



"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."
- Romans 12:5

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Update on Paul Petry - 12-05-07

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<p>Pastor Jamie Munson</p>  <p>Joined: Nov 29, 2007 Posts: 2</p>	<p>Post subject: Update on Paul Petry - 12-05-07 Posted: Dec 05, 2007 - 09:37 PM</p> <p>Update on Paul Petry 12/5/07</p> <p>Paul Petry was terminated from employment with Mars Hill Church on September 30, 2007, and placed on elder suspension pending a full investigation by the elders to determine Paul's fitness to remain as a non-staff elder. The elders have followed the process laid out in both Scripture and our bylaws regarding the investigation and discipline of an elder. Throughout the investigation and examination of Paul, and following the final ruling of the elders, Paul has contended his innocence and not accepted the elders' call to repentance. The full council of twenty-three elders unanimously voted (on October 15) that he was not qualified to be an elder according to the biblical requirements (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:15). They subsequently voted to remove him from the office of elder at Mars Hill by a vote of twenty-one to two.</p> <p>A reconciliation team was formed to care for Paul and his family, and to walk them through the process of repentance and restoration. Paul has denied multiple requests to meet with the reconciliation team and to this day remains unwilling to meet. Rather than working towards restoration, Paul and his family have submitted a resignation of their membership from Mars Hill.</p> <p>Although Paul's request to remove his membership has been accepted by the elders, Paul remains unrepentant, and therefore we are accepting his resignation as a member under church discipline. The elders of Mars Hill have approved the following motion with a unanimous vote of twenty-seven to zero. As a result, we must be faithful to the teaching of Scripture on how to treat unrepentant believers.</p> <p>Motion - The elders of Mars Hill have repeatedly pursued reconciliation and restoration of Paul Petry. This pursuit of reconciliation includes both individual attempts at personal reconciliation made by some elders individually, and repeated efforts by a smaller team of elders appointed on behalf of all of the elders to seek reconciliation between Paul Petry and all of the elders. Paul has refused these efforts to meet with the elders and continues to demonstrate a lack of repentance for his attitude and actions that led to his removal from eldership. At this time I am voting to accept Paul's resignation from membership as a member under church discipline. Furthermore I agree to instruct and warn our church body of how to treat an unrepentant believer according to our Church Discipline procedures with the hope of repentance and reconciliation.</p> <p>The elders have written a comprehensive document that teaches biblically and practically how to handle cases of church discipline, which has a two-fold goal of either reconciliation or protection of the church, depending on the humility and repentance of the individual under discipline. The document can be found on the members' site in the "From Your Elders" forum. We encourage you to read it to more fully understand church discipline and to biblically align with God's plan for calling an unrepentant believer back to the flock of God (in crafting this document, we sought outside theological counsel from Doctor Gerry Breshears, the chairman of the Division of Biblical and Theological Studies at Western Seminary). While the treatment of an unrepentant believer may seem harsh, it is actually motivated out of love and care for the individual and the rest of the church.</p> <p>We continue to remain grieved for Paul and his family and have been patient and thorough in our pursuit of him, waiting to inform the members of any finality in hopes of bringing about restoration and repentance. No progress has been made because of Paul's unwillingness to meet with the elders, and it has reached a point that we must publicly instruct and warn the church according to biblical guidelines. These guidelines are laid out below in summary, and in more detail within the church discipline document. We would discourage anyone at Mars Hill from continuing to look to Paul for spiritual leadership, counsel, instruction, or oversight in any form, formal or informal. In addition, we strongly encourage you to soberly assess your interactions with other disgruntled members as to whether they are causing further division of the church or unity in Jesus.</p> <p>We realize that this is an extremely difficult message for those of you that are personally close to Paul and his family, as many have benefited from his care and friendship. Likewise the elders are also grieving from the actions and attitudes of a man we too considered a close friend; we are praying for his repentance so that we can reconcile. We care for you and desire to shepherd you through these circumstances for the good of the church and your well being. If you need help or have questions, please reach out to an elder at your campus or your Community Group leader.</p> <p>On behalf of the elders, Pastor Jamie Munson, Lead Pastor</p>

Pastor Jamie Munson, Lead Pastor

Excerpt from Church Discipline Document

Steps of Discipline

Overlook/Forgive an Offense

Proverbs 19:11 - Good sense makes one slow to anger and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Admonish

If a sin seems too serious to overlook, we are to go to our brother in private, discover the truth and if sin is present, appeal to him with a spirit of reconciliation to repent (Matt. 18:15; Rom. 15:14; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; Titus 3:10).

Those who have been offended must be careful not to ascribe guilt to others without faithfully seeking the truth about what was done or said. Hearsay or second-hand reports from one person do not qualify as a credible charge (Deut. 19:15; 1 Tim. 5:19).

