

Church Discipline – the PROCESS

1. In Matthew 18 Jesus outlines the step-by-step process that is to be followed when there is sin in the church (Mt 18:15-20)

2. The context of the passage sheds light onto the practice of "church discipline"

Matthew 18

- :1-6 = who will be greatest in the kingdom
 - unless you become like a child and humble yourselves you will not enter
 - do not cause the little ones to stumble

- :7-11 = stumbling blocks

#4625 *σκάνδαλον skandalon*

- = the trigger of a trap on which the bait is placed
- = always denotes an enticement to conduct which could ruin the person in question

→ those causing people to sin

- woe to the world for its stumbling blocks
- woe to him through whom they come
- do whatever it takes to escape hell

- :12-14 = 100 sheep

- a man will leave 99 sheep to go and search for one that has strayed
- he will rejoice more over the one sheep that he finds than over the 99
- it is not the Father's will that one of the little ones perish

- :15-20 = if your brother sins ...
 - whatever you bind or loose
 - if two of you agree about anything
 - where 2 or 3 are gathered I am there

- :21-35 = forgiveness ...

3. If your brother sins

#264 *ἁμαρτάνω hamartano*

- = to wander from the law of God
- = to violate God's law → to sin
- = to do or go wrong

STEP #1 - v15

- go to him, show him his fault

#1651 *ἐλέγχω elegcho*

- = to call to account, reprove, admonish
- = to convince of error
- = implying that there is adequate proof
- in private = between you and him alone
- if he listens you won your brother

#2770 *κερδαίνω kerdaino*

- = gain arising from escaping evil
- = to gain in addition

✘ if he does not listen



STEP #2 - v16

- go to him taking one or two more with you
- they serve as witnesses
- ✘ if he refuses to listen



STEP #3 - v17

- tell it to the church
- openly, publicly, the church, under the leadership of elders, must confront the offender with his sin and his unrepentance
 - ✘ if he refuses to listen even to the church



→ consider him to be an unsaved person

STEP #4 - v18-20

- the leadership must decide an appropriate course of action
- they will carefully determine what will be forbidden (bound) and what will be permitted (loosed)
- as they prayerfully come to agreement, the Lord Jesus promises that
 - a) the Father will give them what they ask
 - b) He Himself will be there in their midst

4. The goal of the process is forgiveness and restoration and reconciliation

Binding and loosing are known **technical legal expressions in the ancient Jewish world**. "To bind" is to restrict, to confine, to limit and in legal sense "to forbid something". On the opposite side "to loose" is to unbind, to untie, to free, to release which in a legal sense means "to permit something". — Pinchas Shir



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(see also Matthew 16:18-19)