Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday - October 25, 2026

Preached By: Matt Alexander

"The Church as the Household of God"

Set In Order - God's Design for His Church - Message #10

1 Timothy 5:1-16

Homiletical Bridge

CIT: Paul instructed Timothy how believers, families, and the congregation should care faithfully for one another within God's household.

FCF: Because sin makes us selfish, irresponsible, and undiscerning, we often neglect our responsibility for others or fail to care wisely for those who are genuinely vulnerable.

Thesis: Because the church is God's household, God's people must care for one another with both compassion and responsibility.

Proposition: I want Fusion Church to increasingly live and care for one another like the household of God.

PQ: How should we care for one another in God's household?

1. **Treat One Another as Family — vv. 1–2**
2. **Take Responsibility for Your Family — vv. 3–8**
3. **Test the Reality of Faithfulness — vv. 9–15**
4. **Target the Church's Care Wisely — v. 16**

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Work through the questions at whatever pace fits your group. You do not need to cover every question in a single sitting. Prioritize honest conversation over simply completing the material.

OPENING QUESTION

Think about a time when someone in your family or church community showed up for you in a moment of genuine need. What did that act of care communicate to you about how they saw you?

SERMON OVERVIEW

Pastor Matt opened with a simple but searching question: what is the difference between a crowd and a family? A crowd gathers and disperses without obligation. A family notices, knows, and takes responsibility. Using 1 Timothy 5:1–16, he showed that the church is not merely an organization to manage but a household to love. Paul gave Timothy four practical answers to the question of how God's people should care for one another.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *The church is described in 1 Timothy 3:15 as the household of God, and that identity shapes how every relationship within it should function.*

- *Believers are to treat one another with the same relational warmth, respect, and purity they would bring to their closest family relationships.*

- *Caring for aging or vulnerable family members is not merely a social obligation — Paul calls it an expression of genuine godliness.*

- *Neglecting family responsibilities while maintaining a visible church presence is a contradiction Paul takes seriously, calling it a practical denial of the faith.*

- *Biblical compassion is both warm-hearted and wise. The goal of the church's care is not temporary relief alone but lasting spiritual good for the people God has entrusted to it.*

- *Good works flow from salvation as its fruit, not its root. A life of faithful, ordinary service reflects the grace already received, not an attempt to earn standing before God.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section 1 — Treat One Another as Family (vv. 1–2)

1. Pastor Matt asked whether we see one another as family or merely as people who attend the same church. How would you honestly answer that question about your own experience at Fusion?

2. Paul tells Timothy to correct an older man not by harsh rebuke but by encouraging him as a father. What does that tell us about the relationship between truth and tone? Can you think of a time when you were right about something but wrong in how you said it?

3. Paul adds the phrase "in all purity" when describing relationships with younger women. Why do you think he felt it necessary to include that qualification? What does moral integrity in church relationships protect, both for individuals and for the congregation as a whole?

4. Jesus said in John 13:35 that love among believers is the primary way the world identifies his disciples. In what specific ways does your small group reflect that kind of identifying love?

Section 2 — Take Responsibility for Your Family (vv. 3–8)

5. Pastor Matt said that sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do this week is take care of your family. Does that reframe how you think about godliness? What are some ordinary acts of family care that rarely get recognized as spiritual faithfulness?

6. Paul's warning in verse 8 is striking — he says that failing to provide for your own family is a practical denial of the faith. Why do you think he uses such strong language? What is he trying to protect?

7. Pastor Matt described a scenario where someone is deeply involved at church while an aging parent nearby goes without basic care. Without naming anyone, have you ever seen that tension play out — or felt it in your own life? How did you navigate it?

8. He also acknowledged that some family situations are complicated by financial limitations, illness, or unsafe relationships. How does a group or a church help someone discern what genuine responsibility looks like when circumstances are difficult?

Section 3 — Test the Reality of Faithfulness (vv. 9–15)

9. The qualifications Paul lists in verse 10 describe decades of quiet, ordinary faithfulness — raising children, showing hospitality, serving believers, caring for the afflicted. None of those things come with a platform or applause. Who in your life or church community embodies that kind of faithful, unrecognized service? How might you honor them?

10. Pastor Matt drew a clear distinction: good works are the fruit of salvation, not the root of it. Why is that distinction important? What goes wrong when we reverse it?

11. Paul's concern with younger widows in this passage is not that they are unworthy of care but that a particular arrangement was unintentionally enabling patterns that were spiritually harmful. What does that suggest about how we should think about compassion? Is it ever loving to say no to a request for help?

12. Pastor Matt said biblical compassion should promote faithfulness, not enable destructive patterns. How does a church or a small group hold both of those commitments at the same time without becoming either cold or naive?

Section 4 — Target the Church's Care Wisely (v. 16)

13. Paul's logic in verse 16 is that when families fulfill their responsibilities, the church is freed to care for those who genuinely have no one else. How does that principle shape the way you think about your own role within the broader community of Fusion Church?

14. Pastor Matt said the goal is not to spend less on people but to care wisely for the people God has entrusted to us. What is the difference between a church that manages a benevolence budget and a church that faithfully loves people? What does the second one actually look like in practice?

Closing and Gospel Application

15. In the conclusion, Pastor Matt pointed to John 19:26–27, where Jesus, in the middle of bearing the weight of the world's sin, made sure his mother would be cared for. What does that moment reveal about the character of Christ? How does it shape the way you think about your own responsibilities to others?

16. Pastor Matt closed with this statement: "We don't care for others to earn a place in God's family. We care for others because Christ has brought us into His family." How does the gospel change the motivation behind every act of care described in this passage?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Work through these individually or as a group. Choose at least one to act on before your next meeting.

For individuals:

- Identify one family member — a parent, grandparent, or relative — who may need your attention this week. Make a specific plan to reach out, visit, or provide practical help.
- Consider whether there is someone in your church family you have been meaning to check on but have not. Make the call or send the message this week.
- Reflect honestly on whether any of your church involvement has become a substitute for responsibilities God has already given you at home.

For the group:

- As a group, identify one older or more vulnerable member of Fusion Church who might benefit from intentional encouragement or practical support. Discuss how your group could take responsibility for that person together.
- Talk openly about what it would look like for your small group to function more like a family — not just a discussion group. What specific commitments or habits would that require?

For prayer:

- Pray for those in your church community who are genuinely vulnerable — widows, isolated individuals, or those without nearby family support.
- Ask God to reveal where you may have been waiting for someone else to do something He has already called you to do.
- Pray that Fusion Church would be known not as a crowd that gathers but as a family that loves.

MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK

1 Timothy 3:15 — Paul describes the church as the household of God. Meditate on what that identity means for how you relate to the people around you at Fusion this week.

Set in Order: God's Design for His Church — Fusion Church Madison