

MEDORA COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

CHURCH DISCIPLINE POLICY

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Church Discipline Policy

Introduction

Christ recognized that offenses in the Church would occur (Luke 17:1). Further, because we are one body (Romans 12:5) the sin of one affects all (I Corinthians 6:15). Achan in the Old Testament (Joshua 7) and the immorality of a Corinthian believer are examples of this principle (I Corinthians 5:2). Thus, church discipline is required (I Corinthians 5:12; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15) with repentance, forgiveness, and restoration (Galatians 6:1) being the desired results.

Discipline also acts as a warning to the congregation (Joshua 7; Acts 5:11). If discipline is ignored, the Church will be polluted; but if it is practiced, it will be purified. Additionally, warring brethren may be reconciled.

The Medora Community Bible Church Constitution reads as follows: “The discipline of the church members shall be entrusted entirely to the Board and shall be exercised in accordance with the plain teaching of the New Testament. It shall be the responsibility of the Board to order a review of the church membership whenever they deem it necessary. At this time, members, who seem to manifest inconsistent living or flagrant sin in their lives, a wrong attitude toward the doctrine and work of the church, or failure to attend church or communicate with the church for a period of three months shall be evaluated. The Board may, after honest evaluation, decide to drop them from the membership.

In the light of unbiased testimony of those involved when charges are laid against any attendee of the church, the Elders shall have the power to conduct a hearing and render a verdict regarding those charges. When a member is found guilty of open sin (I Corinthians 5:13), or is causing division (Romans 16:17), such a member may be counseled by the Pastor and/or the Elders. If said person is not willing to repent and forsake that sin, then if by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the full Board, such a person is found guilty, then he/she shall be dropped from the membership without the church voting at a regular business meeting. The procedure laid down in Matthew 18:15-17 shall be followed in all personal

disputes and grievances between members. Principle: I Corinthians 5:3-13 teaches judgment by mature Christians with exclusion from the church as the most severe form of punishment. Matthew 18:15-17 gives the principles to be applied in any assembly of God's people. Three instances of discipline are taught: (a) the church leaders act as a reconciliatory body between believers (Matthew 18:15-17); (b) the church leaders confront believers living in open and gross sin (I Corinthians 5:3-13); (c) the church leaders deal with open disagreement with the Word of God in areas covered by the doctrinal statement and scriptures.

The Proper Procedure for Discipline

1. The desired objective should be Biblical rightness, repentance, and reconciliation for the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The one initiating the matter should first go to the one(s) accused to verify the facts of the matter. This should be done only with those currently involved and needs to be done face to face if at all possible.
3. If the matter is not rightly resolved and it needs the Elders' attention, the charge must be made, then the Elders shall investigate and document the facts of the matter.
4. The Elders shall attempt to resolve the matter using Matthew 18:15-17 as the guideline.
5. If the matter is still not resolved, the Elders will initiate and enforce discipline where and when applicable for the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. A permanent record shall be kept in the church office of all correspondence and related records of each disciplinary case. These records shall be secured and are only accessible by the Senior Pastor and Chairman of the Board.

The Requirements to Submit an Accusation:

1. Charges may be in writing with the signature of the accuser and, if possible, at least one other witness. Charges also may be given orally before the Elders. The Elders receiving the charges must make and preserve an official written record of such testimony.
2. The charge must set forth the alleged offense, and be accompanied by the specification of facts relied upon to sustain the charge.

3. Each specification shall declare, as far as possible, the time, place, and circumstances, and shall be accompanied by the names of the witnesses to be called for its support.
4. A charge shall not allege more than one offense. However, several charges against the same person, with the specifications under each charge, may be presented at the same time. If the Elders deem it wise, several charges may be considered at the same time. When several charges are tried at the same time, a vote on each charge must be separately taken.
5. At the first meeting of the Elders to consider charges, nothing more than the presentation of the charges and specifications shall be undertaken. At this time, a copy of the charges and the specifications, together with the names of all the witnesses then known to support each specification, shall be furnished to the accused.
6. Every effort shall be made to procure all witnesses requested by both the plaintiff and defendant deemed necessary to establish the evidence necessary for a fair hearing and a just decision.
7. If an accused person refuses to respond to a summons to appear on his own behalf, having been given due consideration for possible extenuating circumstances, the Elders shall proceed to trial and judgment in his absence.

The Extent of Discipline

The authority of Medora Community Bible Church (MCBC) is limited by MCBC membership and those who consider MCBC their home church as demonstrated by regular attendance. MCBC can only exercise its discipline within its bounds.

The extent of DISCIPLINE upon A PERSON FOUND GUILTY is outlined in the following actions, but not limited to:

1. Suspension from any position that the disciplined person may hold in MCBC.
2. The suspension of fellowship, attendance, probation, or revocation of membership with MCBC.
3. Full restoration of the offender shall be considered after satisfactory repentance and restitution.
4. The withdrawal of the MCBC endorsement of ministerial credentials and pay, where such exist.
5. The publicizing to MCBC constituency, as the Elders may deem necessary and prudent, of the results of any and all disciplinary action taken. A churchwide meeting may be held in order to inform the church of the church discipline being administered.

The Response of the Accused Individual

1. The accused shall appear (or if unable, may appear by counsel) at the meeting in response to the summons so that the process may begin.
2. The accused or his counsel may file objections at this time to the Elders of the church as to the sufficiency and/or accuracy of the charges and specifications, authority, or any other objection affecting the order or regularity of the proceeding.
3. The parties shall be heard upon the objections being filed.
4. The Elders conducting hearings shall determine the validity of objections filed.
5. The Elders conducting the hearings may dismiss the case, or permit, in the furtherance of justice, amendments to the specifications, charges, or suspensions.

General Considerations

1. Process against an alleged offender may not be pursued unless one or more witnesses undertake to sustain the alleged charges.
2. The Elders may act as plaintiff and/or instigate investigation and bring charges on their own initiative. When accusations are brought and deemed serious, the person will be suspended from any position until the Elders deem it resolved.
3. No prosecution shall be begun in the case of alleged personal injury when the injured party is the accuser, unless the means of reconciliation have been tried which are required in Matthew 18:15-17.
4. Great care should be taken in receiving accusations from any person who is known to harbor a malignant spirit toward the accused, who is not of good character, or who is himself under suspicion of offense, censure, or process; or who may have personal ends in view in the conviction of the accused, or who is known to be rash or highly imprudent.
5. A person making allegations of offenses against another must be warned that if his accusations are not sustained, he himself is liable to censure as a slanderer of the brethren in proportion to the malignancy or rashness which may appear in the process.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO RESTORE FELLOWSHIP WITH MEDORA COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

1. Admission of the sin, and acknowledgement that the sin was against God (Psalm 51:4).
2. Offensive sin with public knowledge needs a public confession (Matthew 18:17).
3. The sin or sins must be terminated immediately. “She said, ‘No man, Lord.’ And Jesus said unto her, ‘Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more’” John 8:11.
4. Accountability with leadership be established and maintained.
5. Faithful attendance at MCBC services.

When the above steps have been complied with, and a space of time has revealed that full restoration has taken place, then the “under church discipline” status will be removed.

I hereby acknowledge that I understand the discipline procedure and I am under church discipline for my sin, and I am willing to respond to pastoral leadership for restoration.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____

[1] Medora Community Bible Church Constitution, Page 5, Article III, Section 4.