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Discipline of Members

Introduction

Being a disciple of Christ means that we are under the discipline of Christ and of the Church. For most followers of Christ, this means that the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, the example of other christians and the conviction of Scripture are sufficient to keep us on track and making progress in holiness and righteous living.

However, sometimes christians can be deceived or become hard hearted and engage in persistent and sinful behaviour. Often informal procedures such as encouragement and exhortation are sufficient to put a fellow believer back on the right track.

This policy describes a process of discipline that New Life Christian Fellowship may follow where a member engages in repeated and difficult behaviour. The aim of the process is always the retortion of the offender to fellowship with the Lord and with the Body of believers.

Scope Of This Policy

There are three types of behaviour which the church must address when it occurs:

1. Divisive Behaviour

Church leaders must be vigilant about correcting those who would seek to cause any division within the church for which Jesus died. This is so serious, the Apostle Paul warned in Romans 16:17-18, “I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching

you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery, they deceive the minds of naive people."

2. Immoral Behaviour

The Bible compares unchecked immoral behaviour to yeast that works itself through "the whole batch of dough" (1 Co. 5:6). Persistent immoral behaviour on the part of a church member must be corrected because it hurts the church member involved in the sin, but also because it creates a lax moral environment within the church.

3. Teaching Against Church Doctrine

When someone persistently teaches doctrine that is in direct opposition to the position of New Life Christian Fellowship and seeks to rally people to adopt such a position, that behaviour must be confronted and corrected.

Procedure

The church discipline process at New Life Christian Fellowship is based on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15-17: "If a brother or sister sins, go and point out the fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

If at any stage, the brother or sister recognises their sin and repents of it, then the process stops.

1. Initially the person's Cell Group Leader and a member of the Leadership Team will talk to the person about their behaviour, explain to them why it is being addressed and ask them to change their behaviour.

2. If the person remains unmoved and their behaviour continues to represent a threat to the life and well-being of the church, the people involved in Step 1, together with the Pastor, will meet with the person. Again, they will explain why their behaviour is being addressed, and ask them to change.

3. If the person still refuses to change their behaviour, then the Leadership Team will be formally asked to make a determination on the matter. The Leadership Team may take action including, but not limited to, any of the following:

- termination of the person’s membership
- removal from any positions of leadership or ministry
- removal from attendance at cell group
- removal from attendance at worship or other gatherings of the church.

The Leadership Team will notify the person of their decision as soon as is practicable. The membership of New Life will also be notified of the actions taken.

The Leadership Team shall set a period after which the disciplinary action will be reviewed and they will determine a restoration process by which the person may be re-admitted to membership and participation in the life of the church.

Revisions and Changes

Adopted by Leadership Team: 27/01/2023

June 2024 Modified to include Leadership Team in Procedure Step 1

July 2026. Reviewed