

ANABAPTIST DOCTRINE

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The public ordinance of baptism was important because it was a sign to the congregation that new believers bound themselves to church discipline. The scriptural basis for church discipline is found in Matthew 18:15-18.

One of the functions of church discipline, which the Anabaptists called “the ban,” was to take the place of the old sacrament of penance (confession).

1. What was confession, and why isn't it practised outside the Catholic Church?

2. Should confession still play a part in our churches?

The second function of the ban was to maintain a vital and reformed church. The Anabaptists were convinced the true church would be made up of those who had been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Such “members of the Body of Christ” would live visibly new lives. Just as Christ was pure and holy, so also his members were to be pure and holy. The ban provided a way to maintain holiness and purity in the church.

3. Describe what Matthew 18:15-18 says about conflict within the church:

- 4. Compare 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 and 1 Corinthians 13:1-7. How should church discipline be conducted in light of these passages?

- 5. Read Galatians 6:1-2. How can the church practice its call for purity, with the call for love and patience?

- 6. Is it important for the church to practice some sort of church discipline today? What should it look like?

- 7. If someone within the church is practicing or teaching something that is unbiblical and/or harmful to the church and the steps mentioned in Matthew 18 have been following and haven't worked, what should the church do?

“Christians are members of Christ, and their body the temple of the Holy Spirit...Jesus Christ has no unclean members, and the temple of the Holy Spirit is holy.”

Dirk Philips (d. 1568)

Read 1 Corinthians 5