

Caring for Our Church Family (Deuteronomy 24:17-22 and 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2a)

04-Oct-26

Deuteronomy 24:17-22

¹⁷ Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. ¹⁸ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

¹⁹ When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. ²¹ When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. ²² Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

1 Timothy 5:1-6:2a

Widows, Elders and Slaves

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

³ Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. ⁸ Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ⁹ No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, ¹⁰ and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

¹¹ 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. ¹² Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. ¹³ 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 busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. ¹⁴ So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. ¹⁵ Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

¹⁶ If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

¹⁷ The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." ¹⁹ Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. ²⁰ But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning. ²¹ 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 favouritism.

²² Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

²³ Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

²⁴ The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. ²⁵ In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.

6 All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. ² Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare of their slaves.

There are **Bibles** in front of you

And a sermon **outline**

I encourage you to have your **Bibles opened** at **1 Timothy chapter 5**

Let's pray...

Intro/Family

Question to begin with

"Can anyone tell me what I usually say when I begin the worship service?"

(pause)

That's right!

"G'Day Church Family"

That's not some quirky thing I say!

It's actually deliberate!

And that's because as a church of believers in Jesus – we are all part of Jesus' family – and so we are a **church family**.

That's what we just taught the children this morning.

[Slide-Mark 3:35]

Jesus explained in Mark 3:35 who His family is– He said:

Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother

And what is **God's will**?

Jesus tells us that too in John 6:40

[Slide-John 6:40]

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son [Jesus] and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.

So if we are part of Jesus' family – a church family

It begs the question – what does it look like to be a Church Family? How do we care for our Church Family?

Well – that's where the Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy – chapter 5 verse 1 to chapter 6 verse 2 comes in!

[Slide-1st]

1st point then – **How to Treat Everyone in the Church Family** – that's verses 1-2

How to Treat Everyone in the Church Family — 1 Timothy 5:1–2

And first up – we have **older men**

V1 – Timothy is *not to rebuke older men harshly but exhort an older man as if he was a father.*

Rebuke means “stern disapproval or criticism”

The Greek word used here for rebuke literally means “**strike at**” – so Timothy is not to attack an older man with harsh words [a tongue lashing] – but instead treat the older man with respect for his age.

Most of us grew up with the advice “have respect for your elders!”

So it doesn't mean Timothy is NEVER to rebuke an older man – but that he must do it kindly and gently!

Why?

Because - the older man will not take too kindly to a harsh rebuke (especially from a young upstart!) and he probably won't receive the rebuke well!

Also when rebukes are overly harsh – people raise their defense mechanism pretty quickly – and pride takes over – and their hurt feelings become more

important than the necessary rebuke. I'm certainly guilty of that one – perhaps you might be too?

Although we're talking about the rebuke of an older man – it's a pretty good principle – not to be overly harsh when rebuking someone.

No one likes to be rebuked; but a wise person will take the rebuke as a valuable way to grow in godliness.

Charles Spurgeon says, “A sensible friend who will unsparingly criticize you from week to week will be a far greater blessing to you than a thousand indiscriminating admirers - if you have sense enough to bear his criticism, and grace enough to be thankful for it” (Lectures to My Students).

Next we have **younger men** – still in verse 1

Younger men must be treated as brothers.

And verse 2 – *older women [are to be treated] as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.!*

Older women - are to be treated as mothers, with the respect and honour due their age. A young minister/pastor must accept — and appreciate — there will be some amount of mothering from some of the older women in the church family, and it is proper for the minister/pastor to give these mothering older women honour and respect.

I can say I have plenty of mothers out there – who mother me! And I really appreciate it!

Younger women – are to be treated as sisters, with absolute purity. Timothy as a godly man was to make sure his conduct towards younger women was always pure and above reproach. A godly man must not be flirtatious or provocative.

(pause)

Isn't it wonderful that no matter what our birth family situation is like – we can have extra fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers in our church family.

Personally, being an only child and not having my parents alive – I am blessed to have mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers – here at church.

Praise God!

(pause)

And if we are indeed part of Jesus' family

Perhaps we could take time to get to know each other better?

Before or after the worship service – introduce yourself to someone sitting near you whom you don't know

And if you already know the people sitting near you – ask them how they are going

The same thing at morning tea – introduce yourself to someone sitting nearby – and also ask people how their week was

And if you notice someone missing one Sunday – give them a call – tell them you missed them – and check they are okay

That's what families do – isn't it?

(pause)

[Slide – 2nd]

2nd point then – How to Treat Widows in the Church Family – that’s

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 and 1 Timothy 5 verses 3-16

How to Treat Widows in the Church Family — Deuteronomy 24:17-22 and 1 Timothy 5:3–16

The care of widows is not a new thing

In our OT reading from Deuteronomy 24:17-22 [[please turn there now](#)] – God made provisions for widows

Remember in both OT and NT times there was no such thing as Centrelink to provide financially for a widow

So V17 – God commanded that widows were not to be deprived – and no one could take a widow’s cloak as a pledge. The reason being that in the ancient world poor people might leave their cloak as security when borrowing money – but poor people might use their cloak as a blanket at night.

And V19 – God commanded that during harvesting time if a sheaf of wheat was missed – the harvester was not to go back and get it – but to leave it for widows (and foreigners and the fatherless)

Likewise God also made provision when olive trees (v20) and grapes from the vine (v21) were harvested.

