

# The Brighton Light

BRIGHTON ARP CHURCH

P.O. Box 28

Brighton, Tennessee 38011

Web site address - [www.brightonarpchurch.org](http://www.brightonarpchurch.org)

E-mail address - [baarp@brightonarpchurch.org](mailto:baarp@brightonarpchurch.org)

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## Disciples of Discipline

One of the most pleasurable experiences of serving as a ruling elder in our church is the reception of new members into the fellowship. Often the Session will ask the prospective members if they would care to share their testimony of the Lord's saving grace in their conversion, and each time it is a moving moment for the members of the Session. Interviewing and receiving new members is one of the many tasks of a ruling elder that are both a duty and a pleasure.

There are other tasks and duties, however, that are not so pleasurable. In fact, some of these duties are downright distasteful and are sometimes avoided altogether by some elders. One of these duties is church discipline.

I refer to those who study and practice the biblical concept of church discipline as "disciples of discipline". A disciple is one who practices a teaching or concept, and in the scriptures he must not only practice them but also guard them; *"Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples"* (Is 8: 16). A Christian disciple is also one who follows exclusively the Master's teachings; *"So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples" (Jn 8: 31), "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13: 35).* And so it can be reasonably argued that any true disciple of Christ is at least one who follows His teachings and has love for fellow believers. When it comes to the matter of church discipline there are therefore the questions of what Christ taught about it and how is it administered in love?

The most referred to scripture concerning this topic is Matthew 18: 15-17: *"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"*. These are very clearly the words of Christ Himself, and so are the definitive answer as to how to practically practice church discipline. But they do not necessarily exhibit an attitude of love for the offender. Here are clear, chronological steps to take in an attempt to redeem a fallen or backsliding brother or sister. But on the surface they don't seem to demonstrate much of an attitude of love.

Perhaps a brief study of what church discipline isn't may help in defining what it is. It isn't an exercise of God's (or man's) hatred for the sinner, although it is almost always viewed that way by the wicked. *"But to the wicked God says: "What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you" (Ps. 50:16,17).* And those who rebel at being disciplined demonstrate a lack of wisdom. *"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid" (Prov. 12: 1).* And so the church must have the same attitude toward those who refuse to accept her discipline. Although many people believe they would prefer it, the Session does no one a favor to leave them in their wicked stupidity and it is a sign of disdain by the church to ignore a member's open rebellion against the statutes of God.

In fact, church discipline is a vibrant sign of her love for her wayward members. Job 5: 17,18 says *"Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he binds up; he shatters, but his hands heal"*. Here is a promise of blessing and future healing in accepting the discipline of God through His ambassadors in the church. Discipline is the attitude of guarding those one loves from the consequences of their sin. *"Whoever spares the rod*

*hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him” (Ps. 13: 24), “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.” (Rev. 3: 19). Again, here are the words of Christ. Here is love, definitive and instructive.*

And in this last verse is the true intention of church discipline. The “disciples of discipline” have only one real aim in mind. It is the repentance, redemption, and restoration of the wayward member. It is always an unpleasant experience to discover a need for church discipline and to go exercise it. It is even more unpleasant when a member refuses to listen or acknowledge their sin and the Session is forced to accelerate the steps of discipline to their unfortunate conclusion. True Christian men approach this most somber responsibility with a real sense of dread, recognizing their own fallability and tendency toward sin.

But there is also a glorious side to this subject. The alternative to a stubborn, hard-hearted member is the one who is convicted by the Holy Spirit of their offence and truly turns from it in joyful repentance. What a blessing it is for the Session to witness the power of redemption as it heals the many hurts that some sin has caused. Oh to witness the overwhelming joy of family relationships repaired and actually strengthened by forgiveness! And what an indescribable privilege it is to be allowed to observe the restoration of the returning prodigal, engulfed in the arms of the Father!

The burdens of being a disciple of discipline are heavy, to be sure. But the elation of a proper and effective application of those principles, grounded in love, can cause a human spirit to loose those burdens and soar to unimaginable heights. What a privilege!

