

## **THE ELDER'S ROLE IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. The subject of church discipline almost always brings up some sort of excuse as to why the church should not be involved in such when we think of it in respect to the withdrawal of members. .
  - A. However, all of the excuses pale in significance when confronted with the numerous Scriptures which clearly show the obligation of such when necessary.
2. Except for a total disregard of what the Bible says, one cannot deny that discipline may involve withdrawal from unruly members.
  - A. This is clearly a command of the Scriptures.
  - B. Note the following:
    1. Romans 16:17.
    2. 1 Corinthians 5:11.
    3. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.
    4. 1 Timothy 6:5.
    5. 2 Timothy 3:5
3. As to the role of elders in this matter it must be understood that, as in all matters pertaining to the local church, the elders must assume a leadership role.
4. However, we must also understand that true church discipline involves many things of which we will give consideration to in this section.

### **BODY:**

1. It is the business of the elders to feed the church - Acts 20:28.
  - A. They further are responsible in helping the weak members of the church to become stronger - Acts 20:35.
  - B. They are also to watch after the souls of those under their charge – Heb. 13:17.
    1. A part of this responsibility will be carried out in seeing that proper discipline is carried out within the local congregation.
2. When we speak of church discipline we speak of those things pertaining to the teaching, training, collection, and development of its members.
  - A. All of this has as its goal the ultimate salvation of every member of the church.
  - B. We should not entertain the idea that church discipline has to do only with getting rid of unruly members, although it does involve this.
    1. The withdrawal of such is to be resorted to only when all other disciplinary measures have failed.
3. In every well-regulated body, whether family, state, or church, discipline must be maintained.
  - A. To fail to do so will result in that body going to pieces.
  - B. True discipline promotes peace and happiness, as well as efficiency and development of character.
  - C. Imagine a church where no discipline exists.
    1. Where there is no systematic effort made to instruct members.

2. Where there is no program set forth to train them to become efficient workers in the kingdom.
3. Elders must know that they are responsible to tend, feed, watch, warn, lead, provide for, protect, unite the sheep, guard, and teach.
  - A. They are to "hold to the faithful word" - Tit. 1:9.
4. A true "overseer" of the flock knows that all that concerns the church is under his care.
  - A. He well understands that he cannot shirk that duty and still be pleasing to God.
3. The organization of the local church is an established order - Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5.
  - A. This organization is the only medium through which God is going to accomplish His work - Eph. 3:10; Acts 13:1-3; 14:25-28; 11:27-30.
    1. Elders are to "oversee" the local church, and those who plea for a restoration of the church of the N. T. must strive to be loyal to that plea in all respects.
  - B. It is important that elders see that there is a body of truth that must be upheld in regard to the doctrine of the church.
    1. God has given unto "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" - 2 Pet. 1:3.
    2. He further has shown us those things that are the fruit of the spirit - Gal. 5:22, 23.
    3. He has also given us the Christian graces so that we may grow as He would have us to do - 2 Pet. 1:5-8.
  - C. With these in mind they must lead us in the path of righteousness.
    1. Keeping the church pure is of utmost importance.
    2. And the only way that this is going to happen is for the elders to lead us in these matters.