

The Church Order on Discipline

(Course Outline)

B. Gritters (2023)

- A. Article 71: The nature and necessity of discipline
 - 1. Nature: spiritual. Contrasted with civil, physical
 - 2. Necessity: from Scripture and confessions
 - 3. Objects: Those who are a) impenitent b) members c) *confessing* d) sane
 - 4. Purposes: a) save sinners, b) save the church, c) God's glory

- B. Article 72-73: Treatment of Private Sins
 - 1. Sins of conduct and sins of confession (life and faith)
 - 2. The distinction between public and private sins
 - 3. Explanation of the 'way of Matthew 18'

- C. Articles 74-78: Treatment of Public Sins
 - 1. 74: If *no* repentance via Mt 18 or if inherently public, report to consistory
 - a. Reporting secret sins to the consistory
 - b. Reporting public sins to the consistory
 - c. Reporting: by what means? 1) Members only? 2) Anonymous letters?
 - 2. 75: If *repentance*, how does reconciliation take place (the consistory judges)
 - a. Definition of reconciliation
 - b. The two options for reconciling
 - c. The condition for reconciliation: "sufficient evidence of repentance"
 - 3. 76: The three *steps* of public discipline
 - a. The difference between the three 'steps' and the three announcements (chart)
 - b. Silent censure: 1) What it is 2) The procedure 3) Reasons
 - 4. 77: The three *announcements* to the congregation and excommunication itself
 - a. The announcements themselves
 - b. The advice of classis for the second public announcement
 - c. Excommunication

- D. Article 78: Re-admitting excommunicated persons

Special Topics:

- 1. Discipline is the activity of all the members, not just the elders.
- 2. Discipline of non-confessing members is different than of confessing members.
- 3. Can/may one escape discipline by terminating their membership?
- 4. May a consistory put a member under probation?
- 5. The biblical treatment of excommunicated persons (or who left while being disciplined).