

Intro:

Thesis: "The Church Cares for the Needy, B/C Christ Cares for us."

I. True Care

- A. **The Church should be a place that reflects who God is.** Jesus was God and reflected God's heart on earth. The Church reflects Jesus as God's reflection.
- B. **God is a "protector/defender of the widows." HONOR.**
- C. **Ps. 68:5,146:9; Prov. 15:24; Dt. 10:18, 24:17; Is. 1:17; James 1:27** (Justice, Welfare, Protects, Pleads/Represents, Boundaries/Rights)

ILLUSTRATION: Acts 6. It was caring for the widows. Distributing food. Feeding the hungry. Needed to make sure they were all taken care of and cared for. Important work.

- D. **The Principle here is to Care for the Needy.** They're everywhere. Vulnerable to societal abuse or disadvantages. The marginalized. The disabled/sick. The uneducated. Those with criminal records. Those with less resources, flexibility and networks for getting momentum. Finding opportunities. Skills learned. Work ethic. Abilities.
- E. **Help & Disciple: Poor, Disabled, Marginalize, Oppressed, Addicted. Powerless/Helpless.**
- F. **Identify truly needy ones, then help them.** Financially. Practically. Resources. Food.

APPLICATION: 1. Baby Shower in my First Church. First time I had ever seen an adult in church with no teeth. Single Woman. Poor. Drug history. Pregnant out of wedlock. The church through a baby shower for her. It was a beautiful thing! She had limited resources. Needy.
2. Black History Month. Historically, large portion of the Church did not care for those in Need. The African-Americans. Human beings. Recognize their humanity, rights, dignity, value. They did not protect, Justice, Welfare, Protect, Plead, Represent, Rights. That's our history. Sad.

II. Family Care

- A. **Take care of each other.** Kids/Grands take care of parents and grandparents. Payback.
- B. **Especially believers.** Even pagans do/get this. *Law of nature. Common Sense. Family.*
- C. **Why? To ease the burden that's placed on church, so church can focus on those who are truly needy and without any power/help. Believing Women especially.**

ILLUSTRATION: Ice Age. "That's what you do in a herd, you watch out for each other." **Mother-In-Law Suite.** Bed. Bathroom/Toilet. Kitchen. Dining area. Living area. Laundry. Separate entry!

APPLICATION: African/Asian cultures. Family/group identity and mindset. This is assumed. There's no question that they will be cared for. **African-American culture.**

III. Wise Care

- A. **Stewardship of Resources.** When you give to the church, it's for ministry & God's glory.
- B. **Training & Discipleship of all people.** Not just throwing money and doing handouts.
- C. **Practical Guidance and Wisdom.** Cultural/Opportunities. We have a lot more opportunities today. Resources. Work. Education.

ILLUSTRATION: Roman Culture. Dowry system. Widows were to remarry for their own good and the good of any children. Provision. It was also believed that it was bad for a woman's health to go without marriage relations. Paul is writing with some cultural influence, but he's also writing out of principle of wisdom. Here's the main principle.

APPLICATION: Someone who acted very needy. Financial help. Rent pay. Clothes. Food. Etc. Turns out they just didn't know how to keep a job, live healthy, cook and manage money. They needed practical help. Wise help. Not just money handed out. **"Teach a man to fish."**

Conclusion on Back....

SCRIPTURE: 1 Tim. 5:1-16 TITLE: "FAITHFUL: Care"

CONCLUSION: EVERY PERSON....

> No matter situation or setting has God-given dignity, value, Honor as Image Bearers.

> Value to add to the church and to culture. There's something for everyone. Nobody who is In Christ is truly "disabled." You are able to serve in many different ways. How can you serve? How can you operate with an attitude of gratitude, humility; not entitlement & self-indulgence.

> Needs to be served according to their needs, and serve according to their abilities. The beauty of the Church, is that it's a place where we all admit that we are weak, helpless, powerless and needy, but also valuable, gifted and have purposed and power by the grace of God to make a difference.

> Gets to ask themselves and others how they get to be useful and be used by God in the Church and in the lives of others, not just use and take advantage of the Church and others.

> Widows, Poor, Disabled, Retired, Uneducated, Housewife, etc. can find purpose, worth, exercise their gifts by serving and helping in the Church. You find a sense of dignity in that.

> Ministry: Prayer ministry, emailing, note writing, phone calling/texting, anniversaries, birthdays, deaths, etc., visiting, cooking, baking, pet sitting, babysitting, teaching kids, prison ministry, evangelism, discipleship, testimony, family.

> Make good use of your time on earth while you can. You only have so much time left to serve the Lord in His Church and His earthly Kingdom. You'll have lots of time to rest and relax in heaven. Think of the eternal impact you could have on someone's life. What if God used you to lead one person to Christ. Either by inviting them to church, loving them, writing them notes, praying for their salvation, baking them a pie, etc. There's so much left for you to do!

Conclusion on Back....