

DEALING WITH OFFENCE IN CHURCH

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Luke 17:1 (KJV) Then said he unto the disciples, it is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

It is impossible to avoid offence especially in a group, be it family or church. If you do not know how to deal with offence you will end up not talking with anyone in your family or end up changing churches every day because wherever you will go, you will still be offended. As long as you are with people, then offences will always come. Even highly spiritual people can offend each other.

Firstly, you must understand that there are people who will offend you deliberately. Such people the Bible says it was better if a stone be tied to their back and be thrown into the sea... (*Luke 17:2*).

Jesus does not take kindly to people who bring deliberate offences to other believers. If you have offended someone like that, Jesus also taught that even when you are about to give your offerings, your tithes or any other gift, you should put it aside and go back to deal with the matter first (*Mathew 5:23-24*). Jesus forbade such people to even put money into the treasury. If you have an unresolved issue with fellow brethren, your gift is considered unworthy... That is why most people give but their giving does not seem to help them because they give in offence and a gift given in offence will not be blessed by God. If you cannot deal with an offence, how then would you give gifts to God?

Let me hastily say, let us say you want to give a special offering, or your seed or maybe your tithes, before you do that, also search for any offence in you, and if you find any, kindly go back and try to deal with it in a way we shall explain below then you come and give your gift.

Secondly there are those who will offend you without knowing that they are offending you or you will find out you have offended each other without both of you knowing that your actions were offensive to each other.

However, the Bible has a way of dealing with offence in a church set up which also applies elsewhere. Let us look at this teaching of Jesus in (*Mathew 18:15-17*). Jesus taught about four

things to do when you are offended (procedure of dealing with an offence).

1. Jesus said go to the person who has offended you. Show the person the point of offence.

Make sure you talk the two of you. Jesus said if you succeed, then you would have won your brother/sister over. Then it is over!

2. If you cannot understand each other, Jesus went on to teach that, take with you, two or three more brethren and go and discuss the matter. These other brethren will act as witnesses between the two of you and if you do not find each other then you go to level 3.

3. Then take the matter to the church, bring it to the church Elders to help the two of you and if that is not enough and the offender is not budging you go to the final level.....which is level 4.

4. Treat the person as you would treat a pagan or a tax collector. What does this mean? It means show no brotherly respect to that person and also stop expecting any such from him/her, treat him/her as you would treat a general stranger. At this stage, if it was with an offence with a pastor, you will be free to even change the church, if it is with fellow brethren you are working within a certain department, then request to change the department and separate from him/her. However, do not rush to level 4 without exhausting all the other levels because there is someone who is watching you, whom you cannot cheat him? His name is the Holy Spirit. Most believers had jumped to level 4 without exhausting the other options and ended up partakers of the same sin as of the person who offended them.

In **Mathew 18:21** Peter asked an important question; **vs 22** Jesus answered the question. Let us deal with this question and answer tomorrow. God bless you. Hallelujah!

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