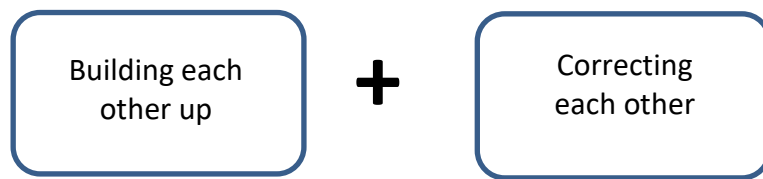


Home groups together: biblical, loving church discipline

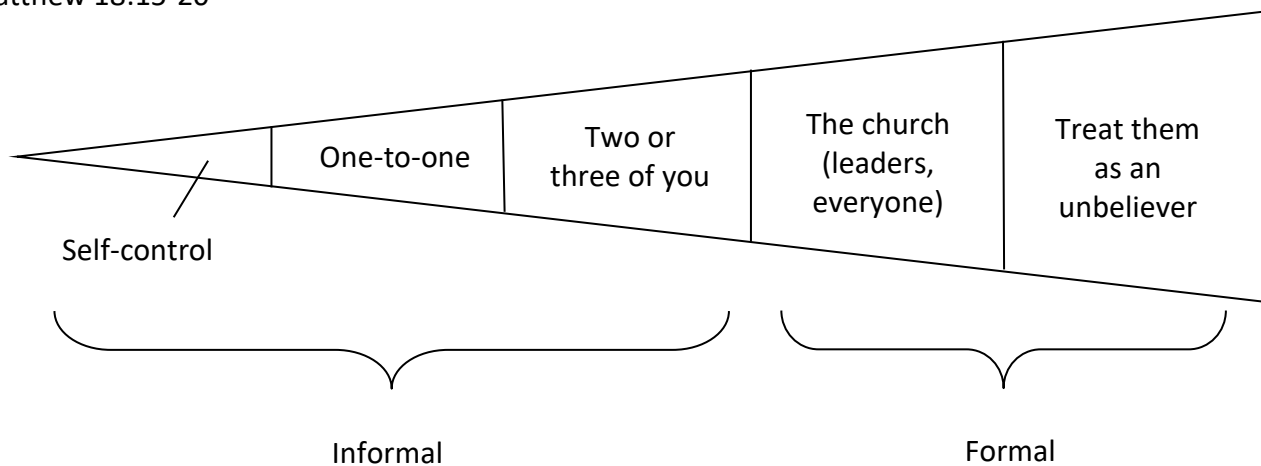
Spiritual health

A healthy church needs both



Jesus' four steps

Matthew 18:15-20



Forgiveness and receiving someone back (Matthew 18:21-35)

Bible study: look at 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 around tables.

- Look at v2. What is the church family to do?
- How is v5 saying the same thing?
- What is the loving aim in v5?
- What's the danger of not doing this? Look at v6.
- "Yeast" stands for sin. What kind of church should we be (v8)?
- What do you find encouraging about Paul's teaching? What do you find challenging?

The need for speed

Divisiveness (Titus 3:10-11)

When leaders sin (1 Timothy 5:17-21)

This is Anglican

The introduction to the Book of Common Prayer communion service (in up-to-date English): *if a minister is persuaded that anyone who comes for communion ought not to receive it because of some open unrepentant sin, they shall explain the situation to the diocesan bishop, and then follow their instructions. If the situation is more pressing and would cause a real scandal in the church, the minister can withhold communion immediately, as long as they then explain the situation to the bishop within seven days, and then follow their instructions. Before giving instructions, the bishop will offer the person in question a chance to talk about it.*

→ at step four, we involve the bishop of Sheffield and the bishop of Ebbsfleet

Some real life examples

(1) One day Joe thought he saw the vicar flirt with a woman he wasn't married to in a shop. He started rumours the vicar was having an affair and needed prayer. When challenged, Joe couldn't produce another witness, nor would he stop gossiping. The church wardens quietly looked into it and found nothing. They asked Joe to stop making accusations at least four times, but he refused. After 6-8 weeks of conversations, Joe would not relent, and in fact embellished his story. When friends started backing away from him he turned to less mature members of the church searching for supporters. The church leaders were very aware that Joe's comments arose frequently in conversations at church, that the issue was taking up a lot of their time, and that it was affecting some church members' ability to listen to sermons.

What would you do next, for Joe's sake and the church's?

(2) Jill was raised by a single mum who had various partners, some of whom treated her and Jill abusively. Longing for a steady male figure, Jill later started sleeping around. She also began self-harming. Later, she became a Christian at a church which didn't say much about sin or holiness, and she soon fell back into old patterns. A couple of years later she became involved in a more healthy church. She joined a female small group and, over time, opened up to them about her ongoing behaviour. With a group member, she opened up to one of the church leaders. Jill wasn't defensive, she agreed to start meeting 1-1 with the women's worker, and she seemed to long for a different future.

How can the church help Jill? Is this a church discipline issue?

Recommended reading

Church Discipline, by Jonathan Leeman (Crossway, 2012)