

**Members Meeting  
May 20, 2018**

- I. Welcome & Prayer (6:00-6:02) – *Randy Hagler*
  
- II. Intro to Evening (6:10-6:12) – *Tad Skinner*
  
- III. Collegiate Ministry Report (and introduce Brandon and Chris) (6:12-6:20) – *Erik Naylor*
  
- IV. New and Former Members (6:20-6:30) – *Todd Diehl*
  - A. New Members: Tess John, Isabel Han, Tim Henaughan, Lori Henaughan
  
  - B. Former Members: Don Orvis, Nancy Orvis
  
- V. **Called to Serve: Light in the Desert and Report (6:30-6:40) – Logan & Brooke Murphy and Chuck Newkirk**
  
- VI. Financial Report (6:40-6:45) – *Tad*
  
- VII. **Understanding Member Care (6:45-7:35) – Chuck**
  - A. For the last year or so, when we have announced new and former members, we've also announced a few members on what we've simply called a "Public Care List".
    - 1. For years, the Leadership Team, then the Transition Team, and now the Elders have maintained a **private care list** – basically members we are laboring with closely in prayer and care.
      - a. But a public care list is not something we've done until fairly recently.
  
      - b. Our sense was that as a church we needed to continue to grow in our biblical understanding until we were all prepared for this important, biblical step.

## 2. What's a Care List?

- a. When there are members who have stopped participating in the life of the church for some lengthy period of time and seem to be uninvolved in any church...
- b. OR if a church member is in some other significant unrepentant sin and *private* counsel has not helped bring the person to repentance...
- c. The intent of the care list has been to bring people to you in a Members Meeting so you can pray,
  - i. give the elders more information if you have it, and to ask you – especially if you know the person –
  - ii. to pursue him or her in kindness and love.
- d. This is the Bible's prescription for straying, wayward people who have covenanted to a local church. It's the whole church's responsibility to offer this kind of loving care, not just the elders.

### 3. We've seen the Lord use this to resolve issues in some cases.

- a. We've also had one individual on the list for quite a while and she still has not heeded your attempts at repentance and restoration [Kennetha Perkins, Linda Harris]
  - b. This is not a moment Church on Mill has been in for many, many decades.
- B. Some of us as church members have been a part of seeing these biblical processes at work in the past as members of other churches, but **for some this is brand new.**

1. It can be quite starting to hear a specific person named publicly in a Member's meeting if you have never closely studied what the Bible says about church membership and church discipline
  - a. While God's intent in telling us to correct each other when we sin is in fact *exceedingly* loving
  - b. It may *feel* rather mean spirited.
  - c. We live in a time and place where personal autonomy is understood to be the greatest good.
    - i. "You do what you want, I do what I want. There's no truth anyway."
    - ii. And this idolatrous sense of autonomy can deceive us into thinking that personal privacy – privacy at any cost – is always what's best.
  - d. But God calls Christians to something far better. He's given Christ and called us into the family of God.
    - i. And church family is commissioned by God to gently, lovingly, patiently, mercifully *be all up in each other's business*
    - ii. So we can all grow into greater Christlikeness and represent the name and reputation of Jesus well to the world
2. So, in a desire to help the whole church family work toward a unified understanding of membership and discipline – instead of announcing the names on the care list or recommending any action on your part...
  - a. Tonight we simply want to think together about understanding our biblical responsibility to care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ as members of this particular local church.
  - b. The elders have asked me to teach a little on this and then answer any questions you might have.

3. [Brief Prayer]

C. **What is our biblical responsibility to one another as members of COM?**

A simple yet biblical answer is –

we are all responsible to help one another stick with Jesus.

1. Think about all the “one anothers” of the New Testament.
  - a. The point is that we would be a redemptive community
    - i. Because we have a redeeming God
  - b. The point is that we would love each other well,
    - i. because Jesus loved us well.
2. Invariably ‘helping one another stick with Jesus’ will normally include some form of church discipline, both formative and corrective.
  - a. By normally, I mean “Formative” discipline
  - b. Although there will be times when “Corrective” discipline is needed
3. **“Formative discipline”** is simply helping each other learn the Bible’s commands and encouraging each other to align our thinking and behavior to God’s directives
  - a. It’s being in a GC, and men mentoring men and women mentoring women, it’s calling one another for prayer during the week, serving in a ministry, it’s sitting under the preaching of God’s Word on Sunday mornings

- b. It's just the normal, everyday lives we live as brothers and sisters in Christ, in which we are intentionally encouraging each other to live gospel-centered lives
- c. This formative discipline is like regular spiritual exercise, helping keep us all more and more formed into the image of Jesus Christ.
  - i. And at times that will mean we need to correct each other:
    - ii. Galatians 6:1 ESV Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted

4. "Corrective discipline" is more what the public care list is moving toward.

- a. Corrective discipline is when all the typical means of grace and formative care and discipline are no longer working effectively.
- b. Corrective discipline is necessary when someone said with his mouth<sup>1</sup> that he trusts Jesus and has gone public in baptism but doesn't show it in actions,
  - i. It's when someone who has been received into church membership as a voluntary, covenant commitment between Christians...
  - ii. When someone's said by joining "help me stick with Jesus" , "I submit my discipleship to all the members of Church on Mill"
  - iii. **Corrective discipline is when *that person* begins and continues to deny Jesus in a lifestyle of significant, unrepentant sin**
  - iv. Many of us are likely familiar with Matthew 18 where Jesus himself calls for and commissions the church to do this difficult work.

