Dealing With Drawbacks

"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition..." (Hebrews 10:39)

I. Ties with a disorderly member who has merited exclusion are to be severed.

A. He is to be purged out of the church. **1CO 5:7, 13.**

1. The church is *not to keep company* with such. **1CO 5:9-11.**
2. <u>company</u>: *sb.* Companionship, fellowship, society.
3. There is to be a formal dissociation from the society of the church body.
4. He is no longer *numbered with* the membership and the church thus clears itself before God. **ACT 1:15 c/w EPH 5:3; 2CO 7:11.**
5. If he assembles with the church, he has no voice in church decisions nor any right to the church's communion service, nor is permitted to stir up strife, discord, tumults, etc. **PRO 6:19; 2CO 12:20.**

B. An offender is to be *marked* and *noted* for his sin and *avoided*. This is done to teach him a lesson and shame him into repentance. **ROM 16:17-18; 2TH 3:14; 1TI 1:20.**

1. The marking is to be done publicly. **1TI 5:20.**
2. A distinction is to be made between sinners outside of the church (i.e., of the world) and those within. **1CO 5:10-11.**
3. The emphasis of this end of companionship with an offending member is the Lord's Table. **1CO 5:7-8, 11 c/w 1CO 10 & 11.**
4. Church discipline does not rule out all association with the disciplined member.
   a. The vow and duty of marriage remain intact unless an unbeliever departs. **1CO 7:3-4, 12-15.**
   b. Allowance would also have to be made for business obligations, especially where a contractual commitment exists.
   c. Parents of minor Christian children who have sinned their way out of the church could not turn them out into the cold.
5. Unnecessary fraternizing with an unrepentant disciplined member is unwise. Such a person holds the judgment of God and His church in contempt and should be avoided as a scorner and a fool.
   a. (**PRO 9:8**) Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.
   b. (**PRO 15:12**) A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.
   c. (**PRO 14:7**) Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.
   d. (**PRO 23:9**) Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.
   e. Remember the corrupting influence of foolish associations. **PRO 13:20; 1CO 15:33.**
   f. Unnecessary association with the disobedient may invite judgments upon you. **2CH 19:2; JAM 4:4.**
6. Our attitude towards a disciplined member should never give the impression that his actions are condoned or of little consequence.
   a. Christians have a responsibility to forego liberty if it emboldens another's error. **1CO 10:23-24.**
   b. An apostate has put himself in a worse state than he was in prior to conversion. **2PE 2:20-22; LUK 12:47.**

c. We are justified in not having pleasure in an apostate. **HEB 10:38.**

7. An offending church member is to be disciplined, not in proud arrogance, but with firmness attended by the terrors of God.
1CO 10:12; JOS 7:19, 25; HEB 10:26-31; 2CO 5:11.

8. He is *not to be counted as an enemy* (**2TH 3:15).** See further comments below.

II. If we interact with a disciplined church member, what should our attitude towards him stress?

A. A disciplined church member is to be considered as *a heathen man and a publican* (**MAT 18:17**). Heathen and publicans are supposed to be urged to repent of their sin. **MAT 9:10-13; ACT 17:30.**

B. He is to be *admonished as a brother.* **2TH 3:15**.

1. <u>admonish</u>: To put (a person) in mind of duties; to counsel against wrong practices; to give authoritative or warning advice; to exhort; to warn.

2. *Admonishing* is set in contrast to *counting him as an enemy.*

a. If you wilfully refrain from admonishing the errant brother because you want to convey that he is not an enemy, you miss the point. You are in this case his enemy since your reluctance to do right reinforces that person in his error rather than drive him to godly sorrow that works repentance per **2CO 7:10**.

b. (**LEV 19:17**) Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

3. The church's *confirming of love* towards him is reserved to his deep sorrow for his sin. **2CO 2:6-8.**

C. It is not easy, but if our hearts are right before God, it is the proper course. True love rebukes. **REV 3:19; PRO 27:5-6.**

1. <u>rebuke</u>: *trans*. To beat down or force back; to repress or check (a person); to repulse. 2. To reprove, reprimand, chide severely.

