

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Take the case of an openly unrepentant sinner. He or she should be WON back from the error of unbelief and sin. Unrepentant sin is an affront to God and a scandal (a cause for stumbling) to that person and members of the congregation.

What should the church do?

The church has the power to administer the OFFICE OF THE KEYS. There are four steps to be taken, according to Matthew 18:15-17. (Read THIS VERSE)

- 1.) A Christian who is aware of a fellow Christian's sin is to admonish him or her. The member should not at first tell anyone, not even the pastor. If the erring person stops doing wrong, the matter is resolved. No one else should be informed about the situation.
- 2.) The member takes with him or her one or two TRUSTWORTHY" mature Christians, that "ever matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." IF the unrepentant person acknowledges the sin, the matter is dropped. If he or she does not listen, then the third step.
- 3.) The church is informed. (typically through the pastor). Can be done through the Elders. The pastor sometimes seeks the support of the ELDERS. The church (or pastor) invites the member to attend a meeting in which concerns of the sin are held up "again" before the person. If he or she repents the matter is settled. If not, then the fourth step.
- 4.) The church "EXCOMMUNICATES" the person, which means ,puts him or her out of communion, out of fellowship, regards him/her as a lost person, outside of the church, in need of the LAW and GOSPEL. The congregation through the pastor tells that person their sins are RETAINED.

If after a while, the person repents, asks for forgiveness and reinstatement, the congregation would through its pastor forgive the person's sins and again recognize them as a fellow brother or sister in Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PASTORS???????