

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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EXCUSES GIVEN TO NEGATE CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The necessity of church discipline is often argued away by so-called elders and preachers. In this article, I will deal with a few of the famous excuses people offer up in order to coddle the sinner and to encourage him/her in his evildoing (**Jer. 23:14**). However, before we get to said excuses, let's first underscore the fact that local church discipline is not an option, nor a matter to be voted upon. It is a command the faithful must obey. Let's first turn our attention to **1 Cor. 5:1-13**. That text reads as follows:

*“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed **might be taken away from among you**. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, **In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus**. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? **Purge out therefore the old leaven**, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in an epistle **not to company with fornicators**: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now **I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat**. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore **put away from among yourselves that wicked person**.”*

Let's now look at **2 Th. 3:6, 14**. Those verses read: “Now **we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us**.” “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, **note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed**.”

Clearly an honest and good heart (**Lk. 8:15**) can obviously see that there comes a time when local churches must withdraw from the unrepentant sinner. The problem is, not everyone has an honest and good heart! As a result, some folks quickly start making up excuses as to why church discipline should not be enforced upon the erring Christian. Some of those excuses include:

WITHDRAWING FROM THE WAYWARD IS NOT A LOVING THING TO DO

Those who utter such phrases are totally ignorant of what true biblical love is. True biblical love is equated to following God's will (**2 Jn. 6**). Question: is withdrawing from one who refuses to repent God's will? Yes (see the verses above). Therefore, how can it not be a loving thing to do? Listen, the most loving thing any brother or sister in Christ can do for an erring Christian is to “go the distance” in an effort to save his/her soul. On the contrary, the least loving thing any brother or sister can do for an erring Christian is to act as if everything is just fine and comfort the erring one in his/her sins. Church discipline is unloving? Give me a break! How loving is it to sit back and do nothing and watch the rebellious fumble down the broad way to hell (**Mt. 7:13**)?

IT HAS NEVER BEEN DONE AT THIS CONGREGATION

And just what does said statement prove? This proves nothing! Just because a congregation has never done something before does not, in and of itself, mean that the practice is wrong. God expects the faithful to withdraw from the unfaithful. Period.

IT WILL JUST DRIVE THE ERRING ONE FARTHER AWAY

Those who argue such think they know better than God. They don't (**Rom. 9:20**). Local church discipline is not an option! I heard an “elder” named David Shipley make this argument recently. I wonder if he'd allow the same line of “reasoning” for other things to be done in an effort not to drive people away; e.g. bringing in mechanical instruments of music, women preachers, or calling the church some vanilla denominational name. I'm positive he'd oppose such on the basis that God has not authorized such. I retort, the same is true for ignoring church discipline – there's no authority for such (**Col. 3:17**). I cringe for David's soul.

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This proves nothing! **2 Th. 3:6** stated that EVERY disorderly person must be withdrawn from. This includes the big givers.

More dumb excuses could be refuted, but I'll stop here. Let's remember that church discipline is a must and cannot be excused away! When the need arises the faithful must do their part to help a lost sheep return to the fold, even though it is hard.