

Elders Statement Regarding Divorce

Because marriage has been established by God as an indissoluble union, and since it is an earthly copy of the relationship between God and His people, it is to be kept inviolate. (*Gen. 2: 24; Eph. 5:32; Mal. 2: 16*) However, because of the fallenness of human nature, the Scriptures permit divorce in the following cases as condescension to human frailty for the protection of the innocent party:

1. Divorce for the cause of marital unfaithfulness—with the understanding that the obligation to maintain or reinstate the marriage may not be imposed upon the innocent spouse. (*Matt. 5 and Matt. 19*)
2. Divorce for desertion—Desertion being defined as behavior equivalent to the abandonment of the marriage relationship. (*I Cor. 7*)

In such cases, the offending party becomes subject to church discipline in order to bring about repentance and reconciliation. Should efforts to achieve restoration fail, the innocent spouse is not bound. He or she is free to remarry in the Lord (*I Cor. 7*) (*though the seeking of repentance and reconciliation should always be the first recourse*).

The remarriage of believers may not be approved when:

1. Divorce is being used as a vehicle to seek a different mate, since such pre-intent makes the divorce adulterous.
2. There is no evidence of repentance and brokenness over the circumstances that caused the divorce.
3. Restoration of the original marriage remains a viable option. (*I Cor. 7*)

Each case of divorce or remarriage has to be dealt with on an individual basis from the perspective of God's inexhaustible capacity to forgive human sin and to restore broken lives.