Reprove

If he will not respond to repeated personal appeals, we are to take one or two other believers along, so that they too can urge the believer to turn back to God (Matt. 18:15; Ephesians 5:11, 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9, 13, 2:15).

Philippians 4:2-3 gives a practical illustration of two people who have a personal dispute. There is no hint of immoral sin or doctrinal heresy. For some reason, they just do not get along and are causing tension in the church because of their differences. The Apostle Paul deals with this by setting up a mediator to cause them to agree in the Lord and expects them to submit to the mediator. Sometimes there is sin that needs formal discipline and sometimes it is hurt feelings and strained relationships that need mediation.

If the believer persists in sin, we are to seek the formal involvement of the church, initially by seeking assistance from the elders, and if necessary, the elders may inform and ask for the prayers and assistance of the entire congregation.

Separate

If these efforts do not bring a believer to repentance and reconciliation, Jesus commands us in Matthew 18:17 to treat the person as a "Gentile and a tax-collector," which means we no longer have normal, casual fellowship with the believer, but instead use any encounters with the person to bring the gospel of reconciliation to him and lovingly urge him to repent and turn back to obedience to God.

Those who are members of the church or who regularly participate in church activities may be dismissed from the church by the agreement of the Board of Directors. The dismissal of a church member may be made known to all church members. If the offense is a publicly known matter, the Board of Directors has the discretion to determine if the member's discipline should be made known to the entire church.

An offense may be serious enough to temporarily remove a member from the body immediately for the well being of the church until a thorough investigation can be completed.

A member who resigns his membership while under discipline by the church does not end the discipline process. It is expected that a member under discipline and the elders will walk together towards repentance until full reconciliation takes place.

Until full reconciliation takes place, any person may be notified that he or she is not to be present at church functions for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well being of others at church functions.

Treatment of an Unrepentant Believer

Jesus instructed us to treat those who will not repent as a "Gentile and tax-collector." Although rejection and disassociation may seem harsh, these responses are simply a means by which the individual in question may come to an acknowledgment of their sin and repent. The idea is not that we stop caring for them, but rather that when they sin and refuse to repent we are to treat them as if they were enemies of the gospel. Other biblical examples of this type of response include 1 Timothy 1:20, Titus 3:10 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-7. The church members in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and 14 admonished the church members to withdraw from the brother that walks disobediently and to have nothing to do with him. 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 is the strongest of all biblical admonitions by requesting us not to have any association or share a meal with believers who are guilty of sexual immorality, greed, idolatry, revilement, drunkenness or swindling. Because sharing a meal with a person is symbolic of a hospitable and cordial fellowship, it is not to be allowed under the circumstances. When you put a person out of the church, you don't have him over for a meal. You don't treat him like a brother. You don't treat him as an unbeliever. You treat him like an outcast.

In other words, when the whole process of discipline has been unproductive, Jesus instructs us to put the unrepentant out of the fellowship. Don't let them associate and participate in the blessings and the benefits of the Christian assembly until they have repented.

Our association with the unrepentant brother is not to treat him like an enemy but to warn him as a brother (2 Thess. 3:15). We are reminded, "When we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). There is a sense in which you never really let him go. Though you are to put him outside of the sphere of associating with him, you keep calling him back. It is fine for you to see an unrepentant brother as long as your speech or actions do not dismiss the gravity of the sin or imply

that reconciliation has been completed when one has not yet repented.

Remember, Romans 12:18 instructs us to be at peace with everybody if we are given the chance. We are to be willing to forgive everybody of everything. As soon as the individual repents, we should welcome them back into the body of Christ with open arms. Where sin did abound, the grace of God did much more abound! (Romans 5:15) They are put out for the purity of the church but they are always admonished to come back (2 Cor. 2:5-11).

Practically Treating an Unrepentant Member like an Outsider

- While changing the way you associate with the sinning member, treat the rest of the family as normal as possible inasmuch as the other family members do not act as facilitators or liaisons for the unrepentant family member. The whole family will feel the effects of the sin, but they are not being directly disciplined for a family member's sin.
- Pray for them that they will confess and repent of their sin.
- Have nothing to do with them except to admonish and encourage them to confess and repent.
- Ask the person not to attend regular worship services and community groups, unless they have fully reconciled with the elders at that campus. Refuse their participation in Communion.
- Treat them cordially, but postpone your fellowship with them until they have repented.
- Inform the church of the results of attempts to reconcile.
- An elder of the church is to be more thoroughly disciplined and rebuked in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear (1 Tim. 5:19-20).

Motivation for Treating an Unrepentant Member like an Outsider

- That Jesus would be glorified through our obedience.
- That they would confess their sin and repent through the excessive sorrow of lost fellowship (2 Cor. 2:5-7).
- That they would know they are loved by a church body -2 Cor. 2:8.
- That the Holy Spirit would work on their heart without the normal fellowship of other believers.
- That the believer would fear the discipline of the church and would be drawn to a deeper intimacy with Jesus.



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