A Different Take: On When 2 or 3 Gather

Read Matthew 18:15-20 without any preconceived ideas and see what you think of the last verse:

Matthew 18:20 (NKJV) – *For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*

Normally verse 20 is quoted by Christians who want to justify their coming together at a church service as being approved by 'God'[1].

In reality the verse <u>in context</u> is all about discipline in the *ekklesia*. Verses 15-17 are obviously about discipline, but most teach verses 18-20 out of context – i.e. outside of the disciplinary processes. There is no hint in the text that there is a break in what Jesus was talking about.

Translating the Greek word sunagó (συνάγω) as 'convened'[2] instead of 'gathered', which is a legitimate alternative[3], throws a different light on verse 20. In Western culture disciplinary hearings are <u>convened</u>, they don't <u>gather</u>. It was the same in ancient cultures.

See how the use of a different English word changes the meaning or nuance of a verse?

So *"two or three are gathered together in My name"* is for the purpose of discipline. That's why the previous verses are about binding and loosing (passing judgement), and also about agreement (passing judgement).

Amazing how what we are taught from the pulpit misdirects us in our understanding of living our life in the Kingdom.

Laurence
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(www.CanberraForerunners.org)

(Readers will need to look up for themselves any scriptures alluded to in this document)

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1 – 'God': I use this term in inverted commas because 'God' is the generic term people use, while I don't any more. I have an intimate relationship with the members of the Trinity, so I refer to them by name out of relationship. Out of my oneness with them, I also refer to them as The Trinity.

2 – Or 'convoke': 'call together' (Thayer's definition) www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G4863/sunago.htm

3 – Strong's definition   www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G4863/sunago.htm