

CLEARY BAPTIST CHURCH

# Church Discipline

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- I. Cleary Baptist Church Statement of Church Discipline
  - a. All discipline will be conducted as laid out in the following statement of discipline.
  - b. Church discipline is one of the primary means God uses to correct and restore His children when they fall into sin. It is also one way in which He maintains the unity, purity, integrity, and reputation of the church. Through private or public instruction, warning, counsel, rebuke, and even social avoidance or expulsion from membership, God corrects his disobedient children or removes those who are not truly His. Christ Himself declared the church to be heaven's instrument in carrying out this difficult but necessary function (*Matthew 18:15-20*).
  - c. The purpose of this statement is to define, in general terms, five (5) classes of sinful behavior for which church discipline may be necessary, and to explain how the Bible tells us to respond to each. We must not assume, however, that every situation will fall neatly into a single category. Disciplinary matters are often confusing combinations or variations of these general classes, making the proper course of action difficult to determine. For this reason, the church must carry out discipline with prayer, diligent application of Scripture, and reliance upon the Spirit of God.
    - i. Minor Faults
      1. Minor faults are attitudes and actions such as rudeness, impatience, grumbling, complaining, negativity, pettiness, boasting, irritability, speaking too much or when inappropriate, lack of trust, worry, timidity, and selfishness. We are permitted, and actually encouraged, to overlook most minor faults rather than resorting to discipline (*Proverbs 10:12; 19:11; 1 Peter 4:8*).
      2. If a minor fault seems serious enough to require private counsel, we should be particularly careful to apply Christ's words about removing the "speck" from our brother's eye while a "plank" is in our own (*Matthew 7:1-5*).
      3. Only if a minor fault is repeated so consistently or in such a disruptive manner that it causes harm to the church will any measure(s) be taken beyond private instruction, warning, and/or rebuke.
    - ii. Unverifiable Sins
      1. Whether minor or serious, unverifiable sins are offenses that are known to only one church member in addition to the offender(s). Additionally, no concrete evidence could be brought forth as proof. Unverifiable sins might include insulting words spoken in private, physical assault or theft where no physical or circumstantial evidence exists, breach of a private verbal contract, and private awareness of another member's illicit behavior.
      2. In such cases, it may be necessary for the offended person or lone witness to rebuke the offender privately. If private rebuke is unsuccessful and the offender is not willing to admit his sin to

others, normally no further action may be taken. The matter must be left with God. It should not be revealed to anyone else (*Deuteronomy 19:15; Proverbs 25:8-10*).

3. It must also be recognized that the one being accused of an unverifiable sin may, in fact, be not guilty or misunderstood.
4. Exceptions to this rule concerning silence include the reporting of criminal offenses to the proper authorities when necessary or required by law. Also, if the unverifiable sinful action is of such a nature that it likely would affect a person's involvement in the church, or poses a danger to others, the member should speak to an Elder about it. The Elder may have received other information about this individual that would verify the action(s) in question (*such as a past history known only to the Elder, or a similar report from another church member*). If this is the case, additional action will be necessary. In all situations involving unverifiable sins, the individual in question is assumed to be innocent until proven guilty.

### iii. Personal Offenses

1. Personal offenses are those that occur between two Christians—more specifically, two members of the same church. Personal offenses could be defined as any sinful behavior by one member that causes harm to another. A representative list of these sins would include insults, slander, breach of personal trust or contract, physical or sexual abuse, adultery, physical assault, theft, and vandalism.
2. In these situations, the offended person must closely follow **Matthew 18:15-17**.
3. He must first meet with the offender in private, explain his offense to him, and seek his repentance (*Matthew 18:15*). If the offender remains unrepentant, the offended person must be cautious before taking additional measures. If the offense is unverifiable (*as defined above*) or not serious enough to warrant bringing to the attention of other church members, it should not be pursued further.
4. If the offense is significant and verifiable, a meeting will be arranged, during which the offended person may present his case to the offender in the presence of one or two other members (*Matthew 18:16*). These should either be witnesses to the offense or mature, discerning members, who are able to evaluate evidence and testimony, question both parties effectively, determine guilt or responsibility, and offer appropriate biblical counsel.
5. If the offender remains unrepentant even after his guilt has been proven before witnesses, the matter will be told to the general

membership of the church at another meeting (*Matthew 18:17*). If the offender is present, the Elder(s) will rebuke him publicly and implore him to confess and repent. If he is absent, the matter will still be revealed to the church in appropriately limited detail. In either case, the members of the church will be encouraged to make personal efforts to persuade him to repent.

