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Train & Multiply™

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Discipline in the Church



Pastoral Leader Training Booklet

41

Train & Multiply™



T&M™

To be holy means remain separated from all sin, and to give ourselves totally to loving and serving God. To live holy lives, we discipline ourselves in several ways.

What does “discipline” mean? Perhaps we think of the correction needed by a drunkard or a fornicator. But discipline is more fundamental. Christian discipline is submitting to the Holy Spirit, so that He can guide us according to the Lord’s commands.

THE DISCIPLE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST



A disciple of Jesus follows His example and obeys His commands. He gives and tithes generously. He witnesses. He avoids selfishness and gossip. He helps the needy. He prays and meditates on God's Word. He seeks the guidance of the Holy Spirit daily.

NOTES

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- Idolatry. (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- Gossip. (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- Drunkenness. (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- Theft. (1 Corinthians 5:11)
- Legal cases between fellow members. (1 Corinthians 6:1-10)
- False teaching. (Romans 16:17)

PRACTICAL WORK

- Help your church to apply all these aspects of discipline.



A disciple is someone who obeys Christ. (He has not simply made a “decision” to “accept” the Lord.) The disciple does not simply study the Bible. He applies its teachings to his life and ministry.

Christ commanded us to make:

- ☐ Bible students.
- ☐ obedient disciples.
- ☐ emotional decisions.

In Matthew 28:19-20, the Lord Jesus Christ commands us to make d_____ who keep all His commands.



Christ's disciple seeks to live in holiness. False disciples follow Jesus in the hope of receiving material gain (John 6:11-15) or a privileged position.

The true disciple doesn't only "accept" Christ and believe Gospel doctrine. He also acts by faith, in holiness. His character is the fruit of the powerful Spirit of God. (Galatians 5:22-23) This faith leads us to trust God in many areas. For example:

- complete forgiveness of sins, and eternal life,
(John 3:16, 1 John 1:7-10)
- holiness,
(1 Peter 2:9)
- power over temptation and evil spirits,
(Matthew 17:14-20)
- physical healing,
(Matthew 9:28-29, Matthew 15:28, 2 Corinthians 12:8-9)
- clothing, shelter and food,
(Matthew 6:25-34)
- guidance in our daily life.
(Romans 8:14)

The Bible does not speak of separating members for a specific period of time (e.g. three months, etc.); we must be careful about this. We should receive back whoever repents immediately, when it is clearly seen that this is sincere. (2 Corinthians 2:6-8)

Nevertheless, in the case of a leader who is restored after a fall, we ask him not to preach or lead services for a reasonable period, so that the Gospel does not fall into disrepute.

The following offences need correcting:

- Problems between members. (Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 6:5-6)
- Divisions. (Titus 3:10-11, Romans 16:17)
- Sloth. (2 Thessalonians 3:7-15)
- Immorality. (1 Corinthians 5:1-2)
- Avarice. (1 Corinthians 5:11)

- to purify the congregation; an uncorrected sin affects everyone (1 Corinthians 5:6),
- to warn others of the danger of an unruly tongue, so that they take notice (1 Timothy 5:19-20, James 3:1-12).
- to leave you in God's judgement (1 Corinthians 5:12-13, Hebrews 10:30-31).

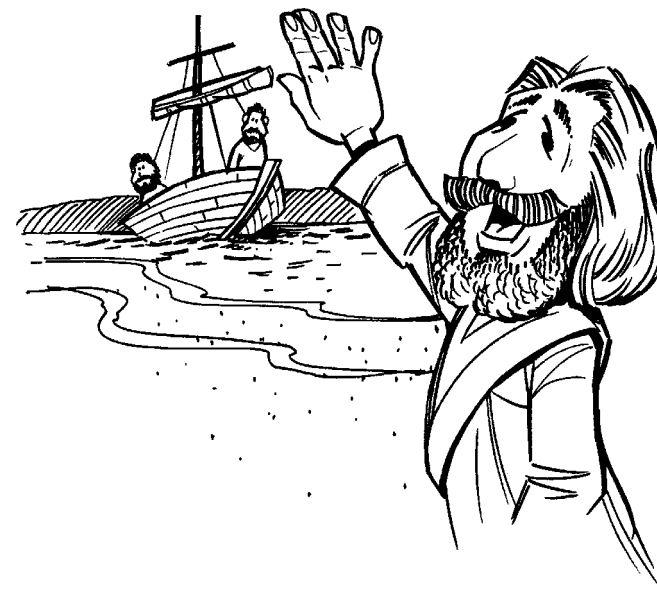
John-Luke, it hurts us that these measures are necessary. Nevertheless, we must obey God's voice and exclude you. Your position as deacon is terminated. This decision is unanimous. We continue praying that you will repent and once more glorify Jesus Christ in your life.

