

What is Church Discipline?

1. The church is made up of **DISCIPLES** of the Lord Jesus who discipline themselves for the purpose of godliness and stability of faith

#3101 μαθητής *mathetes*

= a follower, learner, student

= a pupil, one tutored, implying a closer relationship than mere information

= an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him & makes it his rule of conduct

(Acts 6:7, 9:1; 1 Tim 4:7; Col 2:5)

2. A disciple understands the need for discipline in every area, at home, in society and in church

(Prov 13:24; Rom 13:1-5; 1 Cor 5:1-13)

"Discipline implies instruction and correction, the training which improves, moulds, strengthens and perfects character. It is the moral education obtained by the enforcement of obedience through supervision and control."

– Baker's Dictionary of Theology

3. **DISCIPLINE** is spoken of and described in three ways in God's Word

a) the training or general education of an individual

b) the trials God brings on His own for the strengthening, refining and purifying of their faith – not because of sin

c) the correcting or punishing of a person because of sin he refuses to abandon

(Acts 22:3; 2 Tim 3:16; Tit 2:11-12; Heb 12:5-11; 1 Pet 1:6-7;

1 Cor 11:32; 2 Tim 2:25; Rev 3:19)

4. Church discipline is designed to demonstrate a hatred for sin and the determination to live in righteousness and obedience to God

5. * Why then has the Scripture-prescribed discipline almost completely ceased in the modern churches?*

→ they don't know the Bible's teaching on discipline

→ they have never seen it done before

→ they don't want to appear judgmental

→ the church has a wide-open front door

→ they have had a bad experience with discipline in the past

→ the church is afraid to open "Pandora's box"

→ they have no guidelines for discipline

→ they fear losing members (or dollars)

→ their Christianity is individualistic and privatized

→ they fear being "legalistic"

→ they hope transfer growth will fix the problem

→ leaders are sometimes dealing with their own sin

6. Today many churches have turned away from the biblical teaching concerning sin and the need for salvation

Instead of teaching

the depravity of man and original sin

they teach that

people are basically good and mean to do good

Instead of teaching that

the wages of sin is eternal death

they teach that

the good will outweigh the bad and heaven is assured

Instead of teaching that

God's word is the standard of truth and righteousness

they teach that

love, acceptance and tolerance are the decisive standard

7. The result: there is no need to judge each other and therefore church discipline is also unnecessary