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<sup>1</sup> One author put it this way, "When faced with people who claim to represent Jesus with their lips but who live contrariwise, churches must carefully weigh the evidence and render judgment" Jonathan Leeman, *Church Discipline*, 29.

c. Corrective discipline is God's good gift to the church – to correct the person in sin, to protect the church as a whole, and to make sure the church is representing the gospel of Jesus Christ to a watching world

i. And on those rare occasions when it is necessary...

**ii. It's something *only* the entire church body can do.**

iii. Biblically, the elders do not have the authority to remove someone's membership OR withhold the Lord's Supper...

1. Only the church at large is called by God to do that.

2. It's our responsibility as members, not the purview of a few leaders.

iv. And as Galatians 1 makes clear, the elders themselves are subject to this wonderful correction and discipline if needed!

One Example:

1 Corinthians 5:1-12 It is actually reported that there **is sexual immorality among you**, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. <sup>2</sup> And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? **Let him who has done this be removed from among you.**

<sup>3</sup> For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. <sup>4</sup> **When you are assembled** in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, <sup>5</sup> you are to **deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.**

<sup>6</sup> Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup> Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— <sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup> But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother** if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to

eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup>For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? <sup>13</sup>God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”**

5. Why is this work of overseeing the church’s membership important *evangelistically*?

- a. Because the church represents Christ to the world. We are the body of Christ.
  - i. The way that we live serves to either affirm or deny the gospel before a watching world.
  - ii. God has sovereignly placed this body of believers in downtown Tempe. This is a strategically important location for the present and the future – even globally speaking.
  - iii. Will we be a holy, loving, weird, gospel-pointing people? Or will we look like the lost world all around us?
- b. It’s also important because we are all prone to self-deception.
  - i. It might be that someone in the membership of the church isn’t a Christian and needs to be evangelized.

**D. A few years ago when the members of Church on Mill revised our church bylaws, you wisely choose to include a statement on this:**

See “Congregationalism” on the back of your handout. [READ IT]

- 1. The former Transition Team and now the Elders are desirous and prayerful about helping us as a church obey these – and many other biblical texts – which this church may have neglected for longer than any of us have been here.
  - a. Because this is such an enormously important aspect of church life

- b. It's the essential strategy of God's to get us all back on track when we stray
2. The care list is one attempt at carefully getting you more engaged in corrective discipline. May God use it to help us cling to Jesus and keep from serious sin.
- a. In order to obey Scripture and fulfill the charge you've given us in the bylaws and elders vows...
    - i. The elders may need to recommend that **you** vote to remove people...
    - ii. who remain in long-term, significant, unrepentance from the public membership of the church
  - b. In most cases this wouldn't mean a person is excluded from public meetings, like Sunday mornings, but rather it would mean
    - i. We all take a posture of witnessing to him or her
    - ii. And until there's repentance the person can't observe the Lord's Supper – that's why it's called excommunication, or ex-communication.
3. Another way we've been working at teaching on church discipline and membership is in the **Membership Class**.

You were given a copy of the latest edition taught a couple of weeks ago when you came this evening.

- a. I'd encourage you to read the whole thing if you've not been through it in the last year or two
- b. But a few pages to focus on include:
  - i. Page 11 – Place of the local church



ii. Pages 16 – Organizational structure

iii. And all of section 6, starting on page 24

E. Please consider this an open-ended conversation

1. Very likely, there's a spectrum<sup>2</sup> of understandings and feelings about this topic in the room this evening:

a. Supportive – hurry up let's do it

b. Concerned – See it in Scripture but are Concerned because you've heard this can go awry

c. Confused

d. Maybe even there are some who are --- Opposed

2. Let's walk with each other and work hard to learn more

a. Elders available

b. Read membership class materials

c. Books in the back

3. Based on the conversations we all have until the next members meeting, we'll likely either talk about this again

a. or if you seem ready,

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<sup>2</sup> Robert K Cheong, *God Redeeming His Bride*, 60.

- b. bring back the member care list and press forward in obedience together

F. Questions / Discussion

**VIII. Looking Ahead – Summer Study and 2018/2019 Serve (7:35-7:45) – Chuck**

A. Summer Study – Through Ephesians

1. Handout
2. Half time in Bible study / instruction and discussion AND the other half in prayer
3. Youth will have an occasional swim and study time, but mainly we'll be encouraging them to come along with the adults
4. Mike – tell us about the kid's activities and how people can help

B. 2018 / 2019 Serve

**IX. Guided Prayer (7:45-8:00) – Chuck**

- A. New members – Tess, Isabel, Tim, Lori
- B. Mission team in E Asia right now with the Patterson's and another team headed to Scotland to work with 20 Schemes later this summer
- C. Maddie and Brandon's new marriage, and Brandon's transition to residency at COM
- D. Travel this summer – we'd remain faithful to God and not take a vacation from him

- E. Light in the Desert – Bryan Jerry’s leadership; Logan and Brooke’s transition to membership there, strong gospel witness to grow in that community
  
- F. Collegiate ministries as they continue the work of evangelism and planning for the fall
  
- G. Kids camp, youth camp this summer, as well as Summer Study
  
- H. God to help us be unified and obedient in membership and discipline