When your conduct changes, we will be prepared to restore you as a member, and will receive you joyfully.

Signatures of the church leaders:

When a believer repents, he must return any stolen goods, pay outstanding debts, and correct what he has said, whenever this is possible and convenient. (Luke 19:8) According to the case, do this in private or in public. After this repentance, the congregation again considers him a member.

Jesus called two fishermen: Peter and Andrew. They obeyed by faith, leaving their nets and boats, to follow Him as disciples. (Matthew 4:18-20)



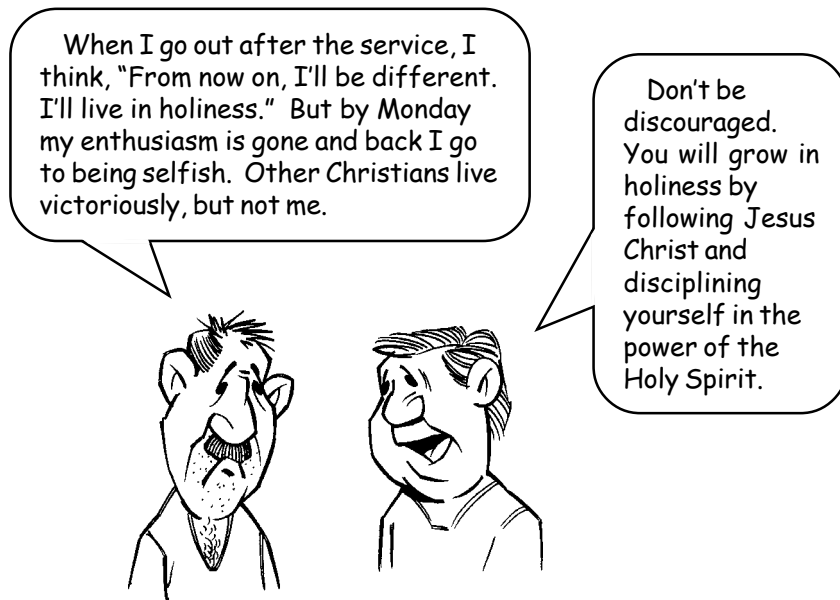
With this same faith, we, too, leave aside the activities and material things, which prevent our obedience to the Lord.

Do you want to live by faith in God, and not for the material and temporal things of this world?

PERSONAL DISCIPLINE

Self-control is an important part of holiness.

(Galatians 5:23, 2 Timothy 1:7)



Paul commanded Timothy: *“Train yourself to be godly.”*

(1 Timothy 4:7) A permanent discipline! The Lord commands us:

“Be holy, as I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:15-16)

God makes us holy, changing us more and more into the image of Christ.

Example of a disciplinary letter:

20th January
Mr. John-Luke Kotokoua
“(The person's address)”

Dear John-Luke,

We greet you in the name of the Lord, in love, and sincerely wish you and your family His blessings.

John-Luke, the New Testament commands us to correct whoever does not repent of a serious fault.
(1 Corinthians 5:1-11)

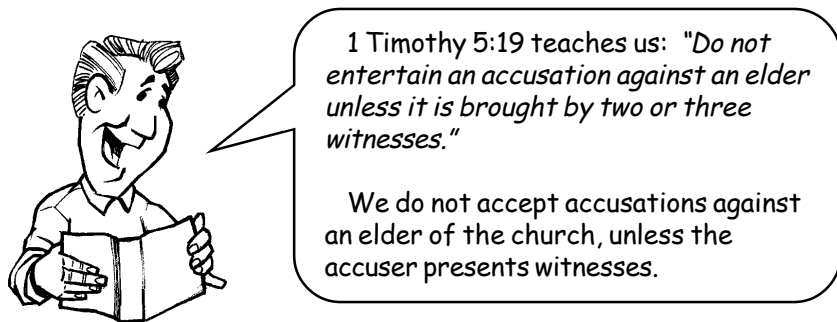
Your gossiping and unfounded criticism of other members has caused serious division. You have been warned in private, and later warned by the elders. As you did not pay heed, we requested that the congregation deal with the matter. The church has confirmed the elder's recommendation that you should be excluded from the congregation until you repent. Of course, this applies only to you, and does not include other members of your family.

