



Home Group Discussion Guide

Excommunication

1 Timothy — Part 5

ICEBREAKER: What books on your shelf are begging to be read?

OVERVIEW: The Bible says that the church is the body of Christ; each of us is a member or part of His body, and He accomplishes His work through. But what happens when one of the members of the body acts in a way that hurts the body; that makes it unhealthy; that hinders and interferes with what Christ is trying to do in and through His body? In this discussion we will go deeper with the topic of church discipline.

1. Read 1 Timothy 1:18-20. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
 - What does Paul mean when he says "fight well in the Lord's battles?"
 - How does someone deliberately violate their conscience?
 - What does it mean that Paul "threw them out and handed them over to Satan?"
2. Read Acts 5:1-11.
 - Why were Ananias and Sapphira punished?
 - Why do you think their punishment was so severe?
 - If the health and purity of the church are important enough for God to take such drastic measures, what can we learn from this story about how we should view the church and church discipline?
3. Why is church discipline necessary for a church to be healthy?
4. Other than the pastor, who in our church would you like see thrown out and handed over to Satan? Just kidding! Please go to the next question.

5. Review this list by a Baptist church founded in 1872. Which of these, if any, do you think should be eliminated from the list? Are there behaviors that you would add to the list?

Members shall be liable to the discipline of the church for the following causes:

- For any outward violations of the moral law.
- For pursuing any course which may, in the judgment of the church, be disreputable to it as a body.
- For absenting themselves habitually without good reasons, from the church at the seasons set apart for public worship.
- For holding and advocating doctrines opposed to those set forth in the statement of faith.
- For neglecting or refusing to contribute to defraying the expenses of the church according to their several abilities.
- For treating the acts and doings of the church contemptuously, or pursuing such a course as is calculated to produce discord.
- For divulging to persons not interested, what is done in the meetings of the church.
- For pursuing any course of conduct unbecoming good citizens and professing Christians.

6. Read Matthew 18:15-17.
 - What is the step-by-step process for church discipline?
 - What should you NOT do when someone in the church sins against you?
 - How should you handle it when someone in the church confronts you about your sin?
 - What should you do if you know someone in the church is living in outright sin?

The Last Word: Be prepared to respond to loving rebukes from church family with humility. When somebody confronts you about something don't take offense; their purpose isn't to insult you. Don't attack them ("How dare you point out my faults!"). Simply admit your sin and pledge to repent. And thank them for caring enough to approach you.