

The Lord's Churches.

Matthew 16:18 *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

Jesus said the church is His, Jesus said He will build it into a Superstructure, and Jesus promised that even Satan cannot shut it down. The word “gates” here I believe this means authority and power. Hell is the place of Satan, his angels, and all the lost souls that died without Jesus Christ in their hearts, without trusting Him as their Saviour. Only God can close a churches doors and God has many reasons for doing just that, maybe it run its course and served it purpose that God ordained. Or maybe she fell away from Truth and Jesus removed the Candlestick, Jesus warned the church at Ephesus in **Revelation 2:4 – 5** *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. (5) Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”* We must be careful as church members as to not have the candlestick removed, we as members must do our part.

There is nothing more important on this earth than the Lord's churches of Truth. The church is the Pillar and ground of Truth, **1 Timothy 3:15** *“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* And every single member should know how to behave themselves as being in the Lord's local church. It must remain as a shining light on a hill, it must remain the Pillar and Ground of Truth. If the church becomes loose and lax then the truth will fade, and Jesus will remove the candlestick as He promised the church at Ephesus. The church must be the seminary of biblical studies for the bold teachings of the membership, therefore bold teachings and bold steps must be taken. No matter who is pleased or displeased, Gods Holy Truths are essential, both for teaching and for learning.

It is the church that has been given the “authority” to carry the gospel and the truth to the world. It is the church that has the authority to baptize believers and to be held up by the power of Jesus Christ her Head. The “Word of God” has been placed in her hands, not to be ignored, not to be made light of, but to make sure God's truths are always our beam of light to a Satanic controlled

world. It is the Local churches that has been not only authorized but also empowered by the Holy Spirit to work “till Jesus comes”. It is Jesus’s church, and it is kept by His power, and no matter how much people may revile us and hate us, the world reviled and hated Him more.

As Pastor it is my job to make sure everything is do in decency and in order, **1 Corinthians 14:40** “*Let all things be done decently and in order.*” This means, let all things be done in an “appropriate manner” as the worship of God is to be. If I, as Pastor fails, then the church will fail to rightly serve God. It will fail to properly glorify our Saviour and Her Head in Jesus The Christ. As Pastor I must make hard decisions to make sure all things are proper in the Lord’s church, I, your Pastor am responsible.

Now let us study God’s word about the church.

A. The Church Services.

1. God said, **1 Corinthians 14:40** “*Let all things be done decently and in order.*” – This means in Honesty and in official dignity as the scripture and the Lord directs.
 - a. Every phase of the church, teaching, believing, attendance, and standing should be done honestly or scripturally, and in official dignity or being quality worthy of their call and being worthy and honorable of her work for the Lord.
 - b. A church must have standards, she must have strong doctrine, all doctrine must be in accordance with the scriptures, no matter what, no matter who likes it or doesn’t like it, only the Lord is to be satisfied.
2. The Membership
 - a. God said the membership are NOT to forsake the assembly. **Hebrews 10:25** “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*” – we need to note here, that the emphasis here is not on what a believer gets from the assembly, but rather on what the member can contribute to the assembly.
 - b. Church is not about us, it’s not about our belief, our thoughts, our cares, our families, or whether or not you get insulted. It is about how the membership can work together in unity to be the pillar and ground of truth. Whether or not we can fulfill our commanded duty to the Lord without forsaking the Lord’s church.

- c. For each member to understand that our attendance is not optional but ordered without forsaking.
 - d. Because our faithfulness in church attendance encourages others and provokes them attend church and do good works for the Lord's church. We are the light of Truth, not only in the world but also in the local church. How bright is your light?
3. The church is our Meeting place with the Lord.
- a. **Matthew 18:20** *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* – Christ started the church for our fellowship with God the Father, through Him, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our fellowship with the Lord is a must for our spiritual good.
 - b. For the membership there must be fellowship, forsaking church fellowship is also *"the forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,"* it is forsaking the Unity of the church. **Ephesians 4:12 - 16** *"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (14) That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (16) From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*
 - c. If you fail to attend church you fail the Lord's command, you fail the church, and you fail to have right fellowship with God.
 - d. But Jesus promised, where just a few meets, He is also there with us. *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name"* Numbers of people are not important, Jesus does not count numbers.
 - e. Numbers is not important; the presence and power of Jesus Christ is. **1 Corinthians 5:4** *"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,"*

4. The meaning of the word “church” itself demands attendance.
 - a. The Greek word for church is “Ekklesia” means - a calling out – for the purpose of a meeting into a public place as an assembly. **Hebrews 2:12** “*Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church (congregation) will I sing praise unto thee.*”
 - b. The very word means that we faithfully come together to sing, pray, and preach, praising our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we do not we fail the Lord in His Assembly.

