

RESTORATION AND RECONCILIATION

Henderson Hills Baptist Church

Proposal for the Elder Council

I. THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE:

- A. The *restoration* and *reconciliation* of a fallen Christian. Discipline is not *punishment*.
- B. The protection of the flock from the affects of the sin of the fallen Christian:
 - 1 Cor. 5:2, 6-7
 - Gal. 2:11-14
 - 1 Tim. 5:20
 - Heb. 12:15
- C. The protection of the purity of the church and the honor of Christ:
 - Rom. 2:24
 - 1 Cor. 5:1-2, 6:6
 - Eph. 3:10, 4:1-4, 5:27
 - 2 Pet. 3:14

II. DEFINITION OF RESTORATION AND RECONCILIATION:

- A. *Restoration* refers to a process entered into between the elder council and/or their representatives, and Christians who have lost their fellowship or position of service with a church. In this process, the fallen Christian is guided through a series of corrective steps, which are designed to *restore* the sinning Christian to fellowship and service.
- B. *Reconciliation* is the process by which Christians who have been restored by the elder council *reconciles* their offense to those offended and hurt, their families, other Christians within the church, and with God.

III. SINS REQUIRING RESTORATION AND RECONCILIATION:

- A. Sins that cannot be resolved personally:
 - Matt. 5:23-24, 18:15-20
- B. Divisiveness:
 - Rom. 16:17
 - Titus 3:10
- C. Incest:
 - 1 Cor. 5:1-5
- D. Unruliness/refusal to work:
 - 2 Thess. 3:6-10
- E. Disobedience:
 - 2 Thess. 3:14-15
- F. Blasphemy:
 - 1 Tim. 1:20
- G. Teaching heretical doctrine:
 - 2 John 9-11
- H. Root sins of the flesh:
 - 1 Cor. 6:9-10
 - Gal. 5:19-21

IV. THE PROCESS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE:

- A. Discover the facts, obtaining more than one witness.
 - 1 Tim. 5:19
- B. Confrontation:
 1. Personal offense, with no congregational consequence, resolved on a one to one basis. The offended person takes the initiative to go to the offender. If no resolution, then he/she should take two or three others:
 - Matt. 5:23-24, 18:15-16, 19-20
 - 1 Thess. 5:12
 - 2 Tim. 4:2
 - Titus 1:13, 2:15, 3:10
 - James 5:19-20
 2. Personal offense, with congregational consequence, or personal offense without resolution, relies on Elder Council intervention. This can be accomplished with a sub-team of 2-3 elders and/or their representatives:
 - a) Require the resignation of the elder, deacon, staff member, or church leader.
 - b) Consider “sabbatical” compensation.
 - c) Inform the church, with discretion:
 - Matt. 18:17
 - 1 Tim. 5:17-20
 - Eph. 5:11-12
- C. Restoration:
 1. Restoration cannot begin without full disclosure and repentance.
 - a) Refusal of repentance results in permanent dismissal/exclusion.
 - Matt. 18:17
 - 1 Cor 5:11-13
 - 2 Thess. 3:14-15
 2. With true repentance, restoration begins.
 - a) Restoration begins with a spirit of forgiveness, comfort, love, and gentleness:
 - 2 Cor. 2:7-8, 7:8-11
 - Gal. 6:1
 - James 5:19-20
 - b) Evidence of true repentance:
 - Acknowledge sin: 1 John 1:5-2:2
 - Be sorrowful: 2 Cor. 7:8-11
 - Seek restitution: Luke 19:1-10, Philem. 18-19
 - Demonstrate fruits of repentance: Matt. 3:7-8, Luke 3:8-14
 - c) With true repentance, forgiveness by the church ensues:
 - Matt. 18:21-35
 3. A restoration team provides accountability and timely reports to the Elder Council.
 - a) It is understood that a period of time will ensue before restoration of *trust*, *fellowship*, *opportunity for service*, *leadership responsibilities*, and recommendation for *church transfer* can take place.
 - b) It is understood that both Old Testament and New Testament men of God fell to sin:
 - Adam: rebellion, disobedience
 - Abraham: Faith failure, lying
 - Moses: Anger, murder, avoiding punishment, disobedience
 - David: Adultery, parental failure
 - John Mark: Unfaithfulness to his ministry
 - Peter: Unfaithfulness, impetuosity
 - Paul: Anger, vengefulness (related to John Mark)

- c) It is understood that in spite of repentance and forgiveness, the law of the harvest prevails:
 - Gal. 6:7
- d) The restoration team is comprised of 2-3 elders, deacons, or representatives of the elders who will meet with the one seeking restoration as often as necessary to accomplish full and complete restoration. This team is directly accountable to the Elder Council.
- e) It is understood that if the offense occurred in another church, repentance and restoration must involve that church.
- f) It is understood that repentance, restoration and reconciliation must involve all offended parties, including those directly subjected to the offense, all families directly or indirectly involved, the congregation, and God.
- g) The restoration team will decide when the process is complete and make a recommendation to the Elder Council. The Elder Council will in turn make a recommendation to the church regarding the restoration of the individual.

V. References:

1. Henderson Hills Baptist Church previously established policies on Restoration.
2. "If a Brother or Sister Falls", from Rebuilding Your Broken World, author: Gordon MacDonald, publisher: Thomas Nelson.
3. "Guidelines for Church Discipline", Gateway Cathedral, Staten Island, New York; from Guide to Church Discipline, author: J. Laney, publisher: Bethany House Publishers.
4. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, chapter 46, "The Power of the Church", pp. 894-900, author: Wayne Grudem, publisher: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

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