John-Luke, this discipline has four aims:

- to reconcile you to God and restore fellowship in the church (Galatians 6:1),

- The pastor or principal elder of a congregation does not discipline an erring member alone. This could cause personal resentment against the pastor. That is why Galatians 6:1 cautions us to take others who are spiritual with us, to correct an erring brother.
- We follow these biblical steps until the brother repents. If he still refuses even when the matter is presented to the congregation, he is removed from fellowship.
- If things reach the point where the erring brother pays no heed to anyone, nor to the congregation, he must be advised, formally, of the decision taken.

The procedure is the same, in the case of a leader of the church.



Don't just seek "immediate holiness." The Christian life is not like making instant coffee. God renews us daily, through His Holy Spirit, as He guides us into doing His will.

In Jesus Christ, we have a perfect model of holiness. We grow in our knowledge of Jesus Christ, praying constantly, modeling our lives on Him all the time. We imitate His love, humility and faith.

Jesus Christ disciplined Himself to resist the devil, when tempted. (Matthew 4:1-11) We have Jesus' Spirit to resist the devil. Jesus produces the fruit of holiness in us through our faith. (Galatians 3:2-5)

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me..." (Galatians 2:20)



We are like large houses with many rooms. We sweep the front hall and the dining room, because visitors enter them. We also clean whatever other rooms are seen by others. But perhaps we leave back rooms or closets dirty, out of sight! Let's allow the Holy Spirit to sweep out every corner. May He clean up every aspect of our lives!

WHEN WE ARE IN CHRIST, THE HOLY SPIRIT PRODUCES HOLINESS IN US

Underline in the following passage from Galatians 5:22-25, nine things which the Holy Spirit produces in us.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

The following verses are from Matthew 5:3-10.

Underline eight attitudes which describe the character of the Christian filled with the Spirit of Christ.

“Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them!”

“Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!”

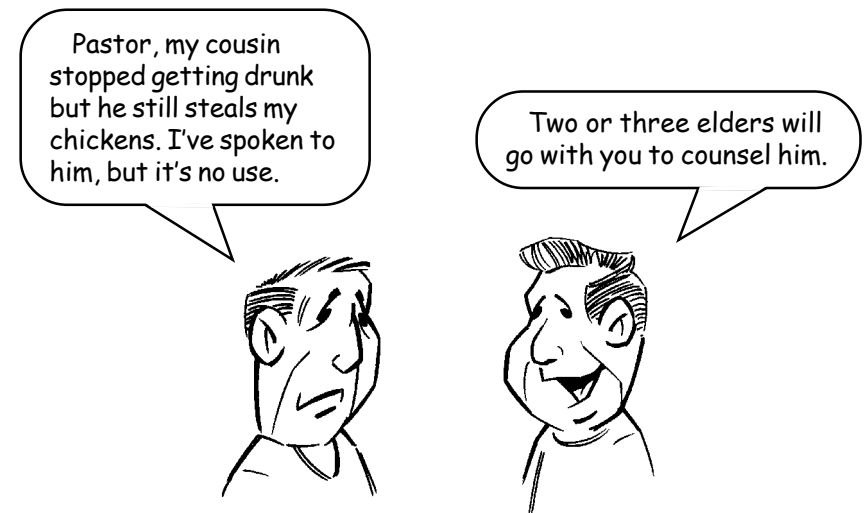
“Happy are the meek; they will receive what God has promised!”

Write down the three steps to correct a brother:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Do not listen to an accusation, if the accuser has not first spoken to the accused.

Second:

“But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’”

We deal with him meekly, and correct gently. (Galatians 6:1)

Third:

“If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan...”

If he persists in error, the church deals with the matter (Matthew 18:17, 1 Timothy 5:20). If he pays no heed to the church, he is excluded from the congregation until he repents.

“Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!”

“Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!”

“Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!”

“Happy are those who work for peace among men; God will call them his sons!”

“Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!”

“Holiness is a burning love for God which brings positive things, every kind of virtue, good works and purity.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Galatians 5:22-23, Philippians 2:13)



We should not compare ourselves with others (2 Corinthians 10:12), but rather with Christ. (Ephesians 4:13) Holiness is not just leaving obvious, easily-noticed vices and sins. It is recognizing our pride, greed, jealousy, envy, resentment, covetousness, etc., and asking God to fill us rather with the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and the other virtues that are the fruit of the Spirit.”

Do we criticize another believer, for obvious sins, when we ourselves sin in what we say and think? Does it make us feel holy to be able to point out another's sin?

