

SUPPLEMENT 11

Meeting with the Alleged Abuser

- If possible, the church leadership should meet immediately with the alleged abuser of a minor.
- Conversely, church leadership should allow an able-bodied adult victim to decide if the church leadership will meet with her or his alleged abuser.
- Listen to the alleged abuser's version of events in a caring, respectful, and thorough manner.
- Take notes of every meeting.
- If the victim is a minor or vulnerable adult, remove the alleged abuser from access to children, vulnerable adults, and the church premises until the investigation is complete.
- If the victim is an able-bodied adult and he/she has a VPO in place, remove the alleged abuser from the church premises regardless of the presence or absence of the victim. (For example, the abuser should not be allowed to attend a men's Bible study at the church even if the victim is not currently present at the church facility. We must maintain the local church as a refuge for victims, and to this end, if the legal authorities have deemed the abuser a threat, church leadership should treat him as such until proven otherwise.)
- Consider taking "church" to the abuser.
- Have the abuser sign a written agreement documenting expectations, or the refusal to sign should be documented.
- If the legal process would be impeded by these pastoral care efforts, the church will postpone these steps until it would no longer interfere with needed legal procedures.

"If the alleged offender is someone in our faith community... we must review the available information regarding the allegation, and be prepared to take immediate and well-reasoned precautionary measures to protect children and anyone else who may be a target of such abuse. Doing so is not casting "judgment", it is simply being responsible. It is never a rush to judgment to fall on the side of safety when it comes to protecting the vulnerable."

BOZ TCHIVIDJIAN

"There is NO GRACE in leaving another in the prison of practiced sin, justified by deceptions. We become complicit in their spiritual suicide. So Diane, what are we to do? Do we leave the abuser in their sin and keep them away from the church? No, to the first question. Yes, to the second. BRING THE CHURCH TO THE ABUSER. I have worked with churches who have done this. A group of committed and mature adults meet once a week with the abuser and listen to the sermon, discuss it, check in, not only about actions and choices but also about thoughts and impulses. They sing and they pray. There are to be NO children in the house - ever."

DIANE LANGBERG
