

Small Group Notes

Sermon: 2 June 2024

Notes by Sam Gardner



SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 5

OVERVIEW

In chapter 5, Paul outlines some instructions for how Timothy is to organise the church in Ephesus by addressing 3 areas: 1) how the church is to relate to each other; 2) how true widows are to be supported; and 3) how accusations against elders are to be handled.

Bringing organisation to something can be hard-going and a dull, tick-box type of job. Underneath Paul's instructions, however, we can see his heart for what kind of church he wants them to be – and this is first and foremost expressed by viewing church as FAMILY.

In verses 1-2, the church is to be a 'Family' before being an 'Organisation'. The church should relate as brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers.

The church is not an Organisation that is familial; it is a Family that is organised.

In verses 3-8 as well as verse 16, the church is to be a Family of families. In organising how the church cares for widows, Paul directs the immediate family of those widowed to be responsible for their care. Provision for one's own family is a spiritual issue of utmost importance, and helps with the health and organisation of the church.

In verse 9-15, the church is to be a fair family. Paul qualifies who does and does not qualify for widow support, highlighting younger widows who a) have immediate family, b) who have not been honest about their relationship status, and c) who behave inappropriately, should not receive church support. A church family should consider how they distribute their time and resources – both on a large, whole-church level as well as the smaller, individual level.

Finally, in verse 17-25, the church is to be a family led well. Paul instructs the church to doubly honour their leaders, and to not quickly entertain accusations against them. That said, they are to be held to account, and when persistent sin and disqualification has been proven, it is to be made public for the whole family to know. The church family is to go out of its way to acknowledge when they are being led well, and to be organised and above board when dealing with leadership failures.

QUESTIONS

1. What difference does it make to view church as a 'Family' rather than an 'Organisation'?

2. How has your being a part of the church family impacted your immediate family? Do you feel like you are able to be an involved member of both?
3. How do you currently use your time and resources to help others in the church family? What does it mean to do this 'fairly'?
4. How can we all be involved in honouring our leaders as well as keeping them to account for their fatherly care of the church family?