

# The Church: God's Family on Earth

## 1 Timothy 5

### INTRODUCTION:

- Discuss: What do you think the greatest threats have been to the local church in the last 50 years? *Allow for some discussion...*
- Point out these specific ones:
  - Radical individualism – The idea that man is sovereign. The individual chooses what is best for him with no care or concern for how his choices may impact others. In church application, “I don’t have to be a member of a church to be a good Christian.”
  - Technology – This has made it easy for people to opt out of the activities of the local church. We can stream the service on-line from anywhere. We can listen or “attend” any church anywhere in the world.
  - Automobiles – Before we had cars, people would attend the church that was closest to home and there weren’t many options. This forced people to stick through difficult times and dented fenders. With the automobile, if my emotional fender gets dented I can simply drive a few more minutes to the next church.
- Paul presents quite a contrast to the modern concept of the church. The local church is the physical family of God on earth. In today’s chapter, he deals with a broad range of family members.

### BIBLE STUDY:

1. The Composition of God’s Family (vs. 1-2)
  - a. The church is not a building. The church is made up of people, but not just any random collection of people. The church is made up of a collection of people who are spiritually connected by an eternal bond that will never be broken.
  - b. Paul makes this clear by his choice of words in these two verses. We are to treat others “as fathers, as brothers, as mothers, as sisters.” When a person joins a church, they join a family!
  - c. How ought we to treat our family? This goes a long way in defining how we are to get along in the church.
  - d. The first example Paul gives is in reference to the “elders.” This is a specific reference to an aged, mature believer. We should treat them as we would treat our father. What does this look like?
    - i. We must not speak roughly or act impatiently.
    - ii. They deserve our respect and dignity.
    - iii. Many times, the older members are ridiculed for their “traditional” ideas and music preferences. Paul says this should not be normal in God’s family!
  - e. At the same time, the older members should be patient with the younger members. We all need each other!
  - f. This also applies to the differences between men and women. We must remember we are brothers and sisters in Christ.
    - i. Men do not look upon women with lust as the world does.
    - ii. Women respect men.
    - iii. Older women are our mothers and young men are our brothers.
  - g. The family of God is one. We are united together as the body of Christ.
2. The Compassion in God’s Family (vs. 3-16)
  - a. As we can see from point 1, God’s family as experienced in the local church is special. This means that it ought to be filled with special compassion expressed between God’s people.
    - i. Quite simply, we are to love one another.
    - ii. Or as Paul wrote in Galatians 6:10, we are to do good to others, but especially to those within “the household of faith.”

- b. Case Study (use this as group work): To make his point, Paul singles out widows to represent the church's obligation to minister to all its members. Widows, who are often neglected by the world, should be protected by the church. Paul makes two specific points:
  - c. First, some widows need their physical families to bear much of the ministry burden.
    - i. If a widow has a family, family has first responsibility (vs. 4).
    - ii. This is a reminder that the home is the first place our Christian witness is to shine. Paul has strong words for the family that doesn't provide for their own (vs. 8).
    - iii. Paul reiterates his point again in verse 16.
  - d. Second, some widows need their spiritual families to bear the ministry burden. This is who Paul is addressing as "desolate" in verse 5.
  - e. Paul then pens a lengthy paragraph going into deeper detail the qualifications that widows must have when qualifying for assistance.
3. The Custody of God's Family (vs. 17-25)
- a. God's family on earth is gifted by those whom the Lord anoints as custodians of His family. These would be pastors.
  - b. Paul's point: Pastors who serve God's church, overseeing His ministry are to receive special recognition and authority within the church. Paul addresses four areas of concern:
  - c. First, financial matters need to be considered.
    - i. Paul's main point is honor (vs. 17-18).
    - ii. The most important work the pastor can accomplish is faithfully preaching God's Word.
    - iii. When a pastor faithfully fulfills his duties, he should be generously ("double honor") rewarded financially. This simply means that they should be able to comfortably provide for their family.
  - d. Second, spiritual matters need to be considered.
    - i. Paul's main point is holiness (vs. 19-22).
    - ii. Sin cannot be taken lightly within the church, and church leadership is not exempt. Paul placed high standards upon those who would bring charges against church leaders.
    - iii. In these verses Paul prescribes a process:
      1. It begins with the accusation (vs. 19). Two or three witnesses are required.
      2. Then there is the confrontation (vs. 20). When the facts are known, the determination is made whether or not the church leader sinned.
      3. The process culminates with determination (vs. 21-22). While the goal is always redemption and restoration, there are also consequences when sin is revealed.
  - e. Third, physical matters need to be considered.
    - i. Paul's main point is the health of the church leader (vs. 23).
    - ii. It's hard to do anything when one is suffering from physical illness!
  - f. Finally, eternal matters need to be considered.
    - i. Paul's main point is the hereafter (vs. 24-25).
    - ii. Paul addresses the sin question in verse 24. All sin will be revealed!
    - iii. Paul addresses the service question in verse 25. All service will be recognized!

#### APPLICATION:

- If we took Paul's admonition to consider our church as family, how would it impact our lives?
- What would look different?