

# POLICY OF RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

Harvest Valley Worship Center has specified steps of reconciliation and discipline to restore a minister or a member who has been unrepentant in participating in conduct that compromises holy living or the Christian faith. Repentant members and ministers are expected to yield to a restoration process as needed.

These steps of restoration are based upon biblical principles and the command to "bear one another's burden and fulfill the law of Christ."

*Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:1-2).*

It is the heart and the concern of the pastoral staff and the congregation to see every person who has fallen restored spiritually and emotionally. It is our aim for them to grow into maturity and the fullness of Jesus Christ and see them ministering in the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

## THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THIS POLICY:

This policy is based upon the instructions of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18 and the instructions of Paul in Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-11; Galatians 1:8-9; Titus 3:10-11. Based upon these principles the following steps will be taken to reach the stated objectives.

## TERMS:

**Discipline:** the process of lovingly working with an unrepentant brother or sister in the Lord to show them the severity of their actions, and to bring correction with the desired aim of restoring a healthy relationship with God and the Body of Christ.

**Grievance:** when there are attitudes and actions that violate clear Christian moral and community standards according to Biblical standards and the code of conduct agreements for leaders.

**Reconciliation:** when the relationship between an offender (one who has violated their role or responsibility) and the person or group that was impacted by their sin has been cleared up through prayer, and forgiveness.

**Repentance:** when a violator takes full responsibility for their sin and the effects of their sin in all of the arenas that their sin impacts.

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**Restoration:** based on repentance and humility, once reconciliation has taken place, the offender is given opportunity to step back into their God-given calling in a manner agreed to through prayer and fasting by all involved parties.

### ROLES:

**Pastor:** Appointed leader licensed through the Church of God, Cleveland, TN.

**Core Team:** The Board of Elders at Harvest Valley Worship Center.

**SERVE Team Leaders:** Deacons who serve and lead teams.

**Leader:** those carrying the responsibility to steward and lead others, including Pastors, Core Team, and SERVE Team Leaders.

**Member:** a person that has publicly committed themselves to Harvest Valley through serving or the formal commitment of church membership. A voting Member has completed the Membership process becoming a member of the Harvest Valley church family and the Church of God, Cleveland, TN.

### RESOLVING A GRIEVANCE AGAINST A MEMBER OR A LEADER:

When a member or leader has a grievance against a leader or member of Harvest Valley Worship Center, he or she will be asked to take the following steps.

- 1 First go to that individual alone and seek harmony and reconciliation through communicating concerns and observations. If the individual is caught in sin, we confront privately, and encourage repentance for the behaviors.
- 2 If the issue remains unresolved, and there is no repentance or desire to resolve the issue, then ask the Senior Pastor or his appointed Associate Pastor or Core Team Member to go with you to meet the individual for the purpose of reconciliation.
- 3 If the issue continues to remain unresolved a hearing before the Core Team and maybe requested. If the issue is found to be valid, the offending member will be placed under accountability for resolving the issue and adjusting their behavior and relationships within the church for the sake of reconciliation.
- 4 If the issue is still unresolved further steps of discipline will be administered by the Core Team including the possible removal from any position of leadership.
- 5 If the member refuses to accept the process and does not resolve the matter, steps will be taken for possible removal of their membership.

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### HANDLING ACCUSATIONS OF IMMORAL CONDUCT

When a member is involved in conduct that is not in harmony with the scripture or is morally impure, as determined by the teachings of the Church of God and Harvest Valley Worship Center, it may be sufficient grounds for discipline if unrepentant and unwilling to enter a restorative process.

