

The Measure of Excommunication or of Chastisement

by St. Benedict of Nursia

The measure of excommunication or chastisement should correspond to the degree of fault, as estimated by the judgment of the Abbess.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:11, Matthew 18:15, 1 Corinthians 5:5, Galatians 6:1

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Community Restoration"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of appropriate measures of discipline within a community, where the severity of punishment should align with the seriousness of the offense, as determined by the Abbess's judgment. For lighter faults, exclusion from communal activities like meals is prescribed until satisfaction is made. The process of reconciliation involves refraining from certain activities, such as singing Psalms or participating in communal meals, until proper amends are made to seek forgiveness and restoration within the community.

Transcript

The measure of excommunication or of chastisement should correspond to the degree of fault, which degree is estimated by the judgment of the Abbess. If a sister is found guilty of lighter faults, let her be excluded from the common table. Now the program for one deprived of the company of the table shall be as follows: In the oratory she shall intone neither Psalm nor antiphon nor shall she recite a lesson until she has made satisfaction; in the refectory she shall take her food alone after the community meal, so that if they eat at the sixth hour, for instance, that sister shall eat at the ninth, while if they eat at the ninth hour she shall eat in the evening, until by a suitable satisfaction she obtains pardon.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/the-measure-of-excommunication-or-of-chastisement/>

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