



## **APPENDIX II**

### **CHURCH DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The mission of Clear Creek Community Church is to reach unchurched people and lead them to become fully devoted followers of Christ. The Elders of Clear Creek Community church are charged with promoting the mission of the church, and in so far as is possible, remove barriers to its accomplishment.

Scriptural principles of church discipline shall be applied to members and non-members who are identified as regular attenders when their actions or behaviors impede the Church in the accomplishment of its mission.

Discipline is an act of love, not vengeance or spite (Philippians 2:1-4, 1 John 4:7-8). The primary focus of the process is the restoration of the errant individual to fellowship with God and his Church (Galatians 6:1). Every effort will be made to understand the facts of the situation (Proverbs 18:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, James 1:19-20) and to follow the biblical disciplinary process outlined in passages such as Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 2:5-8 and Titus 3:10-11 in accordance with the bylaws of Clear Creek Community Church, Section 5.08.d.2.

#### **The Purpose of Church Discipline**

- To bring the sinning individual to repentance in order to restore fellowship with God and His church. (Galatians 6:1)
- To purify the church by removing from active participation those deliberately living in consistent disobedience to Biblical teachings (1 Corinthians 5: 12-13; 1 Peter 4:17). Such disobedience could include:
  - i. Sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5)
  - ii. Lawsuits (1 Corinthians 6:1-8)
  - iii. Divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:9)

Dr. Wayne Grudem notes,

*On the other hand, there does not seem to be any explicit limitation specified for the kinds of sin that should be subject to church discipline. The examples of sins subject to church discipline in the New Testament are extremely diverse: divisiveness (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10), incest (1 Cor. 5:1), laziness and refusing to work (2 Thess. 3:6–10), disobeying what Paul writes (2 Thess. 3:14–15), blasphemy (1 Tim. 1:20), and teaching heretical doctrine (2 John 10–11).*

*Nonetheless, a definite principle appears to be at work: all sins that were explicitly disciplined in the New Testament were publicly known or outwardly evident sins, and many of them had continued over a period of time. The fact that the sins were publicly known meant that reproach was being brought on the church, Christ was being dishonored, and there was a real possibility that others would be encouraged to follow the wrongful patterns of life that were being publicly tolerated.<sup>1</sup>*

- To correct actions or behaviors which are the cause of serious discord or dissent within the church body. (Romans 16:17-18; Proverbs 6:16-19).
- To prevent the spread of doctrines and practices contrary to those set out in the Clear Creek Community Church Essential Beliefs (Romans 16:17-18, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15) or other doctrines the elders might specify.

## **Disciplinary Procedure**

1. The errant individual shall first be confronted privately by a believer who has knowledge of the offense and is motivated by the spiritual welfare of the offender (Matthew 18:15).
2. If the individual does not repent and the offense continues, the concerned believer should confront the offender in the presence of one or two witnesses (Matthew 18:16). These witnesses should be people who are trustworthy and able to give reliable testimony (Deuteronomy 19:15; John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1).
3. Should the individual continue in disobedience, the confronting believers shall take the matter to an Elder. The Elder shall interview the persons making the allegation in order to ascertain the facts in the case and the reasons for the allegation. The Elder shall document the nature of the offense, verify that the correct Biblical process has been followed, and determine whether to bring the matter to the attention of the Elders as a whole. The written allegations should be signed and dated by the confronting believers.
4. The written allegations shall be presented to the Elder body. The Elders by consensus will decide whether to pursue the matter and, if warranted, appoint two or more of their body to investigate further.

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 896-897.

5. The offending person will be given the opportunity to be interviewed by the appointed Elders and discuss the allegations. Notes should be kept of the meeting.
6. If, after due investigation, it is determined that there is merit in proceeding with a disciplinary process then the Elders will develop a restoration plan for the individual, a timeframe for the individual to demonstrate compliance with the plan, and specific disciplinary actions that will be taken if the plan is not complied with.
7. The person against whom the allegations have been made shall be notified in writing of a disciplinary meeting that will deal with the specific allegations. Elders will be appointed to meet with the person, give them a written description of the specific allegations, the disciplinary actions that the Elders might pursue if the matter is not resolved in the timeframe agreed upon by the Elders, and a restoration plan. In an attempt to have the matter dealt with in a timely manner, the meeting should be scheduled within 30 days of the presentation of the written allegations to the Elder body.

On the other hand, if after due investigation there appears to be no reason for any further disciplinary action the matter shall be dropped. An Elder or Elders shall be appointed to counsel all parties involved and bring to an end any continuation of rumors or conflicts related to the matter. Both parties shall then be informed in writing that the investigation has been concluded and the allegations dismissed. A record of the investigation shall be kept in the Elders confidential records.

8. Whenever the sinning person demonstrates a spirit of repentance by acknowledgement of the sin, seeks forgiveness from God and the church, asks the forgiveness of the offended, and makes restitution where necessary, the Elders at their discretion may elect to fully restore the penitent to the fellowship of the church (2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1).
9. If the sinning person has not repented within the time set by the Elders, disciplinary actions may be imposed by consensus of the Elder body. These actions could include some or all of the following: (Matthew 18:17b; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13) (See Section 5.08 of the Bylaws)
  - a. Revocation of church membership.
  - b. Removal from positions of leadership in the church.
  - c. Removal from positions of service in the church.
  - d. Barred from church fellowship, facilities, and functions.
  - e. A public rebuke made before the congregation of CCCC. (1 Tim. 5:20)
10. A request for resignation of membership or any other voluntary severance from Clear Creek Community Church shall not automatically resolve the church from further responsibility in the matter. When a person under church discipline leaves Clear Creek Community Church to attend another church, the Elders shall determine whether to

privately inform the leadership of the other church of the individual being under church discipline at Clear Creek Community Church.

11. All documentation of disciplinary actions shall be kept in the confidential Elders records.

One final note from Dr. Grudem on the matter of church discipline,

There is always the need, however, for mature judgment in the exercise of church discipline, because there is lack of complete sanctification in all our lives. Furthermore, when we realize that someone is already aware of a sin and struggling to overcome it, a word of admonition may in fact do more harm than good. We should also remember that where there are issues of conduct on which Christians legitimately disagree, Paul encourages a wide degree of tolerance (Rom. 14:1–23).<sup>2</sup>

This is a very serious and weighty practice. Therefore church discipline should be executed in a very careful manner with the knowledge of the sin kept to the smallest group possible and disciplinary measures increasing in strength until there is a solution.<sup>3</sup> Again, the aim of this biblical practice is loving restoration to Christ and his church.

\*\*\*For the technical understanding of church discipline process, please refer to the CCCC Bylaws, Exhibit B.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 896-897.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.