Jesus commanded:

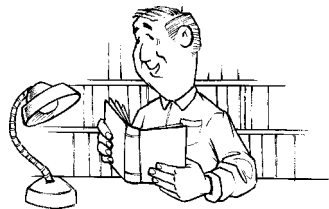
“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”

(Matthew 7:1-3)

How does the Holy Spirit sanctify us? He helps us to act the way Jesus did, *“continuing to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”*

(Philippians 2:12)

We need to discipline ourselves daily, praying and meditating on the Bible, to be able to obey Christ. That is how the Holy Spirit gives us power to do this.



THE DISCIPLINE OF CORRECTION

“Be holy, because I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:16)

We discipline those who fall, to restore them (Galatians 6:1) and to purify the church. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5)

We do not discipline to punish. It is the Lord who punishes, not us. (Hebrews 10:30-31, Hebrews 12:5-11)



The church is a holy body. Nevertheless, there may be gossip, criticism, lies, disagreements and immorality. If these errors are not corrected soon, everyone is affected.

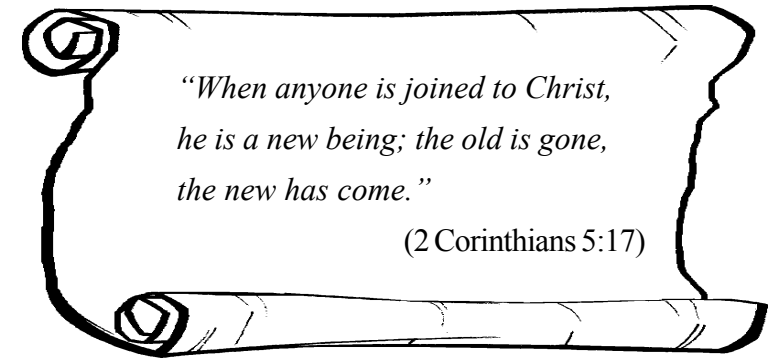
Steps to correct an erring believer (Matthew 18:15-18)

First:

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, then you have won your brother over.”



We examine ourselves before sharing in the Lord's Supper. If we take part without preparation, the Lord will punish us. Praying in silence, we confess our sins to our Heavenly Father. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)



"When anyone is joined to Christ, he is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come."

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Through the Holy Spirit, we put to death evil desires.
(Romans 8:12-17, Galatians 5:16-24)

Jesus says: If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget himself, take up his cross every day, and follow me. (Luke 9:23)

Forget oneself? Take up our cross every day? We can only do that if we are followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus' disciple is always ready to suffer for his Lord, and die for his faith if need be.

God gives us the strength to do it: *"...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."*
(Philippians 2:13)

How often does your church celebrate the Lord's Supper?

The apostolic churches celebrated the Supper on Sundays.
(Acts 20:7) This is not a command, but a church that neglects the Lord's Supper misses many blessings.

We share in the Lord's Supper with reverence and joy. We use a clean table. The bread and wine can be covered with a clean cloth.

Jesus got up very early to pray. When he prayed, great things happened.



Do you pray daily, including with your family? _____

IMPORTANT WAYS TO SANCTIFICATION

As you meditate daily on God's Word, deliberately decide to obey the Lord in everything that day (Matthew 4:4), then do it!

- Pray, being transformed through communion with God Himself, and asking Him to deliver you from temptation and transform you. (Luke 21:36, Luke 22:40, 2 Corinthians 3:17)
- Obey in the midst of trials and difficulties. (1 Peter 1:7)

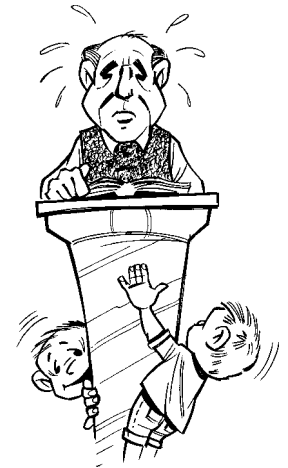
"Make good use of every opportunity you get, because these are bad days. Don't be fools, then, but try to find out what the Lord wants you to do..."

(Ephesians 5:15-17)

Are the children taken care of, during the services, so that they can take part in an orderly way, or receive appropriate instruction for their age?

- ☐ Yes.
☐ No.

Disorderly children can ruin worship. They distract everyone, if they run, shout, or walk around in front. Let members take turns to look after them if this is a problem.



Is the Lord's Supper celebrated properly?