- 1 Upon hearing the accusation, the Senior Pastor or an Associate Pastor or Core Team Member appointed by the Pastor, shall investigate the report as to its validity. \*See Investigation Notes
- 2 If the investigation shows the accusation has validity, the Senior Pastor or his appointed representative, shall go to the individual alone, and "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15) will encourage them to repentance and reconciliation with God and the church. If it is deemed important and necessary, the accuser may accompany the Pastor in this visit.
- 3 If the member persists in the error or if they refuse repentance and reconciliation, the Senior Pastor and his appointed representative, along with one or two leaders, shall go to the individual and again, in love, urge them to seek repentance and reconciliation (2 Th. 3:15).
- 4 If the erring member will still not repent or be reconciled, the situation will be shared anonymously with the congregation for prayer and fasting. After a specified number of days, the Senior Pastor and his appointed representative, along with one or two leaders shall again go to the individual and exhort them with loving correction.
- 5 If the member still persists in their error, they will be notified of a hearing before the Core Team and SERVE Team Leaders. The notice will be sent to their previously known address not less than three days prior to the hearing. They have the right to be heard and to offer testimony.
- 6 After the hearing with the Leadership, if there is no reconciliation, the individual will be dis-fellowshipped with a public statement being read by the Senior Pastor to the congregation. The congregation will be urged to continual prayer and intercession for the individual, that through this discipline they might repent and be restored to fellowship (1 Cor. 5: 1-11 ).
- 7 A disciplined member does have a right of appeal to the Pacific Northwest Office of the Church of God. 'The complainant must, within ten (10) days, notify the Administrative Bishop (in writing) the reasons for dissatisfaction. In such case, the church clerk and pastor must furnish the Administrative Bishop the full information (in writing) of the business meeting in which the member was excluded.' (*Church of God General Assembly Minutes S36-VI*)

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- 8 "The Administrative Bishop shall have power to make the final decision in the matter or the appeal. If in his judgment the case warrants calling a state board, he may do so. In either case there shall be no further appeal."  
*(Church of God General Assembly Minutes S36-Vt)*
- 9 Upon the confession and true repentance of an erring member, by the loving judgment of the Senior Pastor and the Core Team, reconciliation and full restoration of membership will graciously be given (Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Cor. 2:5-11).

### RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION OF PASTORAL STAFF AND LEADERS:

- 1 Steps one (1) through nine (9) of " HANDLING ACCUSATIONS OF IMMORAL CONDUCT" will be followed, with the following exceptions.
- 2 Any accusation against a pastoral staff member must be in keeping with 1 Tim. 5:19-20.
  - The accusation must have two or three witnesses.
  - Pastoral staff's restoration plan will be made known to the congregation.
- 3 An accusation that is not frivolous (by judgment of the Core Team), and appears to have validity, will require the pastor or leader to be removed from their position during the investigation and the steps of "RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION OF PASTORAL STAFF AND LEADERS:" are being taken.
- 4 The steps for discipline and reconciliation of a pastoral staff member must be in keeping with the *Church of God General Assembly Minutes S30*.
- 5 The restoration of a leader to their ministry roles and responsibilities will be based on unity of the Core Team and the Pacific Northwest Administrative Bishop of the Church of God.

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### NOTES ON INVESTIGATIONS

- The goal of every investigation is to find the truth, the will of God, and restore any things that have been broken.
- The Pastors and Core Team are tasked with modeling and operating in honor, love, hope, and faith with all parties.
- We will gather as many relevant firsthand details as possible.
- Second and third-hand accounts should be recorded in detail to include names.
- Third-party offenses and perceptions of the uninvolved do not constitute an allegation.
- Not providing names of witnesses is tantamount to gossip and those claims should be dismissed. We recommend, if needed, accompanying a witness to provide support.
- We keep all investigations private and sharing information outside of the Core Team is a breach of confidentiality.
- Breaking confidence will be addressed as honestly and graciously as possible to bring those who breach to repentance.
- The consequences of gossip may include termination of responsibilities and any other clean up directed by the leadership.
- Once the Core Team is involved in the investigation, no further conversations should be had about the issue, unless more information comes to light.
- The Core Team's investigation will be led by a single individual, and they will be the point person on the investigation.
- The point person will be responsible for communicating progress and provide follow-up ministry and reconciliation opportunities for those involved.

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