

Sermon Reflections

Care by the Congregation (Matthew 18:18-20)

Summary: Christ leads His Church to declare authoritatively who God's people are. Take care to use such authority responsibly.

1. Who Has This Authority and Responsibility? (v. 18)

- Are you a member of a local church? How is the church discipline/restoration process (as outlined in Matt 18:15–20) deeply connected to the Biblical understanding of church membership? Why is membership of a local church important in the discipline/restoration process?
- The Church has been commissioned to authoritatively declare who God's people are. How do we know this is a corporate responsibility in v. 18? How does the plural 'y'all' affect the way you view your responsibility as a member? Why is this Matt 18:15–20 process an unavoidable responsibility for members of a local church (see also 1 Cor 5:1–8)?
- Members of the local church have a responsibility for the spiritual health of their fellow believers. At GBC, this is outlined clearly in the relational commitments. How does 'one-anothering' factor into the relationships of church members? What does this say about our heart attitudes in approaching the church discipline/restoration process?

2. When Do the Members Have This Authority? (v. 19)

- How does the context of the surrounding verses inform the meaning of v. 19? Consensus/majority shows the agreement of the body (as seen in 2 Cor 2:5–11) – Why is church unity within the binding and loosening process **key**? What does 1 Cor 12:12–31 reveal about how members of a church are united together?
- Biblical process of discipline/restoration reveals that the assembled church body has this authority to bind and loosen when there is a majority ... but what if you are not a part of the majority? Biblically, what should you do in regard to submission to your elders and achieving unity with the body (Heb 13:17, Eph 5:15–21)? What role does prayer, Scripture, and trust of one another play in these situations?

3. Why Do the Members Have This Authority? (v. 20)

- Why does the physical gathering of the local church, in space and time, bring a confirming authority that reveals God's will? How is Jesus in the midst of His people when they gather in the assembly (v. 20)?
- What are the ties between Matt 18:20 and 1 Cor 5:4–5? Why do we gather in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:8–12)? How does this affect the way you would explain 'church' to an unbeliever?