

## **Church Discipline: Biblical Guidelines for Rebuking and Restoring a Sinning Believer**

As the sheep of God's pasture we truly are prone to wander. However, Our Chief Shepherd has provided His clear instructions as to how His Church is to round up the strays (James 5:19-20). Whereas, some see local church discipline as a means of punishment and banishment, the Word of God presents it as a process of restoration as well as the means by which Christ's Church stays committed to purity, integrity, and unity. This practical workshop will present a specific method for rebuking and restoring a sinning believer.

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### **Introduction:**

“Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)

### **I. THE DEFINITION (What is rebuking?)**

1. Rebuke (2 Tim. 4:2) = to show disapproval of the action
2. Reprove (Eph. 5:11) = to expose the error
3. Restore (Gal. 6:1) = to mend the relationship

### **II. THE METHOD (How do we rebuke?)**

1. Approach Him With Right Attitudes
  - a. An attitude of love (Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5; Eph. 4:15)

- b. An attitude of respect (1 Tim. 5:1-2)
  - c. An attitude of forgiveness (Lk. 17:3; Eph. 4:32)
  - d. An attitude of patience (2 Tim. 4:2)
  - e. An attitude of gentleness (Gal. 6:1; Prov. 15:1)
  - f. An attitude of humility (Mt. 7:1; Gal. 6:1)
2. Approach Him At The Right Time – as soon as possible (Eph. 4:26; Mt. 5:23-24)
3. Approach Him In The Right Place – face to face and in private (Mt. 18:15)
4. Approach Him With The Right Actions
- a. Know the facts first (Mark 8:31-33; Mt. 18:16)
  - b. Talk seriously (Job 5:17; Heb. 12:5; Eph. 4:15)
  - c. Teach the Word (Eph. 5:11; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 4:12)
  - d. Warn and admonish him (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:15)
  - e. Give a solution (1 Thess. 5:14; Gal. 6:1)

### **III. THE POSSIBILITIES (What could happen when he is rebuked?)**

#### **A. He may choose not to listen and remain unrepentant**

1. If he doesn't listen you are to bring one or two witnesses to confirm the facts concerning his unwillingness to repent of his sinful behavior (Mt. 18:16)
2. And if he still doesn't listen, you are to bring the matter before the local church (Mt. 18:17a)
3. And if he still doesn't listen, you are to remove him from fellowship in the local church  
(Mt. 18:17b; Eph. 5:27; 1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:11; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Thess. 3:14-15)
4. And when you remove him, the whole church is to pray for him
5. Then you watch God work His discipline in the unrepentant sinner's life (Heb. 12:3-11; Prov. 29:1)
6. God may choose to allow the rebellion to continue (Prov. 13:18; 15:12; 9:8; 5:12-14)
7. God may choose to take the erring brother home to heaven (1 Jn. 5:16; Acts 5:5; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Cor. 11:30-32)

#### **B. He may choose to listen and repent**

1. We are to forgive him (Lk. 17:3; Mt. 18:21-22)
2. We are to comfort him (2 Cor. 2:4-8)
3. We are to help him (1 Thess. 5:14; Gal. 6:1)

4. We are to rejoice with him (Jas. 5:20; Mt. 18:15; Prov. 10:17)
5. He will be happy (Job 5:17)
6. He will be wiser (Lk. 22:31-32)
7. He will be useful (Prov. 29:15; 15:31; 19:25)
8. He will be honored (Prov. 13:18)
9. He will be thankful for those who rebuked him (Prov. 9:8; 27:5-6; 28:23; Ps. 141:5; cf. 2 Samuel 12)

**Concluding Challenge:**