B. The proper Government of the Local assembly.

1. Jesus said in His commission to the church, **Matthew 28:18** “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*”
Therefore, the power that be of God to the churches were given to the entire church as a unified body.
 - a. Authority for churches are given from church to church by the mother churches authoritative power.
 - b. The churches power is shown in their authority to “appoint” - **Acts 1:23 - 26** “*And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. (24) And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, (25) That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. (26) And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*” – the men of the church has a responsibility to 1. Discuss, 2. Nominate or to make a motion, 3. Vote. It is a duty not an option for the church to fully function in an orderly matter.
 - c. Never forget the power the church has; it was given by Christ. His will is shown through the discussion.
2. They prayed, **Acts 1:24** “And they prayed” this gives them their request to God for a right decision.
3. They cast their lots. V. 26 “*And they gave forth their lots;*” Who cast their lots, V. 15 “And in those days Peter stood up in the **midst of the disciples**, and said, (the number

of names together **were about an hundred and twenty.**)” it is assumed that the whole church cast their votes.

4. The Mission of the church.

a. Matthew 28:18 - 20 "*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.** (19) **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:** (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*" – to the world means every living soul. **Mark 16:15** "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*"

b. This is not the churches option; it is the Lord’s command. Not supporting mission work is a violation of the scriptures. There is only one way for the churches to collectively get the gospel to the world and teach the world and baptize new saved souls, through missions working under the authority of a home church.

C. The Discipline of the church.

1. Church discipline is not an option but a command.

aa. As human children we are brought-up with discipline.

bb. If we are children of God, then we are disciplined by God.

cc. If we are church members then sometimes members are disciplined by the church.

dd. Discipline is a corrective tool by parents, God, and the church. It is not hate, but love. It is to correct those who do not walk correctly and refuse warnings to do so.

People (church members) are like children, they hate to be disciplined, but God commands the church to do so.

2. There are three ways of church discipline. We are going to look at all three to show the love in it. To show the extent of it, and to show how it is used to lovingly correct a church member.

3. First is Formative discipline.

aa. By formative we mean the lightest form. It is like a light corrective form; an example is talking to someone.

bb. One way is through the teaching of the word.

cc. Another way is to personally try to be like a mentor and guide them in the right way.

4. The second is corrective. By this we mean something harmful or undesirable to gain their attention.

aa. God said in **Galatians 6:1** *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”*

bb. This means if a church member or another Christian falls into sin. It could be a “surprise” through temptation, getting caught unaware. It could be just not seeing their sin as a sin. This is mostly the Pastors job but could be handled by another church member. Sometimes women are better with women to talk about women matters, but always under the authority of the Pastor. **Titus 2:3 - 5** *“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; (4) That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, (5) To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”* – however it is still the Pastor that oversees it, because he is the overseer of the whole church.

cc. Then they are brought to the church. **Matthew 18:15 - 17** *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (16) But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. (17) And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”* This is not a must, but it is best if this route is taken. Maybe if they neglect the Pastor then it is good to take them before the church and more members will try. Every possible action should be tried before expulsion.

5. The third is expulsion. This is exclusion from their membership. This is the last step and most harsh form of discipline. It is a last resort.

aa. This is for the good of the excluded and the good of the church.

bb. When the Christian continues to defile the Lord, to defile the pastor, and to defile the church body, then it is time to turn them loose. If they want to play with Satan then so be it. God said, **1 Corinthians 5:5** *“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.”*

Even God reaches a point of letting them go their own way. **Romans 1:22 - 24**

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, (23) And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. (24) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:”

cc. The Lord said to the churches, **1 Corinthians 5:8 - 11** *“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. (9) I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: (10) 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. (11) 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.”*

D. How to restore an excluded member.

1. **2 Corinthians 2:5 - 8** *“But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. (6) Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. (7) So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. (8) Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.”*
2. Remember, the excluded member has been “Purged out” 1 Cor. 5:7 meaning they have been “cleansed thoroughly out” also in verse 13 *“But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”* They have been removed from active membership. Therefore, they must be added back into an active role. *“put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”* The word wicked

means – A mischievous person, or badly behaved person – it is not calling a Christian wicked like Satan and lost people are wicked, but that they are disobedient to the Lord.

3. The church simply cannot be in unity with a member that will not obey the Lord or hear the Pastor and church. A church cannot observe the Lord's Supper if the church is not in unity. **1 Corinthians 11:18 - 20** *“For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. (19) For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. (20) When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.”*
4. The church is not in unity with the Lord if she is not doing her responsible duty, and this will fall back on the Pastor.
5. **Matthew 18:21 - 22** *“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? (22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”*