

*“Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...” - 1 Cor 15:58*

# NORTHSIDE EXHORTER

*A Teaching Bulletin to Inform & Edify God's Family at Northside*

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## **“Church Discipline: The Need For It”**

Church discipline is defined as, “*the work of the body of Christ carried out by a local congregation for the purposes of saving the soul of its member & keeping the church of our Lord pure*”. The definition itself teaches its need. However, we will look at 2 specific reasons from Scripture, which explains its absolute necessity.

### **Without Church Discipline, The Local Church Sends A Message That Sin Is Tolerated**

It is amazing how times have changed. At one time in our culture, we lived in an age of deference. This was when people in authority were respected & feared. It was anathema to challenge anyone in a position of authority. This prevented disrespect from cantankerous people, but it also opened the door to abuse of power by those who had it.

From deference, we went to criticism. Everyone has the right & therefore, was emboldened to challenge those in authority & openly criticize without penalty. This prevented the abuse of power, but it discouraged qualified people to desire positions of authority because this opens them up to critique without validity. Hence, people in authority are no longer the smartest or most qualified, but rather, whoever can survive criticism without breaking wins.

From criticism, we have moved into the age we are presently at, which is tolerance. This is when people can say & practice whatever they want openly without criticism because we are now made to believe that to criticize makes one intolerant. This mentality has made its way into the church of our Lord. Members want elders to look the other way, preachers to remain silent about iniquity, & brethren to support

& encourage their evil ways. Tolerance of sin causes:

- A sinner to lose his soul (*1 Corinthians 5:5*)
- The church to lose its influence (*1 Corinthians 5:6*)
- Our God to be displeased (*Revelation 2:20*).

### **Church Discipline Has Purposes That Are Positive**

1. **Luke 6:46** – Jesus is Lord. He is the Boss; el Jefe. Being Lord means He is in charge. How can we call Him Lord & not do what He says? Through church discipline, we maintain & uphold the authority of Christ.
2. **1 Corinthians 5:6-7** – I was once criticized for making the following statement, “*A church is only as strong as its weakest member.*” The critic looked at this statement from a mathematical point of view by suggesting that if you add all the members’ talents & character up, then divide this by the number of members, then you will have the true strength of a local congregation. However, I am thinking more in line of influence & purity. It doesn’t matter how scriptural the practices of a local church are, how beautiful the singing is, or how sound the teaching, if there is one member not living according to the doctrine of Christ, then the whole church is judged by the world & prospective members, as being hypocritical & not serious about the truth. Through church discipline, we maintain the purity of the church & her good influence within the community.
3. Unity (**Ephesians 4:1-3** & **Acts 20:28-31**) & saving the erring (**James 5:19-20**) are also positive purposes resulting from church discipline.

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