- ☐ Yes.
☐ No.

Instead of listening to a badly prepared sermon, the church members would be better spending the time during the service in praying, reading the Bible and praising the Lord!

Are the worship hymns chosen carefully, before starting the service?

- ☐ Yes.
☐ No.

Are other parts of the service prepared according to the theme of the service (Bible readings, hymns, testimonies, etc.)?

- ☐ Yes.
☐ No.

Does the leader arrive punctually?

- ☐ Yes.
☐ No.

Arriving late steals others' time, and does not honor the Lord.
Services are not taken seriously when leaders arrive late.

DISCIPLINE IN THE HOME

Elders help parents to pastor their families.



The Lord has a command that a man should have only one wife, and should love her. Christians seek peace and joy in their homes. (Ephesians 5:21-33, Colossians 3:18,19, 1 Timothy 3:4,5, Titus 2:4,5)

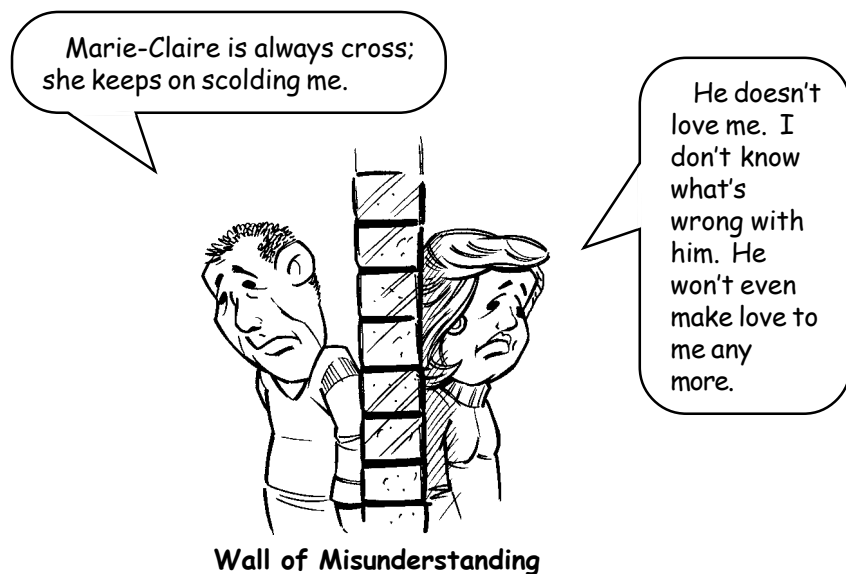
“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”
(Hebrews 13:4)

In 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, Paul explains:

“Now to deal with matters you wrote about. A man does well not to marry. But because there is so much immorality, every man should have his own wife, and every woman should have her own husband. A man should fulfill his duty as a husband, and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs. The wife is not the master of her own body, but the husband is; in the same way the husband is not the master of his own body, but the wife is.

Do not deny yourselves to each other, unless you first agree to do so for a while, in order to spend your time in prayer, but then resume normal marital relations, to keep you from giving in to Satan's temptation because of your lack of self control."

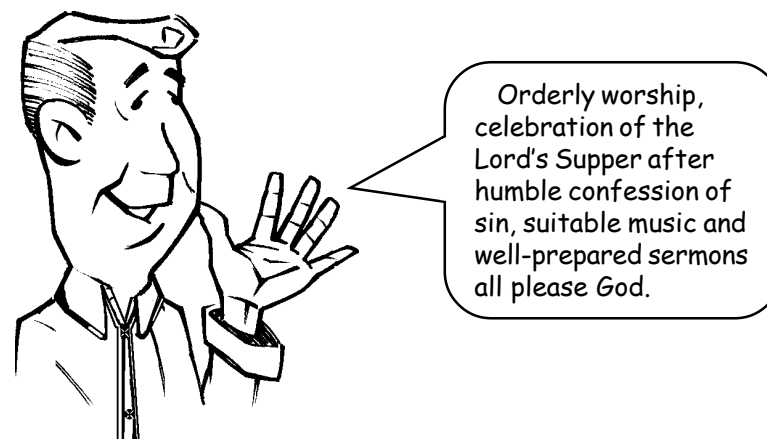
According to this teaching, how should people avoid immorality?



Jesus Christ rules the Christian home. He is its head. If the husband loves and obeys Christ, the rest of the family follows his lead. The Spirit of God helps us to maintain peace and joy in the home.

DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

What kind of service pleases God?



Do you seek the Lord's anointing on the service, beforehand, in prayer?