6. A date will be set for a final meeting where the matter will be brought to conclusion. The offender will be notified regarding this meeting in a verifiable way, such as certified mail, and encouraged to attend in the hope that he will make a public confession. Because the offender's guilt has already been established, no opportunity will be given at these subsequent meetings for him to debate the matter or defend himself publicly.
7. At the final meeting, the offender, if present, will be offered another opportunity to repent and be restored. If he remains unrepentant or is not present, he will be considered an unbeliever and expelled from membership (*Matthew 18:17*). Even if the offender repents, restitution and/or other remedial actions may be necessary as determined by the Elders (*e.g., mandated accountability, removal from church office, and/or counseling*).

#### iv. Public Disobedience

1. Public disobedience is sinful behavior that causes harm to the unity, doctrinal integrity, purity, or reputation of the church as a whole. This category would include, for example, false teaching, divisiveness, contentions, gossip, slander of the church or its leaders, insubordination, sexual immorality, drunkenness, covetousness, theft, dishonesty, outbursts of anger or fighting, foul language, willful failure to provide, wrongful divorce or remarriage, and breach of public trust or contract.
2. Unlike the precise instructions for resolving personal offenses (*Matthew 18:15-17*), the instructions for dealing with acts of public disobedience are varied.
3. Especially here, we must pause, pray, seek wise counsel, and apply the Scriptures carefully, considering each situation to be unique.
4. The following are the procedures found in the New Testament for handling public disobedience. Not all measures listed here will be appropriate for each situation. We have listed them in order of severity, from the most gentle or subtle to the most direct, but this should not be construed to mean that they will be applied in this order. It may sometimes be necessary to bypass these measures altogether and proceed directly to expulsion from membership.
  - a. Be watchful (*Acts 20:28-31; Hebrews 12:14-16*).

- i. We should not aggressively hunt for offenses or opportunities to enact discipline (*Matthew 13:28-30*), but we must be vigilant and ready to address sinful behavior when it becomes known. This is particularly the responsibility of the Elders who are the shepherds of the flock. The New Testament warns that there will be some who profess to be Christians who will seek to harm the church (*Acts 20:30; 2 Peter 2:1-3*).
  - ii. A person who practices and/or promotes sinful behavior, teaches contrary to sound doctrine, is divisive or insubordinate, or exalts himself (*i.e.*, *3 John 9-10*) may be a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.”
- b. Correct through teaching (*2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 1:9*).
  - i. The Word of God is powerful and effective. In all cases, especially when more direct or severe measures are not immediately necessary, Elders and other teachers will address disobedience by applying the Scriptures humbly, gently, patiently, and convincingly (*also see 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2*).
- c. Plead with the offender(s) (*1 Corinthians 1:10-11; Philippians 4:2-3*).
  - i. Paul pleaded with the Corinthian church as a group, and with Euodia and Syntyche as individual Christians in Philippi, imploring them to stop being divisive or contentious. In both situations, his pleas, which were in open letters to the churches, also served as gentle public rebukes.
- d. Warn them of consequences (*1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; Titus 3:10-11*).
  - i. Unruly or disobedient Christians who have not responded to gentle or subtle disciplinary measures are exposing themselves to public rebuke, social avoidance, or even expulsion from the church. When appropriate, we will warn them of these embarrassing and painful consequences. Most importantly, we will tell them of the day when they will stand before the Lord Jesus to be judged according to their deeds (*2 Corinthians 5:9-11*).
- e. Rebuke them (*Galatians 2:11-14; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Titus 1:13; 2:15*).
  - i. The prospect of being rebuked, either publicly or privately, should be a powerful deterrent to sinful

behavior. Public rebuke also serves the purpose of teaching by identifying and exposing the nature of error (*Ephesians 5:8-13*).

