

Church Shepherding Policy

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 Koinonial 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. **Timber Lake Christian Church Policy and Procedure Manual—Fall 2009**

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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; 1 Cor. 5:5) and/or restoration of unity within the body of believers (Phil. 4:2). 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).

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 Tm. 5:20).

3. ORDER IN THE BODY

A church divided by dissension becomes ineffective (1 Cor. 1:10, 11; 3:1-3).

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).

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 —Our Beliefs!).

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)

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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. **Timber Lake Christian Church Policy and Procedure Manual—Fall 2009 22**

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)