

“Ministry To All Ages”
Letters to Timothy — Part 10
1 Timothy 5

1. A pastor must minister without partiality.

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.
1 Timothy 5:1-2

4 Things all pastors need:

- Leadership, not dictatorship
- Humility, not exclusivity
- Moral purity, not sensuality
- Accountability, not independence

2. The church cares for those the world does not.

The problem:

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.
Acts 6:1

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.
James 1:27

The general principle:

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need.
1 Timothy 5:3

A Christian family's commitment care:

But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever...If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.
1 Timothy 5:4-8 and 16

The church's commitment care:

No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.
1 Timothy 5:9-10

3 Qualifications for the office of widow:

- **Over 60** (Rabbinic oral tradition marked 60 as the beginning of old age.)
- **A “one-man-woman.”** This phrase matches the qualification for an elder. This qualification has to do with character. Scripture never condemns remarriage after death of a spouse.

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7:39

- **A reputation for good works.** (5 examples are given: emotional and spiritual maturity, decency, humility, mercy; seeks opportunities to do good deeds.)

Instructions for young widows:

As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

1 Timothy 5:11-15

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake."...

Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

Application: Church charity is not a substitute for personal responsibility. The church cannot support everyone in need, nor should we expect it to. A benevolent fund is a great thing when used wisely to meet real needs.

3. Honoring and protecting Elders

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

1 Timothy 5:17-20

Preparation for hard realities:

- ***Accusations are a serious thing and must be brought responsibly.***
- ***Don't listen to every whim of criticism.***
- ***The purpose of discipline is always restoration.***
- ***Do everything openly and aboveboard.***
- ***Once forgiven, the matter is settled and should not be brought up again.***

4. Summary, warning, personal health, and an observation

I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism. Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.

1 Timothy 5:21-25

***Follow the trail of good deeds to their source,
and you will often find a worthy elder.***