How much time do you put into preparing the sermon?

- ☐ I think about it once the service starts.
- ☐ I prepare it quickly, beforehand.
- ☐ I spend several hours in prayer, meditation, and preparation, several days beforehand.

This budget is an estimate of Church income, and a list of the expenses which the Treasurer is authorized to pay.

If the offerings are not enough to pay for what is on the budget the treasurer:

- ☐ does not send support for the missionaries.
- ☐ gives nothing to the pastors.
- ☐ shares proportionately what he can, to whom it is due, and advises the church leaders.

Answer: The treasurer shares out what is available, according to the church's objectives.

If more comes in than was budgeted, the treasurer:

- ☐ gives it to the pastor.
- ☐ keeps it for the church to decide its use.
- ☐ lends it to his father-in-law.

Answer: The treasurer keeps any surplus for the leaders to decide how to use it.

A disciplined family keeps the home holy.

The husband: governs his house well. (1 Timothy 3:4-5)

The husband: loves his wife and cares for her as he does his own body. (Ephesians 5:25-33)

The wife: respects her husband and submits to him, as to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:22-24)

The married couple: love each other and submit to each other. (Ephesians 5:21)

The children: obey their parents out of love, just as they would obey the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-3)

Parents: raise their children with love, discipline and Christian instruction. (Ephesians 6:4)

Which Bible passage teaches the responsibilities of each member of the family? Find the answer in your Bible.

- 1 Timothy 4
- Ephesians 5:21 to Ephesians 6:4
- Hebrews 13

The wise couple works out a family budget. A budget is a calculation of income and expenses.

Some families break up because they spend money on unnecessary things, without the husband consulting the wife, or the wife talking first with her husband. Debts destroy peace.

Romans 13:8 says: “*Be in debt to no one.*” The couple should agree about this and plan a budget.

A family budget is:

- ☐ an estimate of what will be earned and a list of what is spent.
- ☐ a prophecy of riches.

- Failure to attend for a long time (unless there is good reason; illness, travel or other legitimate cause),
- Death.

The secretary should update the list, regularly. Does he do so?

Stewardship in the Church

Christian stewardship is another aspect of discipline. A steward administers another person's goods. All we have belongs to God (our time, talents and money). All church members support the work with their offerings and tithes.

Do you need to organize this better, in your church?

Does your church have an annual budget?

- To serve the Lord in some ministry.
(Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Corinthians 12)
- To have family prayers, read the Bible and pray daily with the family. (Proverbs 22:6)
- To welcome new believers, teaching them to be Christ's obedient disciples. (Matthew 28:19-20)
- To pray for other believers, friends and enemies.
(Ephesians 6:18, Luke 6:28)
- To work towards establishing the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, peace, order and justice, in the community and in the country. (Matthew 5:13-16)

Reasons for Removal From the Membership List:

- Transfer (send a letter of recommendation to the new church),
- Excommunication (an unrepentant member who persists in sin is excluded from taking part in church activities),

With a budget, incomes and expenses are calculated. Jesus says:
"If one of you is planning to build a tower, he sits down first and figures how much it will cost, to see if he has enough money to finish the job..." (Luke 14:28)

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

A disciplined church knows who its members are. There is confusion when someone belongs to two churches at the same time, or a church does not know who its baptized members are.

The obedient church is clear about its membership. It baptizes new believers and takes off the list those who are not active members, or have joined another church.



Conditions of Membership

Most churches require the following for membership:

- Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for the forgiveness of our sins and rose again to give us eternal life. (John 3:16, John 14:6, 1 John 1:7-9)
- Repentance. Confession of sins to God, turning from them, and baptism. (John 5:14, John 8:11)
- Obedience to Christ. (John 15:14)

If a believer transfers his membership from another church having the same faith and doctrine, he should bring a letter of recommendation.

The Membership List

The church secretary writes down members' names in a book. The following information may be added for each one:

1. address,

2. telephone number,
3. date of baptism,
4. date of their transfer (if from another church),
5. other useful details.

Members' Responsibilities

- To love and glorify the Lord, consecrating their lives to Him keeping themselves spotless in this world, obeying Jesus' commands. (Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 2 Peter 1:4-8)
- To witness for Christ to friends and neighbors. (Acts 1:8)
- To obey their pastors. (1 Corinthians 9:12-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, Hebrews 13:17)
- To support the Lord's work with their offerings and tithes. (Matthew 6:19-21)
- To take part in services, including the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 26:26-28, Hebrews 10:25)