- ii. When carried out in the presence of the church, this type of corrective action is a pastoral responsibility. It should never happen without prior planning and agreement among the church's leadership.
- f. Silence them (*Titus 1:9-11*).
  - i. Paul insisted that false teachers and divisive people "must be silenced," and his implication was that the leaders of the church should make every effort to silence them. There might be a variety of levels at which this can be applied. For example, the Elders may forbid them to speak at meetings, instruct them not to discuss certain matters with other church members, or remove them from teaching positions.
- g. Shame them through social avoidance (*2 Thessalonians 3:6-15*).
  - i. This rare church action becomes appropriate when a church member begins to lead an idle or disorderly life that falls short of gross immorality, but nevertheless disturbs the church. The other members of the church should demonstrate that such behavior is unacceptable in their midst by temporarily (*meaning as long as necessary*) excluding the unruly brother or sister from all fellowship.
  - ii. Such a person, for example, would not be welcome at church gatherings or in members' homes as a dinner guest until his or her ungodly and/or disorderly behavior ended. In appearance, the church's treatment of such a person would be similar to the exclusion commanded in **1 Corinthians 5** and **Matthew 18:17**. The difference is that the person would still be considered a Christian and a member of the church. If this shunning action does not produce repentance within a reasonable (*relatively brief*) period of time, the offense will be considered "insufferable wickedness". (*Note: The reference in Romans 16:17 to avoiding certain people almost certainly refers to outsiders, not members of the church.*)

v. Insufferable Wickedness

1. Insufferable wickedness refers to situations where there is only one proper course of action—expulsion from membership. The difference between the same types of sins mentioned under “public disobedience” and “insufferable wickedness” is, generally speaking, a matter of degree rather than type. A member who begins to form a habit of getting drunk, for example, will most likely be dealt with in one or more of the ways described under “public disobedience,” while one who has become publicly known as a “drunkard” will be expelled immediately. In some instances, however, the type of sin, even if committed only once, may warrant immediate expulsion. There are three (3) kinds of offenders whose behavior will be considered insufferable and will therefore be expelled:

a. Unrepentant Offenders

i. These are church members who have refused to acknowledge their sin and repent, even after public rebuke and exhortation from the entire church (*Matthew 18:17*).

b. Gross Offenders

i. These are members who commit even a single sin that is so abhorrent, shameful, or notorious that the reputation of Christ and the church is imperiled if they are not immediately expelled (*1 Corinthians 5*).

c. Offenders Who Are Known by Their Wickedness

i. These are members who have become known publicly for sins like heresy, apostasy, divisiveness, sexual immorality, drunkenness, or covetousness. Their sinful lifestyle makes them indistinguishable from unbelievers. In other words, they are so characterized by false beliefs, false teaching, destructive motives, worldly affections, or immoral living that they cannot, by definition, be considered Christians (*1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Titus 1:16; 1 John 1:5-6; 2:3-4; 3:9-10; 2 John 9-11*).

ii. In these situations, all that is necessary before expulsion is the establishment of the facts.

iii. We must notice that in **1 Corinthians 5**, Paul did not instruct the church to first warn the incestuous man or seek his repentance. No command was given to rebuke him, publicly or privately, before expelling him. With the man’s gross immorality

well known to all, Paul told them to immediately expel him from the church (*1 Corinthians 5:5, 13*). In verse 11 of the same chapter, Paul lists other types of offenders who must be treated in the same way.

- iv. Even if sorrow and repentance are initially expressed by one who commits insufferable wickedness, expulsion from the church is still necessary in order to maintain the reputation of Christ and His church. Though the offender's repentance may be genuine, a time of proving is required before this can be known for sure, and before membership privileges can be restored. Persons expelled by church discipline, if truly repentant, may come back into fellowship through the normal procedure for church membership.

vi. Additional Considerations:

1. The desired result of church discipline is always repentance and the restoration of the offender. Our private and public disciplinary measures should always be undertaken in a spirit of love, gentleness, and humility as we seek to bring about this positive end (*Galatians 6:1-2*).
  - a. When restoration does not occur and expulsion becomes necessary, we are glad to see the purity of Christ and the church upheld, but we should be grieved, individually and corporately, that someone we loved as an apparent brother or sister in Christ is now understood to be an unbeliever.
2. Genuine repentance consists of more than outward sorrow and tears (*2 Corinthians 7:9-11*).
  - a. Repentance will be considered genuine when the offender not only leaves his sin, but also confesses it to all who are affected by it, even to the general membership of the church if necessary, as determined by the Elders, and makes restitution when appropriate.
3. When a member is expelled or socially excluded, he or she may not attend any gathering of our church unless it is with the permission of the Elders and for the purpose of public confession. Members who have any necessary continuing association with an expelled person (*e.g., husband/wife, parent/child, siblings, next door neighbors, coworkers*) must not participate with him or her in any shared activity that might be construed as Christian fellowship (*1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Ephesians 5:11*). The manner of such association must also never imply



approval of the offender's behavior and/or condemnation of the disciplinary action taken by the church (*Proverbs 17:15*).

