

A Discussion Document
regarding
Church membership
in
The Journey Church

June 12 2013

Proposed Changes for Section 5 of By-laws - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 5: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The members of The Journey Church, as according to the official membership list of The Journey Church, for purposes of these Bylaws, shall consist of people who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord through believer's baptism and who make the following promises to God and other members to learn to practice these commitments which are rooted in living out the gospel, as the Bible teaches, within the community of Christ' church:

a) Promise to protect the **unity** of my church

- By acting in love toward other members
- By refusing to gossip
- By supporting the leadership

b) Promise to share in the **outward focus** of my church

- By sharing in word and deed, local and global
- By inviting the un-churched to attend
- By warmly welcoming all.

c) Promise to **serve** in the mission of my church

- By discovering my gifts and talents
- By being equipped to serve
- By developing a servant's heart

d) Promise to support **the community** of my church

- By attending faithfully
- By living at peace with others
- By giving consistently, proportionately, generously and joyfully

e) Promise to grow **more like Jesus** within my church

- By learning to love Jesus more
- By learning to live more like Jesus
- By learning to lead more to Jesus

This will replace the Present Section 5 of the Bylaws

SECTION 5 – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The members of The Journey Church, as according to the official membership list of The Journey Church, for purposes of these Bylaws, shall consist of people who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ through believer's baptism and who make the following commitments:

- a) To participate regularly in worship and training of the Church in order to grow in their faith
- b) To serve faithfully in the ministries and outreach activities of the Church
- c) To support the mission of the Church and the leadership needed to accomplish that mission
- d) To seek resolution of differences in the Church privately and graciously, as Scripture requires
- e) To give generously to the financial costs of achieving the mission of the Church

This is a Proposed New Section 7 of the Bylaws

SECTION 7: CHURCH DISCIPLINE, RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION

As part of the 'Body of Christ,' members of The Journey Church are instructed in Scripture to love and support one another. On occasion that support and love may need to be expressed through corrective or disciplinary measures when another church member's actions or conduct is not consistent with the covenant he/she affirmed at the time of joining our fellowship.

The Bible notes four common reasons corrective measures may be used: (1) to prevent division within the church (Titus 3:10-11); (2) to prevent the proclaiming of false teaching (Titus 1:9); (3) to challenge and correct immoral behaviour (I Cor. 5:1-2); and (4) to bring back an erring member into a stronger relationship with Christ (Matt. 18:15). Whatever the reason, however, the goal is always to reconcile and restore a member to a rightful relationship to God.

This means the first and primary response to any church member, whose action or behaviour is not in keeping with the covenant agreed to by him/her, is to emulate the process outlined in Matthew 18:15-17. These verses describe an approach that begins informally and then moves incrementally toward increased levels of formality. More specifically, there are three basic phases that are described, but each with the hope that restoration can be achieved. The three phases are:

Phase One (Matt. 18:15): One to One - "If a brother or sister sins, go and point out the fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over." This is the

approach of correction that is most common between one church member and another. The vast majority of disciplinary/restorative actions within a healthy church family should be of this nature and no further intervention will be needed.

Phase Two (Matt. 18:16): Multiple Member - "But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." Sometimes a few extra members (and maybe even a few extra visits and exchanges) may need to occur if the one-to-one is unsuccessful. This still would most commonly happen with church members only, but could potentially include church staff, depending on the severity and/or duration of the 'offense' that is being raised.

Phase Three (Matt. 18:17a): 'Church' Involvement - "If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church." At this point in the process, the pastoral staff would definitely be involved in helping to deal with the non-repentant or non-responsive church member(s). They may even decide to inform and/or include the Church Board in the process depending on the type of transgression involved. Due to matters of privacy, it would not be normal for the church membership to be involved in the formal discipline of a member, however, if the transgression was public in nature and widely known there may be situations where this norm would not be the case.

Should persistent resistance continue at this point, a second dimension to Phase Three may need to be instituted (Matt. 18:17b). ". . . and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or tax collector." On rare occasions, a member may refuse to repent of his/her actions, despite the clear direction of the church leadership. Such an occurrence will inevitably involve the Church Board who, after confirming that all appropriate steps were taken to provide restoration, will normally recommend the removal of the individual's name from the church membership. Again, depending on the private or public nature of the transgression a formal motion may be made to the church membership at a formal meeting of The Journey Church.

Formal Restoration:

The ultimate goal of any disciplinary action is to first create renewed alignment of the member with God and His authority in his/her life through confession and repentance and then to work with the church member to mend and restore any hurt or damaged relationships within the church fellowship. This means as well that for situations when the pastoral staff and/or the Board of the Journey Church have become involved in a disciplinary process that is more public, it is reasonable to expect that a more formal restorative process should to be established and followed. Such situations would need to be worked out on a case-by-case basis, but the guiding principle involved here is that if hurt and damage has occurred in a public way within the Church, than it is crucial and necessary that formal steps also be taken by the Board and/or Pastoral Staff in achieving a public expression of reconciliation and restoration.