

## Restoration Steps

When it is necessary to practice church discipline, it is always our desire to see the disfellowshipped person come to genuine saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and to have them fully restored (cf. Matt. 18:15; Heb. 12:10-13; Gal. 6:1-2; Jam. 5:20).

**In order to be restored, the disfellowshipped person should:**

1. email or contact the Church Leaders
2. be in full agreement with Scripture's description of their sin and prescription for discipline
3. be in full agreement with the church leader's disciplinary actions against them, understanding that it is done in love
4. be humble and teachable

**We ask that, for their benefit and self-examination, they:**

5. do a biblical study of their sin from Genesis to Revelation
6. listen to 52 sermons on how to overcome their sin and take notes
7. read 10 books on how to overcome their sin

**Before being fully restored to the church, we prefer that they:**

8. are 1 year free from that sin
9. have been held accountable for 1 year by one of our church leaders.
10. We eagerly and with tears of joy welcome a repentant person back into the fold. (cf. Luke 15:11-32—"The Prodigal Son" )

**Q:** Why does it seem so hard to be restored? The prodigal son's father did not set up standards for the prodigal to come home?

**A:** That was the prodigal's first homecoming. Imagine, what if, the prodigal did the same thing after being home for 3 years? Or what would Judas have to do to prove that his repentance was real if he wanted to come home after betraying Christ? 2 Cor. 7:11 NKJV says:

"For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* clearing of yourselves, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

The man who was disfellowshipped "proved" himself to be clear in this matter. Paul uses 7 words to describe how the man who had been disfellowshipped proved himself.

1. Diligence – how long does someone have to do something to prove that they are diligent? 1 day is too short and 20 years is too long. While we don't mandate a 1, 2 or 3 year period to prove diligence, our church needs to feel confident that the disfellowshipped person's sorrow is godly sorrow and has produced diligence. Diligence in living a Christian life – separating oneself from that sin.
2. Clearing – this means the person's desire to clear their name from being connected to that sin. If a person has sinned so grievously and unrepentantly that they have to be disfellowshipped for the safety of the lambs in the church, the leadership needs some demonstration that the sinner is disconnecting their name from that sin.

Would anybody imagine that 1 week is a significant enough time to give anyone confidence that the person is truly repentant? For a modern example, when Jimmy Swaggart was exposed as hiring prostitutes, his denomination asked him to step out of the ministry and undergo Christian Counseling for a period of years. He rejected their guidance and claimed that his confession was repentance enough. Within months he was back with the prostitutes.

We see that there needs to be some period of time to test these 7 qualities of true repentance (diligence, clearing, indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal and vindication) after a disfellowship. The period of time is not as important as the demonstration of these qualities.

We stand gazing across the horizon longing for the true repentance and restoration of those who have sinned so grievously and hard heartedly that they had to be disfellowshipped after repeated conversations and tearful pleadings for them to forsake their sin.

We are a church that believes whole heartedly in the forgiving and reconciling power of God. It breaks our heart and demonstrates the impenitence of the disfellowshipped person when they simply leave our church upon disfellowship and begin attending another "church" and slander our church. It is even more grievous to us and to the Spirit of God when the other "church" welcomes the disfellowshipped person, takes up their offense and joins them in slandering us. Those "churches" which disregard biblical church discipline are simply Synagogues of Satan. Furthermore, those Synagogues of Satan are hindering that disfellowshipped, disgruntled former member from ever truly repenting.

Cornerstone Baptist Church is committed to practicing church discipline and honoring the church discipline of any evangelical Christian church whether they are Calvinistic or Arminian. Also, if you are a disfellowshipped sinner reading this, please know that we long to have you back home when your repentance is genuine.