

## Shepherding Policy Summary Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The expressed purpose for the Shepherding Policy is to bring restoration for Christians to God, their families and brothers and sisters in Christ. It is designed to circumvent the schemes Satan uses to cause division in God's family and destructive behaviors within the church. TLCC's leadership understands that conflict in a Christian's family and circle of friends is very painful. It can also be subtle and unwittingly escalating in nature and affect. We believe that an intentional plan to follow God's words in the Spirit of Christ is our best assurance of replacing peace where there has been conflict and confidence where there has been confusion. Our prayer in Christ is that we win our relationships rather than our debates. Therefore, we would ask that you prayerfully follow and help us follow these steps toward restoration:

1. Make sure you have done everything possible to find a solution one on one. Review and apply yourself to the documents "Our Commitment to Koinonia," "The Test of Love." [www.timberlakechristian.org](http://www.timberlakechristian.org)
2. If your attempts as outlined in those studies do not bring resolution then contact one of the ministers or elders to get, review and follow our TLCC Shepherding Policy. (Pay particular attention to "When is Disciplined Required" and "What is the Process?")

Thank you for caring enough about your relationship with God, your church family, and your friend or love one to seek resolution. God will bless every effort that is motivated by love and bathed in grace!

Sincerely,

Doug (Sr. Minister TLCC)

# Church Shepherding Policy

## Timber Lake Christian Church

In a day of apathy, moral laxity, confusion, and church strife, Timber Lake Christian Church believes in the Biblical principles of accountability, discipline, and order, bringing glory to God through His church. We believe that the command to love means that we are our brother's keeper for the best interest of every individual Christian, the unity and integrity of the church, and ultimately the glory of God's holy name. It is the responsibility of the church members to spiritually care for one another (Gal. 6:2; Phil. 2:1-4). If the principles set forth in our —Commitment to Koinonia do not prevent an individual from falling away from fellowship with God and the church then the Elders will prayerfully set forth a plan for correcting any unrighteous actions of which an offender may be unaware, as well as confronting overt acts of wickedness and rebellion against God. The primary goal of all church discipline and confrontation is always to restore our brother or sister to full fellowship with both God and the body of Christ.

### OUR COMMITMENT TO KOINONIA

As a member of **Timber Lake Christian Church** I intend to...

- ... bring my spiritually surrendered self to worship, learn, and serve others as often as possible
- ... model the grace God has given us as a united body seeking - His purpose first, our leadership's vision for ministry second, my lost neighbor's need third, my brother and sister in Christ's good fourth, and my personal preferences in the area of non essentials last.
- ... work with tenacious excellence expressing grace toward other people's ideas.
- ... refuse to allow perpetual conflict go unaddressed.
- ... communicate with loving honesty.
- ... honor and value those I follow and those I lead.
- ... relentlessly pursue personal purity and integrity.
- ... be my Christian brothers' and sisters' champions.
- ... work on my knees.

### WHY CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

Discipline is a biblically mandated means for accomplishing four purposes in the life of the church body and individual believers:

#### 1. RESTORATION

The primary purpose of any disciplinary action is the restoration of a sinner (Gal 6:1-5 *"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 for each one should carry his own load."* 1 Cor 5:4-5 *When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord).* and/or restoration of unity within the body of believers (Phil 4:2-3 *"I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life).* Therefore, any action is to be taken in love and must include the willingness to forgive. Christian love and justice, patterned after God's character, does not allow sin to be ignored (Rev 3:19-20- *"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me).*

## 2. EXAMPLE TO THE BODY

There is a teaching value in the act of church discipline, which demonstrates to the remainder of the church body the seriousness of sin, and the desire on the part of the church to honor and glorify God through all our behaviors (1 Tim. 5:19-21 - *Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. 20 Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning. 21 I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism*).

## 3. ORDER IN THE BODY

A church divided by dissension becomes ineffective (1 Cor. 1:10,11- *I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. 1 Cor. 3:1-3 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?*

## 4. TO PROTECT THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST'S CHURCH TO AN UNBELIEVING WORLD

Christians have been instructed that their lifestyle and attitudes are signs of discipleship, that they truly are Christ's disciples and that the world can draw some degree of conclusion from the behavior of the people of God (John 13:34,35 *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*)

## WHEN IS DISCIPLINE REQUIRED?

### 1. IMMORALITY

The Christian home is the early illustration of Christ's relationship with the church. Therefore, unrepentant immorality by a church member is grounds for disciplinary action (1 Cor. 5:13). Timber Lake's definition of immorality includes many types of sins including but not limit to; adultery, fornication, homosexuality and incest. (1 Cor 6:9-11, Gal. 5:19-21, Rev. 21:8)

### 2. DOCTRINAL ERROR

The teaching of doctrine contrary to scripture or the church statement of faith must be addressed in order to maintain doctrinal purity (Gal. 1:9, 2 John 10 see also [http://www.timberlakechristian.org/about\\_us.htm](http://www.timberlakechristian.org/about_us.htm) —Our BeliefsI).

### 3. CAUSING DIVISIVENESS

Disrupting the harmony of the church body through gossip, slander, complaining, murmuring, criticism, or willfully creating factions within the church body (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 3:3; Titus 3:10)

### 4. SIN AGAINST ANOTHER BELIEVER

The church may become involved in situations where one member has allegedly wronged another, but only after the individual has made attempts to resolve the grievance personally (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Matt. 18:15).

## **5. SIN OF OMISSION**

Failure by a member who, for an extended period of time, does not participate in church activities such as worship services, communion, or financial support (Jam. 4:17).

