

**Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Leadership 1-Ecclesiology
Week 9A - Church Discipline**

Introduction

Biblical Principles of Church Discipline

1. Church discipline is doctrinally based upon divine discipline (Heb. 12:5-13).
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2. There are, however, important distinctions between God's discipline and formal church discipline:
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3. Failure to practice church discipline when needed (not just formal) is a direct violation of God's will (1 Cor. 5:2) and will be destructive to the local church.
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4. Formal church discipline should be limited to serious sins like those named by the New Testament in this connection: sexual immorality, covetous/swindling, idolatry, reviling/factiousness, substance abuse/dependence, false doctrine, unwillingness to work, etc. (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17,18; Titus 3:10).

5. Normally, church discipline for serious sins should proceed in a series of increasing measures ranging from private reproof through corporate confrontation to excommunication if necessary--to persuade the person to repent (Mt. 18:15-17).

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For a review of the importance of admonition in healthy body life, see [Christian Principles Unit #3 Notes](#).

6. Although not commanded by the New Testament, we strongly recommend seeking counsel with other mature Christians before enacting formal church discipline.

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Variables : There are many variables to be prayerfully considered and discussed when contemplating formal church discipline. Consider the following questions:

- Does the person claim to be a Christian, or not?
- Is the person ignorant of the sinfulness of this issue, or does he know better?
- Was the sin a "fall from grace," or part of a pattern of sin in this area?
- Is the person open about his sin and receptive to correction, or does he hide/defend/excuse his sin?
- Is this an isolated problem in a person who is growing spiritually, or is it part of an overall way of life that disregards God's will?
- Is progress in the problem area merely disappointing to you, or is it actually worsening?
- Does the person have the ability to change, or does this problem require additional help?
- Does the unrepentant sinner insist on staying in fellowship, or has he left the church?

Conclusion

Memory Verses

Matt. 18:15-17**

1 Cor. 5**

Assignment

Read 2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9 and identify principles of giving.

Key Points to Know for Exam

1. Be familiar with the six “Biblical Principles of Church Discipline.”
2. Be able to explain three of the eight variables to be prayerfully considered and discussed when contemplating formal church discipline.