

Church Discipline

By James Moriello, Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket RI, 2022

1. Christ's authority is greater than any human authority. Therefore, we readily affirm that there is such a thing as improper exclusion from fellowship that is contrary to Scripture. The church does not decide who is saved and who is not. However, there are certain criteria for fellowship in the local Bible-believing church. Any individual who lives in continual and unrepentant sin does not have fellowship with the church, since his or her unrepentant witness blasphemes Christ. Amongst other things, the local church has the responsibility to seek to restore sinners, reinforce God's standards, and exercise levels of discipline. This is not to be taken lightly.
2. Firm Foundation follows the Bible's instructions. All internal discipline will follow the order set forth in Matthew 18:15-17 and Titus 3:10-11. The purpose of discipline is to offer an opportunity for the involved individual(s) to either repent of sinful action(s) or vindicate themselves. The steps are private one-on-one confrontation and discussion, discussion between at least two members of the congregation and the affected party, further discussion with at least two members of the Board of Directors and/or Board of Elders and Deacons, and/or discussion before interested parties in the church in a specially appointed meeting for that purpose. Discipline measures may include private or public rebuke, removal from ministry assignments, and excommunication.
3. Further Supporting Scriptures
 - a. Romans 16:17
 - b. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
 - c. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
 - d. Galatians 6:1-5
 - e. 2 Peter 3:9