

1980
23C

FORM FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

First announcement

Beloved in the Lord, the consistory informs you with sorrow, that a brother of the congregation has become guilty of.....

In spite of several admonitions there is no evidence of repentance. The consistory had, therefore, to suspend him from the communion of the table of the Lord.

However, this did not lead to repentance. Continuing admonitions also proved fruitless.

Now the consistory is obliged to exercise further discipline, and will have to proceed to the excommunication of this brother if he persists in his sin.

We make this known to you for the first time, and seriously exhort you to pray the Lord that He may bring this member of the body to repentance.

Second announcement

Beloved in the Lord, the consistory has informed you previously that a brother had become guilty of.....

You then heard that he was suspended from the holy supper because he refused to repent.

In spite of continued discipline no true repentance has become apparent. On the contrary, all admonitions remained fruitless. The only result was a further hardening of heart.

We have asked the advice of classis and now inform you that we will proceed with the excommunication.

We seriously exhort you to continually admonish this sinner in love. His name is.....; the address.....

Pray the Lord that He may bring this brother to repentance, that this sin may be banned from the congregation and the sinner be saved.

Third announcement

Beloved in the Lord, the consistory had the sad duty to inform you already two times that brother has become guilty of You also heard that he refused to repent, but rather hardened his heart, so that he had to be suspended from the holy supper. Yet, no true repentance was shown; on the contrary, all admonitions remained fruitless.

Therefore, we now inform you for the third time that we have to deal further with this brother. If he does not come to repentance, he will be excluded from the communion with the church of Christ on.....

For the last time we call upon you to admonish him most urgently and in love.

Pray the Lord that it may please Him to lead this brother to repentance, so that he may not harden himself to the utmost.

-o-o-o-o-

The Excommunication

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, the consistory has informed you that brother has persisted in a life of sin. The purpose of these announcements was that by your prayers and

admonitions he would turn to the living God and thus be delivered from the power of satan who has taken him captive. But, to our deep sorrow, no one has informed us of the least token of true repentance, although he was warned by many. His guilt, which was already serious, has only become heavier by his stubbornness in sinning.

Mt. 18:18 We have shown much patience with him, but now we know ourselves bound to proceed to the ultimate remedy given us by the Lord in His Word, namely exclusion from the communion of His church. This excommunication is intended to bring this brother to shame over his sins, and also to ensure that this corrupt member does not affect the whole body which is Christ's church. Moreover, in this way the blaspheming of God's Name is prevented. Christ Jesus has assigned the exercise of discipline to His office-bearers with the words, Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

Therefore we, elders and overseers of the church of God at this place, excommunicate in the name of our Lord Jesus Christfrom the church of the Lord, because he obstinately persists in his sin.

He is now excluded from the communion with Christ and from His kingdom. He may no longer use the sacraments. He has no part anymore in the spiritual blessings and benefits which Christ bestows upon His church.

Mt. 18:17 As long as he persists in sin, let him be to you as a gentile and a tax-collector.

Warning to the congregation

We exhort you, beloved christians, not to count him as your enemy. On the contrary, try to exhort him as one does a brother. But keep no close company with him, so that he may be ashamed and come to repentance.

This excommunication, beloved, is a warning example for us all. Let us fear the Lord and take diligent heed to ourselves, for he who thinks he stands must beware lest he fall.

Continue in the true fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and also with all upright believers, so that we may obtain eternal salvation.

You have seen in what manner our excommunicated brother has lost the way; how he began to fall and gradually came to ruin. Learn from this how subtle satan is in bringing man to destruction, and how he causes him to despise God's Word and His sacraments.

Heb.12:1,2 Therefore, resist evil from the very beginning. Lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely. Run with perseverance the race that is set before you. Look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

- I Pet.5:8 Be sober and watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
- Luke 22:46 Pray that you may not enter into temptation.
- Heb. 4:7 Today, when you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.
- Phil.2:13 Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Let everyone repent of his sins lest our God humble us again and we have to grieve for another member of the body. Live with one accord in godliness; be our crown and joy in the Lord.
- Phil.2:13 Only the Lord who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure, is able to keep us in the way of His commandments.
- Let us, therefore, call upon His holy Name with confession of our sins.

Prayer

Righteous God and merciful Father, before Thy holy majesty we accuse ourselves because of our sins. We acknowledge that we have deserved the sorrow and grief of the excommunication of our brother. Yes, we all are worthy to be excluded from Thy presence because of our many transgressions.

But, O Lord, be gracious to us for Christ's sake. We repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness. Work in us by Thy Spirit, so that we endeavour to serve Thee more and more. Grant that we may shun the pollution by the world and by those who have strayed from Thee.

- Ezek.33:11 Grant that the excluded member may become ashamed of his sins and return to Thee, for Thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that he may turn from his way and live.

Therefore we, Thy people, will always welcome those who return to Thee. Kindle in our hearts love and zeal that, by our admonitions as well as by our example, we may bring back to Thee this excommunicated brother and others who live in unbelief.

Bless our endeavours, that we may have reason to rejoice again over him for whom we now must mourn, so that in this way Thy holy Name be praised, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(He taught us to pray....(Lord's Prayer)

Amen.

