

Shame and Church Discipline

Tim Lane



If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

2 Thessalonians 3:14–15

Church Discipline

Biblical Church Discipline

Loving Candor

Neglect
1 Cor 5:1–5

Overuse
2 Cor 2:5–11



Nothing can be more cruel than the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the paths of sin.

Life Together, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

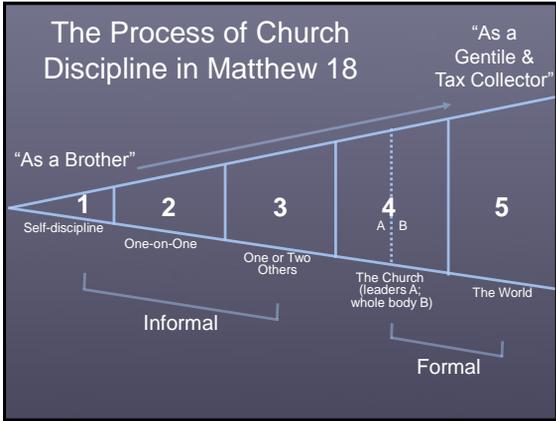
The Broader Context of Matthew 18

What does life in the Kingdom require?

- Matthew 18:1–5 _____
- Matthew 18:6–9 _____
- Matthew 18:10–14 _____
- **Matthew 18:15–20** _____
- Matthew 18:21–35 _____

What Is Church Discipline?

1. Discipline is a family word: Hebrews 12:5–13
1. Discipline and authority: John 10:18, I Peter 5:3
3. Church discipline has two components
 - Preventive
 - Corrective



Church Discipline and Shame-Based Cultures

Discipline or Shame: The Dynamics of Shame in Church Discipline

Reverend Wong Fong Yang

"Loss of Face"

The Cultural Context

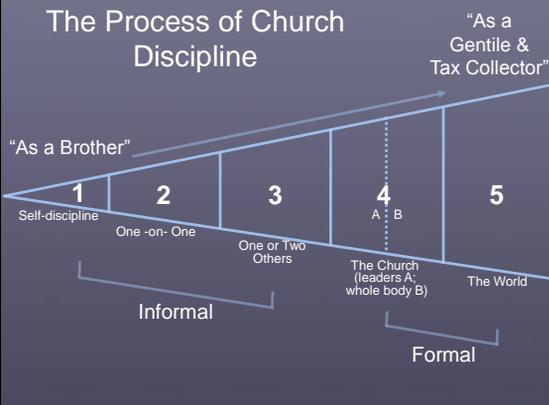
Matthew 18:15–20 and I Corinthians 5:1–13

Scholars have shown that shame and honor are pivotal values in the Mediterranean world, both now and in the first century A.D. In that society, shame was to be avoided by all means.

Theological Foundations for Church Discipline: I Corinthians 5:1–13

1. The holiness of God and the purity of the church
2. Community identity and community formation
3. Covenant community and moral codes

The Process of Church Discipline



Pastoral Wisdom and Practice

- Consider the percentages of guilty/shamed vs. guiltless/shameless in the church.
- Inculcate a culture of grace and growth in which sinners can come out of hiding and find meaningful help.
- Broaden your understanding of church discipline to include all of life—both corrective **and** preventive.
- Steps 1 and 3 have the shamed in mind while steps 4 and 5 have the shameless in mind.
- In steps 1-3 exhaust all efforts to pursue. There is no time frame unless there is the threat of harm.

- Be creative and sensitive with who you might involve in step 2.
- Equip people to practice one-on-one.
- Understand the purpose of taking two or more. Deuteronomy 19:15.
- Teach on church discipline in various contexts.
- Don't let busyness kill creativity, prayer and wise love.
- When public disclosure becomes necessary, carefully craft the way you speak about the person/s (p.70).

- Prepare the church to hear about the person under discipline.
- When administering communion, use it as an opportunity to remind everyone what it means to "come to the table in an unworthy manner."
- Address both the negative and positive aspects of shame.
- Recognize the positive outcomes of other discipline situations where a matter was resolved before step 3 or 4.
- Talk much about the comfort and call of the gospel. Romans 8:1,12.



counseling services
online and onsite courses
national conferences and seminars
Journal of Biblical Counseling
books, blogs, videos, and audio
and more at ccef.org

This outline is a publication of the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF). All content is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced in any manner without written permission from CCEF. For more information on classes, materials, speaking events, distance education and other services, please visit www.ccef.org.
© 2012 Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation
