

6. Do Christian churches have any obligation to communicate with the home churches of persons who are away from home but need discipline? in the case of a person who attends a church away from his home church on a long-term temporary basis and is involved in an offense that requires church discipline, do the elders of the away church have any responsibility to discipline such a person? Do they have any responsibility to inform the elders of the person's home church of the offense and the details surrounding it? Or do the elders of the away church have a responsibility only to attempt to urge or persuade the offender to contact or return to his home church to confess the matter to his elders for their judgment? Are the elders of the away church then absolved of their responsibility, if the offender refuses or simply neglects to contact his home church?

F. The Executors of Discipline

Who is to exercise and execute discipline? in cases of extreme discipline, who is to make the judgment? Who is to execute it?

1. In a preliminary sense, the members of the church are responsible to follow the course of procedure prescribed in Matthew 18, so that possible cases of judicial discipline can, by God's grace, be resolved and turned to good use before they reach the stage of actual discipline. in such cases, the admonition of James 5:19-20 applies:

"My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins."

2. It would appear that, both by way of God's ordination of the pattern of local church government, and by way of the need for the maintenance of peace and good order in the church by means of the government that God has ordained, the elders of the church are charged with exercising and executing church discipline. This would appear to include pastors, who are teaching as well as ruling elders.
3. Nevertheless, it would appear that, in a cooperative and corroboratory sense, all of the members of the church are responsible to exercise and execute lawful discipline, both by cooperating with their elders by way of assistance in ascertaining the truth or falsity of accusations, and in terms of support of their elders' decisions and Judgments, once those decisions have been made and those Judgments executed.