In HIS Service,  
Richard Moore

## Prayer List:

### **Shut ins:**

Bennett, Mary Frances	Moore, Martha Lou
Goulder, Helen	Rhodes, Geraldine
Goulder, Bobbie	Smith, Mary Frances

### **Ill / Recovering**

Jill McCain Gross	Cancer/Radiation/surgery
Wanda	Pat’s sister - Chemo
Ty Bryan	Infant, Heart Surgery
Sandy Williams	Huffman family - Cancer
Glenda Wilson	Bone Cancer
Charles Boswell	Cancer
Gwen Goulder	Breast Cancer/Surgery
Richard Billings	Denise Dad Leukemia
Robert Motes	Heart Attack
Barbara Freeman	Hip Replacemet
Lauren Moody	Sophomore TRA Bone Cancer
Mark Armour	Robyn Scott’s step dad – Cancer, surgery

### **Sick**

Culver, Anthony	Moncla, Luke
Culver, Michael	Moss, Charlie
Curtis, Cooper	Otis, Mike
Hill, Dana	Patrick, Carolyn
Hill, Joy	Pugh, Kaleb
Lineberger, Rachael	Stitt, Sam
Locke, Mike	Tyler, Jean
McCain, Pat	Wells, Whit

### **Military**

Bornaman, Zachary	Heathman, Matthew
Donahoo, Tim	Hill, Debra
Dooley, Rod	Hunt, Boyce
Hair, Colton	Smith, Brad
Young III, Robert	
“Trip”	

### **Missionaries**

Coad, Jim & Gala	Rebekah Carson
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### **FLOWERS FOR THE MONTH**

*Mary Steele Circle*

### **WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES**

<i>August 10</i>	<i>Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Wylie</i>
<i>August 18</i>	<i>Mr. and Mrs. David Templeton</i>
<i>August 24</i>	<i>Mr. and Mrs. Hunter Scott</i>
<i>August 30</i>	<i>Mr. and Mrs. Joe Sides</i>

## August Birthdays

2	Damon Morgan	12	David Templeton
3	Casey Hill	13	Justin Whitmer
	Jonathan Hill	14	Kenneth McCain
4	Jennifer Goulder	16	Laura Richardson
6	Kirsten Rettig	22	Vickie Hugues
9	Lee Ann Smith	26	Joseph Ehrhardt
	Sandy Herring	27	Cynthia Cranford
	Ron Kiphart	28	Nick Goulder
10	McKenzie Huffman	29	Taylor Glass
11	Ginger Carter	30	Judy Huffman

### CHILDRENS SERMON

<i>Aug 2</i>	<i>Margarette</i>
<i>Aug 9</i>	<i>Kevin Heath</i>
<i>Aug 16</i>	<i>Amanda Heath</i>
<i>Aug 23</i>	<i>Margarette</i>
<i>Aug 30</i>	<i>Julia Moore</i>

## August Menu

**Aug 19 WELCOME BACK NIGHT**

**Aug 26 Family Night - Fried Chicken**

Cost: \$3.00 person  
\$10.00 Family

### NURSERY ATTENDANTS

Aug 2	Helen Woods
Aug 9	Stephanie Williams
Aug 16	Denise Moore
Aug 23	Amanda Heath
Aug 30	Molly Huffman

# Upcoming Events

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you have any ideas or suggestions for the church website, please contact Chris Gravley, webmaster, at 901-674-3851 or e-mail at [chris\\_gravley@bellsouth.net](mailto:chris_gravley@bellsouth.net).

**THE DEACON OF THE MONTH** is Chris Woods. If you have any requests for the deacons, please contact Chris at 901-837-8950

**PLEASE NOTE:** Wednesday Night Youth will be starting up August 19<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00. Please keep this outreach in your prayers and if you would like to help out in any way please let Mr. Kenneth know.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There will be a Community Outreach on Monday August 17<sup>th</sup> to go out to the different neighborhoods inviting them to church. We need small bottles of water and Juice to give out Please have them in by Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> and leave in the old Kitchen.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There will be a Car Wash on Saturday August 22<sup>nd</sup> starting at 9:00 a.m. Please come out and get your car washed!

**PLEASE NOTE** Just a reminder; if you have a need, here are your Elders names and numbers:

Larry Crum – 568-0234	Johnny Scott – 581-4780
John Moore – 218-0628	Verlie Wells, IV – 326-7545
Richard Moore – 592-9072	