2. How do you measure your love towards someone who has abandoned the faith: by your standards or God's? **1JO 5:2.**

D. If he is not humbled, keep a cautious distance to induce shame. **2TH 3:14.**

E. God-fearing brethren should be our most precious companions. **PSA 119:63, 79.**

III. Should a disciplined offender be pursued and overtures made towards him to recover him?

A. Consider the account of the prodigal son (given as an example of broken fellowship). **LUK 15:11-32.**

B. See **JER 15:19.**

C. You can easily appear as a "clinging vine" by pursuing someone who has made his intentions clear and incline him to think that the church needs him worse than he needs the church.

D. Let them go, then get on with the program. **1SAM 15:35-16:1.**

E. If an excluded member shows signs of humility and a penitent spirit, then encouragements could certainly be offered.

F. If an excluded member is swallowed up in godly sorrow that works repentance, then in due time slay the fatted calf (**LUK 15:23**)! The church should confirm its love towards such by appropriate forgiveness and restoration. **2CO 2:8-11; GAL 6:1.**

IV. If a disciplined church member becomes gravely ill, should I pray for his deliverance?

A. Scripture teaches that there are times where we should not pray for life. **1JO 5:16-17.**

B. A sin unto death is not to be prayed for.

C. All sin brings death. **ROM 6:23.**

D. There are seven things called death in Scripture:

1. Spiritual death. **EPH 2:1-3.**
2. Second death in the lake of fire. **REV 21:8.**
3. Death of spiritual value (can occur while in the church). **1TI 5:6 c/w REV 3:1.**
4. Death of fellowship. **LUK 15:24.**
5. Death of reproductive power. **ROM 4:19.**
6. Death of the physical body where the spirit departs. **JAM 2:26.**
7. Death to sin. **ROM 6:11.**

E. Of the above seven deaths, only the last one is positive.

F. **1JO 5:16-17** refers to prayer (or its denial) for A BROTHER. This is pertinent to saints.

1. God's children cannot so sin as to lose their eternal salvation (**JOH 10:27-29**), therefore **1JO 5:16-17** cannot apply to the first two deaths.
2. God's children may sin unto the death of fellowship with brethren, the Father, and Christ: they lose their inheritance in the kingdom. **LUK 15:24 c/w 1JO 1:3.**
3. God's children may sin their way into a strong delusion about sexual identity and kill off reproductive potential by drugs and/or surgery. God has otherwise in judgment forbade conception. **GEN 20:18.**
4. God chastens His children for their sins, which may include physical suffering and death. **HEB 12:6-11; ACT 5:1-11; 1CO 10:1-11; 11:30.**
5. This fearsome end may be averted by prompt repentance while there is time. **REV 2:21; LUK 13:1-9 ct/w 2CH 36:16.**
6. If a member rebukes his erring brother to convert him before his sin is commonly known, this is when he should pray that the erring brother may have life. **JAM 5:16-20.**
7. However, once a brother's sin becomes common report, it is too late. Death must result (**1CO 5:1-5, 13**). It is now futile for a prayer to be made for sparing him, but pray yet for repentance.
8. Church exclusion will certainly be death of fellowship, but may also devolve to physical death by such means as natural consequences (e.g. death by substance abuse or by civil punishment). It may also be reproductive death.
9. Observe these other examples of where sinners had gone too far and there was no prayer for life. **2KI 1:1-4; JER 14:10-12.**
10. In one instance, an effectual prayer may avail much for saving one from death. In the other, prayer is not recommended. Rather, the terrors and chastening of the Lord are now imposed to drive him to repentance.
    a. Both the goodness of God and His judgments are meant to lead men to repentance. **ROM 2:4; PSA 51.**
    b. God would rather that men repent than die. **EZE 33:11.**

G. A suitable prayer: "Lord, I resign the fate of my errant brother to your government to use whatever means You deem best to deal with him. Remember, O God, not only your justice but also your mercies."