

rebuke me. That is fearful. We don't like to be told we are doing something wrong. Most often rebuke is all that is needed to turn a brother or sister around. The tenderhearted soul will turn. Perhaps my repentance will only be for a while. If so, then I need my brethren to rebuke me again and turn me around again. If rebuke does not solve the problem it is the duty and responsibility of my brethren (after warning me and I refuse to follow God's word) to punish me.

How may the church punish the rebellious? By withdrawing from me. This means cutting off social association from the person. This doesn't mean we never talk to them. Yet when we do we should talk to them about their sin. *What about when a family member is withdrawn from?* There are responsibilities we have to one another as family members which do not end when withdrawal occurs. Thus withdrawal may involve something different for the family of an unfaithful member.

Withdrawal means that we turn away from a rebellious member and view them as one who is not one of us. *Why does the Lord command this of us?*— Out of love for us and a desire to save our souls. Withdrawal creates a void in the life of a Christian. Before withdrawal a person knows (even if they may be negligent) that he or she may turn to brethren and feel some comfort and reassurance. When a person is unwilling to repent and then

withdrawn from, the only ones they can turn to are those in the world. This makes the person realize that their brethren (the ones who love them enough to take a stand) will not receive them with open arms while they continue in sin. If this is not done souls are lost! This is God's plan for salvation. It is God's way of snatching souls from the fire. It must be done if we are to be sound, loving, and true to Scripture.

We should note that there are different circumstances. Different people must be dealt with in different ways. It ultimately is the judgment of the eldership to determine who requires punishment and who needs patience and further teaching. I don't envy this responsibility.

These four things are not the only ways that we show our love, support and help to our brethren but they are important and essential ways that we do. May the Lord help us to always carry out each of these in a way which pleases him and yields an eternally beneficial result.

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Faithful Sayings

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Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Pat Goguen
Neil Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Fred Perez
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

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How Does the Church Show Love, Support, and Care?

Think for a moment help us overcome temptations—in order to help us life: a person becomes through trials—in order to a Christian. That means encourage us toward maturity—in order to help us they are freed from sin, they grow in love, knowledge, are separated from the strength, self-control and world and they are set apart good works. In a sound congregation are still temptations. There of God's people we find are still trials. The person source of support, encouragement and help. *How will He or she must still grow in this support, encouragement and help show itself?* self-control and good Consider four ways: works.

I. Continual preaching, teaching, and study of God's word. [see 2 Tim. 4:2; 2:2; Eph. 4:16] What binds a church together must be common faith. A church is a group of people who have turned to Christ because of a change that

Question: —Why has God made the Christian faith something that involves Christians working together with other Christians in a local church?
Answer: — For us! He has made it this way in order to

took place in their thinking. It wasn't just a feeling (or at least shouldn't have been) although there are emotions and feelings that come from it. It was not purely knowledge, although there are things that must be learned. It is the conviction that...

— Jesus Christ is now master of our lives.
 — Salvation from sins is found only in Him.
 — It is the duty of those seeking salvation to give themselves completely to His guidance through His word.

God's people must be the kind of people who love hearing, studying and meditating on the things of God. They don't see things that have to do with Scripture as a "chore" or a burden but a privilege because it involves talking about the most precious thing in all the world—the word of God!

II. Displays of compassion and concern. [see Rom. 12:10; 12:15; Phil. 2:4] This may involve expressing concern when a member is away. Or noticing when a brother or sister is downcast. It means that we show concern when a member faces hardship or loss. Then, it means offering help when they are in need (materially or spiritually). We also can show compassion by encouraging one another toward more active involvement in the local church. One of the most effective ways that an eldership can aid in the faithfulness of brethren is to get them involved by assigning various tasks. It matters little what the task may be.

God's people just need to be working to feel a bond to a church.

Think about it for a moment – *How do people fall away?* Sometimes it begins right after their obedience to the gospel. They fail to get involved. Before long they lose interest. This leaves them open to temptation. In no time they are drawn into sin. *Can the church help them?* They don't feel a part of the church! They face a trial and find no help in the Lord's church. They look to the world and find the world offers lots of help. It doesn't matter that worldly help is fleeting, unreliable and even condemning, they go where they get what they need.

Sometimes weak brethren in this condition desperately need help yet don't get it because they don't ask for it! They drop off in their attendance. In doing so they keep themselves from what could help them.

III. Rebuke. [see Luke 17:3; Gal. 6:1; Titus 2:15] When a brother or sister begins to err it is the responsibility of those to whom they have joined themselves, to point that out to them. This is an act of love. It is an essential element of salvation. If it is neglected souls are lost. It is hard. It takes courage. But it must be done.

We don't just rebuke "big sins" (a notion which is totally unscriptural). If we wait until sin is dramatic and open to talk to someone about it we may find it is too late.

This isn't just the job of a preacher or an elder it is the responsibility of all of us. If it isn't done souls will be lost.

IV. Withdrawal. [see Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-6; 2 Thess. 3:14-15] God in His wisdom has given us both positive and negative motivations for faithfulness. One good brother where I preached years ago developed an illustration of this that I think is very appropriate. A four-wheel drive vehicle has front tires that pull a vehicle along. This could be thought of as a positive motivation. The rear tires of the vehicle push it. This could be viewed as a negative motivation. God motivates us like a four-wheel drive. God has loved us and He wants to save us. Yet God will punish the sinner, He is angry with sin, those outside of Christ are His enemies. We must fear the thought of His eternal wrath.

In the church, God calls on us to use positive and negative motivation. We are accustomed to this in the home. We teach our children and love our children but when disobedience occurs we owe it to our children to punish their disobedience. That gives them something to fear that helps them control themselves.

One problem with our world today is we foolishly think that men and women can guide themselves purely by positive motivations. *Why shouldn't I steal my neighbor's car?* Or, *Why shouldn't I beat my wife?* Further, *Why shouldn't I lie to my*

boss? Or *Why shouldn't I kill someone who is my enemy?* Our world says...

— "If a person's needs are satisfied he or she won't feel the need to steal!" Or,
 — "If men are not discriminated against and given so much stress they will not abuse their mates!"

— "If workers feel that their boss understands them they won't feel like they need to lie" Or,
 — "If my rights are protected I won't have enemies and thus feel compelled to kill."

Is this reasoning valid? We live in the richest country in the history of the world. Even the poor among us are kings compared to times past and people of the past. Not only are our material needs met, but also our recreational and entertainment needs are provided for amply. *Why does robbery still go on?* We have the most pleasant work environments imaginable and yet there is still abuse and dishonesty. We have more rights, and laws to protect those rights than any people in history. *Why does there continue to be murder, and violence?* If positive motivation was enough we would live in paradise. There simply needs to be things for us to fear in order to keep our behavior within bounds.

In the church the same thing is true. I ought to do what is right out of love, devotion, and appreciation for what God has done. Yet when that isn't enough it is the duty of my brethren to warn me and