

Is Your Church A Hospital For The Sick, Or A Breeding Ground For Disease?

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Reading Time: 2 minutes

The more I learn, and the longer I minister to other Christians, the more I marvel at the genius of God’s design for the church. It is, after all, the product of God’s eternal manifold wisdom and planning (cf. Eph. 3:10). He has blessed His church with a perfect mechanism for leadership, teaching, and discipleship. But when we ignore the perfect pattern of doctrine we have been taught, the local church no longer demonstrates God’s wisdom. Instead, it becomes a breeding ground for spiritual disease (1 Cor. 5:6) – sin.

Paul, in Galatians 6:1, teaches us how the church can avoid disease by becoming a type of spiritual ‘hospital.’

Brethren

Christians (those who have followed the Gospel plan of salvation, cf. Acts 2:38) are brethren to one another (cf. Acts 2:47). Paul begins Galatians 6:1 with “brethren.” **This is a family matter.** We are the ultimate and original “brotherhood” (1 Pet. 2:17). We are to encourage

and edify one another (Heb. 10:24; 1 Thess. 5:11), care for one another's needs (Gal. 6:2; Acts 2:44-45; 1 John 3:17-18), and pray for one another (Jas. 5:13-16).

If Anyone Is Caught In Any Transgression

While we are to exhort and encourage one another, we are also to discipline family members who are practicing or embracing sin. When Paul continues with, "if a man is caught in any transgression," he is talking about anything that is having a negative affect on another's walk with God. In other words, "...if any man [is not walking in the light]..." (cf. 1 John 1:7).

You Who Are Spiritual

One of the greatest acts of love is restoring a soul that has wandered away from the Shepherd (cf. Matt. 18:10-14). "You who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1). When someone is added to the church, they are being added to a family that is looking out for one another.

When a fellow brother or sister gives in to temptation (Jas. 1:13-15) and steps away from God's Way, they need our loving help to restore them into fellowship with Him and with others whom they may have sinned against (cf. 1 John 1:7). Restoration is to be administered *by* family, *for* family. While we can't restore people in the world (1 Cor. 5:12-13), but we can restore our own members (Jas. 5:19-20).

The church is indeed a hospital, and Galatians 6:1 gives us a glimpse into the emergency room. When a member of God's family has been hurt by sin, that member needs to be rushed in for emergency 'heart surgery' and 'recovery.' This is a critical part of discipleship. And in the hospital of the Lord - the church - there must be an abundant supply of love and grace for both the 'doctors' and the 'patients.' Are you looking out for your brother?

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