4. In the case of a member who was expelled, restoration will be considered with great caution, and then only after the membership process is repeated in its entirety. Depending upon the nature of the offense, a restored member will not be immediately, if ever, qualified for biblical offices within the church (*i.e., Elder or Deacon*) due to a tarnished reputation, issues regarding marriage and divorce, and/or an obvious weakness in a particular area (*1 Timothy 3:2-13; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:3*).
5. Disciplinary matters will be addressed promptly upon discovery of the sin. Unnecessary delay is harmful since it permits the perpetuation of the sin and causes an unhealthy tension within our church by creating the perception of apathy on the part of church leaders regarding sinful behavior.
6. If an offending member leaves the church after initial disciplinary action begins, yet prior to expulsion from membership, the matter will still be brought to conclusion (*meaning, formal expulsion will still occur as if the member were present*). If it is discovered that a recently expelled member, or one who is fleeing disciplinary action, is seeking membership with another church, or has already become a member, one of our Elders will, in most cases, attempt to arrange a private meeting with a pastor of that church along with the offender, to avoid any appearance of slander, in order to disclose the offense and protect the other church from harm.
7. Paul's rebuke of the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 6:1-8** is not a direct reference to a church discipline situation. However, the types of disputes among members that would necessitate a "church trial," as Paul describes, may often involve sinful behavior that should be dealt with through church discipline.
8. Every member of our church must agree that he or she will never initiate, pursue, or participate in any civil legal action against the church or against any member in connection with a disciplinary matter. In fact, any Christian considering civil legal action against another Christian for any reason should consider Paul's prohibition of behavior (*1 Corinthians 6:1-8*).
9. Persistent and willful nonattendance is a sin requiring church discipline (*Hebrews 10:24-25*).
  - a. Except where persistent nonattendance is the result of unavoidable circumstances (*e.g., extended illness or military service*), it will be considered a public offense and addressed accordingly. Those who persist in their nonattendance without a legitimate excuse, even after exhortations and warnings from the church, will be

expelled from membership. No specific length of time has been established to designate nonattendance as “persistent.” Each situation will be treated as unique. Without delay, our Elders will be diligent in conducting the most thorough and comprehensive investigation possible in determining the reason(s) for nonattendance.

- b. Everyone should assume, until conclusive proof to the contrary exists, that the reason(s) are legitimate. Only when it becomes certain that the offender is willfully and sinfully avoiding our church meetings will he or she be disciplined.

10. A member who leaves our church is accountable to us, and remains under the supervision of our Elders, until he joins another true church or is expelled. If the member lives locally and believes it is God’s will for him to seek another church, the reasons must be discussed thoroughly with the Elders. The member will remain under the counsel of the Elders and the accountability of the church during this temporary process. If the member is unsuccessful in finding another church after a reasonable period of time, he must either return to regular attendance or be removed from our membership for nonattendance (*see #9*). The church will not retain non-attending members except due to illness, military service, or other extenuating circumstances. If a member has moved out of town and we learn that he has not joined another true church within six (6) months, unless a longer period of time is agreed upon with the Elders, he will be removed from our membership. Certain exceptions apply, such as members who move to an area where there is no true church, or overseas military deployment. College and graduate students are expected to join a church near their school unless they are close enough to permit continued attendance with us. If a member commits a disciplinable sin after having moved, the Elders will do what is necessary to restore him and to help him find a local church where he can be cared for. If he will not repent, he will be removed immediately from our membership according to the normal process. Also, if a member leaves our church and joins a false church, cult, or non-Christian religion, he will be removed from our church.

11. Paul’s words in **1 Timothy 5:19** should not be construed to mean that Elders are to be protected from proper disciplinary action. Paul knew that Elders, being in a position of authority, could easily become the objects of false or frivolous accusations. His command is simply a warning to watch for such abuses. Elders are

church members just as all others, and are subject to discipline according to the same biblical principles as previously stated.

12. The training and discipline of children is the biblical obligation of parents, particularly fathers (*Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 23:13-14; Ephesians 6:4*).