## **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENACTING DISCIPLINE?**

Once the biblical mandate of going one-on-one as outlined in our Commitment to Koinonia has failed the responsibility for disciplinary action rests with the Board of Elders. At the discretion of the chairman of the Board of Elders, a committee comprised of Elders may be designated by the chairman for handling certain situations.

Discipline relating to church staff or an elder shall be brought to the Board of Elders. Such actions require the attested word of two or more witnesses for consideration (1 Tim. 5:19)

## **WHAT IS THE PROCESS?**

### **1. GRIEVANCE IS PRESENTED**

Any member of the church shall present any grievance in writing and signed to the chairman of the Board of Elders. No action will be taken on anonymous or verbal allegations. Any personal complaints shall only be considered after direct attempts by the injured party have been attempted, according to the guidelines of Matt. 18:15-17, yet without success.

### **2. GRIEVANCE IS EXAMINED**

An Elder subcommittee shall examine grievances. Any grievance that cannot be clearly verified shall be dismissed.

### **3. OFFENDER IS CONTACTED**

Recognizing that restoration is the primary goal of discipline, the offending individual(s) will be contacted by representatives of the Board of Elders.

### **4. DISCIPLINE IS ADMINISTERED**

If there is no repentance, the Board of Elders must take further disciplinary action. The offender must be treated as an unbeliever until repentance is accomplished. This involves removal from the church membership and exclusion from serving in any of the ministries in the church. The Elders are responsible for making sure that the offender fully understands the nature of the problem and has had ample opportunity to repent before it is announced to the church membership.

### **5. A CAREFUL, PRAYERFUL PROCESS**

All disciplinary actions are carried out with much prayer, self-examination, and love and compassion for the offender, fully recognizing human weakness and sin's power (Matt. 7:5). The Board of Elders holds all actions in the strictest of confidence, until such time, if necessary, as they must to be made public for the purpose of public censure or restitution.

(Selected Scriptures Relating to Church Discipline: Matthew 18:15-17; Mark 7:21-23; John 13:34,35; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:10-11; 3:1-13; 6:1-8; Galatians 1:9; 5:19-21; 6:1-2; Philippians 2:1-4; 4:2, 2

Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:8, 19-20; Hebrews 13:17; James 3:16, 4:17; 1 Peter 1:15; 2:1; 5:1-3; 2 John 9-11)

## Church Shepherding Policy

### Process Notes (Confidential)

**Names & Contact Information:**

Offended Brother/Sister expressing Concern \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

 Level of T.L.C.C. Involvement ☐ Member ☐ Attending ☐ Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Alleged Offending Brother/Sister \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

 Level of T.L.C.C. Involvement ☐ Member ☐ Attending ☐ Leader \_\_\_\_\_

**Grievance Described:** (Focus on specific actions, dates, and names in direct involvement.)

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Immorality ☐ Doctrinal Error ☐ Division in Church ☐ Offended Brother/Sister  
☐ Sin of Omission (Scriptural foundation \_\_\_\_\_)

**Shepherding Process Applied:** (The offended brother/sister should have already reviewed “The Test of Love” conflict resolution tract. [www.timberlakechristian.org/forms/a\\_test\\_of\\_love.pdf](http://www.timberlakechristian.org/forms/a_test_of_love.pdf) )  
Each step of the below process is prerequisite by the previous steps.

1. ☐ Direct “one-on-one” attempts have been made to resolve the differences.  
 (approximate dates?)

 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. ☐ Grievance presented in writing to the chairman of the Elders. (Attach the document)
3. ☐ Elder subcommittee assigned by the chairman to oversee the Shepherding process.

Name (Lead Elder)	Phone	Email
Name	Phone	Email
Name	Phone	Email

4. ☐ Grievance verified as accurate and credible by 2-3 sources/events

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5. ☐ Counter perspective described by the alleged offender

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6. Restoration steps clearly outlined with names & dates

☐ Confronted by accuser \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Verified by 2-3 witnesses \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Approached by Elder subcommittee \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Repentant attitude & actions that should be displayed \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Member /Ministry involvement status reinstated \_\_\_\_\_

7. Potential results (consequences) in case of an unwillingness to acknowledge sin, repent and grow.

Ministry leadership resignation – 3 John 9-10

Ministry involvement resignation – 2 Cor. 6:3; Titus 2:5

Church membership rescinded – 1 Cor. 5:4-13

Church warning to avoid fellowship - Titus 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:19-20

8. Discipline applied (dates, names, titles, and results)

☐ Confronted by \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Ministry leadership resignation \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Ministry involvement resignation \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Church membership rescinded \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Public warning to avoid fellowship \_\_\_\_\_

### **Shepherding Process Fulfilled:**

As stated in the Shepherding policy our purpose is to love all brothers and sisters in Christ while supporting them in their resolve to restore their relationship with God and their brothers and sisters in Christ. This process assumes that everyone is in need of grace; no one typically sees their own weaknesses as clear as we see those of others. This process also assumes that the church elders and ministers have been given the responsibility (He. 13:17) to protect the church (Ac 20:27) from division (Tit 3:10), the sheep from “a bitter root” (He 12:14, 15) destroying the effectiveness and witness of the Bride of Christ (2 Cor 6:3). This process is to be fulfilled with humility and love, prayerfully and thoughtfully executed for the glory of God and the cause of Christ (Gal 6:1-5).

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Signatures of Shepherds (Elder Subcommittee)