Discipline and Forgiveness

II Corinthians 2:5-11

Introduction
Church discipline can be defined in two ways:
• Church discipline refers to all we do to encourage, exhort and correct believers to help them become more like Christ. Discipline is a part of discipleship.
• Church discipline refers to the process of dealing with serious sin that can lead to expulsion from the church body.

In II Corinthians 2, Paul gives us three reasons why discipline is necessary.

I. There is a need for discipline because sin affects the church. Verse 5
Who is the sinner that Paul is referring to?
• Most of the older commentators believed it was the person mentioned in I Corinthians 5.
• Most modern commentaries believe it was someone who had personally attacked Paul’s character and integrity.

The call for discipline is because sin affects the whole body.
The classic example in Scriptures is the story of Achan in Joshua 7.
One man sinned and 36 men died.

If a church caters to dysfunctional people, it will become a dysfunctional church.
What kinds of sin need to be addressed in the church? Some examples in Scripture are:

- Teaching Doctrinal Heresy – II John 10-11
- Sexual Immorality – I Corinthians 5:1
- Blasphemy – I Timothy 1:20
- Divisiveness – Titus 3:10

II. There is a need for discipline because sin affects the individual. Verses 6-9

The goal of all discipline is restoration and reconciliation.

Matthew 18:15-17 gives the steps we should take.
Step 1 – Go to your brother in private.
Step 2 – Take one or two others with you.
Step 3 – Tell it to the church. It starts by going to the elders/leaders first. In the most serious cases, it will go to the whole church.

The principle is to keep the circle as small as possible when dealing with sin.
Apparently the action taken by the church in II Corinthians worked and the offender repented. Now Paul urges the church to forgive and restore him.

Why does God discipline us? He loves us.
What is his goal? He wants to make us more like Christ.

III. There is a need for discipline because sin affects the reputation of God. Verses 10-11

There is a greater spiritual reality going on here.
What we do is done in the sight of Christ. “For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.” Matthew 18:20

What we do affects the reputation of God. II Samuel 12:14 – “By doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt.”

Nothing is as sad as seeing Christians quarrel and fight in full view of the world.

Conclusion

Discipline is necessary for:
• The health of the church.
• The health of the individual.
• The glory of his name.