- a. Member parents who refuse or neglect to properly train and discipline a child, resulting in the perpetuation of sinful behavior on the part of the child, are committing a public offense and are subject to church discipline. In the event that an older child has become a member, yet is living under parental authority, the parent(s) remain responsible. If the member parent(s) of a member child refuse or neglect to train and/or discipline, resulting in the perpetuation of the child's sinful behavior, both the member parent(s) and the member child are subject to the discipline of the church. This is not meant to refer to parents who do properly, diligently, and biblically train and discipline a particularly obstinate child who nevertheless remains rebellious and disobedient. Even in these rare cases, whether the child is a member or not, if his or her behavior is so disruptive, immoral, corrupting, divisive, and/or violent that the meetings of the church cannot proceed in a safe, peaceful, positive, pure, and orderly manner, he or she will be excluded from attendance or expelled from membership.

vii. Final Thoughts

1. No church has a choice about obeying Christ; therefore, our church must practice church discipline. But there is also beauty and value in disciplinary action that we may not immediately see. It is beautiful because it is about love. Our discipline toward a professing Christian in sin may be the most loving act he has ever experienced. However uninviting or difficult discipline might be, and however severely we must act, God has made church discipline valuable because it will either produce a holier life or a holier church, or both, when carried out obediently and harmoniously.

viii. Key Passages of Scripture Regarding Church Discipline

1. Better is open rebuke than hidden love. **Proverbs 27:5**
2. "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church,

let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. **Matthew 18:15-17**

3. I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. **Romans 16:17**
4. 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. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. 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. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 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. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 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. 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. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—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. 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. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you." **1 Corinthians 5**
5. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. **2 Corinthians 7:9-11**
6. 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. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. **Galatians 6:1-2**

7. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. **Ephesians 5:11**
8. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. **1 Thessalonians 5:14**
9. Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. **2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15**
10. This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. **1 Timothy 1:18-20**
11. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. **1 Timothy 5:20**
12. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. **Titus 3:10-11**
13. Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. **Hebrews 12:14-16**
14. My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. **James 5:19-20**
15. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works. **2 John 9-11**

## II. Termination of Membership

- a. Membership may be terminated under the following conditions:
  - i. Transfer of membership to another true church.
  - ii. Expulsion by action of this church.
  - iii. Death of the member.

- b. It will be the practice of this church as outlined in the Cleary Baptist Church Statement of Church discipline to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Elders and other mature godly members of the church are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another must always be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.
- c. Termination of membership may be pursued should a member become an offense to the church and its good name by reason of immoral and unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his/her covenant vows, or nonsupport of the church, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made by the Elders and members of the church to bring such member to repentance and amendment as outlined in the Cleary Baptist Church Statement of Church Discipline. In cases of gross immoral behavior, (*e.g. open adultery, murder, and other offenses as determined by the Elders*) it shall suffice that due notice has been given that an action of discipline is going to be brought against an individual.
- d. All requests for termination of membership for disciplinary reasons shall first be considered by the Elders of the church, who shall then make recommendations to the church.
- e. These requests will be presented to the church body at a regularly scheduled business meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose. The membership of no person shall be terminated, except by letter or in cases of gross immorality, at the meeting when the recommendation for such action is made and a hearing and vote will be scheduled for the next regular monthly church business meeting or business meeting specially called for that purpose. There shall be a period of at least seven (7) days between the request for a vote on the termination of a membership and the actual vote. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present is required to terminate the membership of the person charged.
- f. An act of exclusion by the church shall automatically constitute removing that member from any ministry team or position in which the individual was serving. If an individual is working for the church in a position that does not require membership, and the exclusion from the church is not based on grounds that would normally require termination from that position, then the member may continue to work in that position as any nonmember would be allowed.

### III. Discipline of Elders

- a. As laid out in the Cleary Baptist Church Statement of Church Discipline, Elders will be subject to discipline as are all members of the church.
- b. As **James 3:1** says that those who teach will be subject to a greater discipline, and as **1 Timothy 5:20** says to rebuke publicly those Elders who persist in sin, so the practice of this church will be to hold Elders who sin publicly accountable for their sins. Whereas it shall be the practice of the church to resolve all matters of discipline involving members privately, if possible, in the case of a public sin committed by an Elder, or in the case of persistent sin involving an Elder that does not require that Elder being removed from office, it shall be the practice of

the church to publicly rebuke the Elder. Nevertheless, as in all cases of discipline, the ultimate goal of rebuke shall be to restore the Elder and encourage a life of godliness, not to embarrass or bring shame. However, in recognition of the respect due to Elders, no charge will be admitted except in the presence of two or three witnesses. (*Ref: 1 Timothy 5:19*)