God’s reasoning for these provisions is given in v18 and v22 – God says:

“Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this”

It’s like God is reminding the Israelites – you lived in Egypt as slaves so you know what it was like to be powerless, dependent and vulnerable – you were once at

the mercy of others – and now that God has rescued you and given you security – don't you dare neglect people who are vulnerable like you once were!

This same care for widows is given great attention in our NT reading from 1 Timothy 5 – verses 3 to 16 [[Please turn there now](#)]

Paul specifies different categories of widows:

1. Widows who are really in need – vv3-5

These are widows who are truly alone; have no family to support them; they *put their hope in God and continue night and day to pray and ask God for help* (v5)

And Paul says they are to be *given proper recognition and help* (v3) by the Church

2. Widows with children and/or grandchildren – vv4, 8, 16

These widows have family who are able to support and care for them.

Therefore the family should provide for these widows rather than leaving the church to do it!

3. Widows who live for pleasure – verse 6

Paul says such widows are dead even whilst they live. What Paul means is they are spiritually dead and disconnected from God.

Therefore, they are not to be treated as a widow needing the support of the church. They in fact, need prayer to come back to the Lord!

4. Widows within a Christian household/family that are able to help – vv7-8

Paul says the relatives have a Christian responsibility for these widows.

And the Church should have the view that failure to keep this responsibility indicates the family have denied the faith (i.e. they have denied the basic premise of Christianity to show love) and they are acting worse than an unbeliever.

5. Widows who are eligible to be included on the Church's widow list – vv9-10

Such widows must be *over 60 years old; faithful in marriage; well known for their good deeds, such as raising children and providing hospitality; washing the feet of the Lord's people; helping those in trouble and devoted to all kinds of good deeds.*

Such widows, Paul says – are to be enrolled on the widows list and entitled to ongoing support from the church.

6. Younger widows – vv11-15

Paul says younger widows *may find their sensual desires drive them towards remarrying anyway.* And this desire then – v12 – *breaks their pledge to remain widows* and receive support from the church. Paul also says younger widows are more likely to *have a habit of being idle and going from house to house; being busybodies and talking nonsense.*

Paul says younger widows are not to be enrolled on the widows list but instead to be *encouraged to remarry, have children and manage their household rather than give the enemy (Satan) an opportunity for slander.*

7. Widows under the care of a believing woman – v16

Paul says the believing woman should continue to care for the widows and not let them be a burden on the church – so that the church can help those widows who are genuinely on their own and need help!

Applying these helpful practical instructions from Paul to our church family today – as we care for our church family

We could summarize this into 3 broad categories

1. Widows who are genuinely alone and in need

→ **The church should care for them.** (vv3, 5, 9–10)

2. Widows who have family able to care for them

→ **The family should care for them.** (vv4, 8, 16)

3. Widows who don't meet the criteria for ongoing church support

→ **They should not automatically be placed on the church's support list.** (vv6, 11–15)

But what might this kind of practical care actually look like for widows in our own church family?

It could be as simple as:

Love and friendship — making sure widows know they are valued and remembered.

Prayer — praying with them and for them, particularly through difficult seasons.

Phone calls and messages — keeping in regular contact, especially when life becomes lonely.

Visits — taking time to sit, listen and share life together.

Practical help — such as providing transport to appointments or helping with shopping and other everyday tasks.

Hospitality — inviting them into our homes and making sure they are included in the life of the church.

Meals and food — particularly during times of illness, bereavement or difficulty. Possibly having a meal roster.

Financial help and guidance — helping someone navigate financial difficulties or connecting them with appropriate professional assistance when needed.

Technology help — helping them with phones, computers, online services, banking or other technology that can sometimes become overwhelming.

Helping them prepare for the later stages of life — talking through things such as home care, retirement living and aged care, and helping them think about how they can finish life well spiritually and leave a godly legacy for those who come after them.

None of these things has to be extraordinary. Sometimes the greatest gift we can give someone is simply to notice them, give them time, listen to them and walk alongside them.

And if you feel God may be laying on your heart the care of widows or others who need pastoral care, we will be holding Pastoral Care Training on 7th

November. We would love you to come and learn how we can care for one another more intentionally as a church family.

[Slide – 3rd]

3rd point then – **How to Treat Leaders in the Church Family** — that’s 1 Timothy 5:17–25

How to Treat Leaders in the Church Family — 1 Timothy 5:17–25

In this section Paul gives instructions to Timothy related to **elders** – or **church leaders**

V17 - Paul says *the elders who direct the affairs of the church well, especially those whose work involves preaching and teaching, are worthy of double honour.*

By “*Double honour*” Paul means church leaders deserve respect and appropriate material support. Because Paul goes on to support this with the principle that “*the worker deserves his wages*” (v18).

And that is why the Presbyterian Church gives ministers who are elders that preach and teach -a **stipend**.

A **stipend** is a fixed, regular sum of money paid to a minister—to help cover living expenses rather than paying a wage based on an hourly rate. This stipend allows the minister to serve full time in ministry rather than trying to support themselves and their families in secular work and at the same time do ministry.

Paul then in v19 tackles the situation where accusations are made against a church leader. Such accusations must be proved by two or three witnesses.

Those who are found guilty of the accusations v20 – must be rebuked in public.

A public offence in a public office deserves a public rebuke!

Many churches have suffered great turmoil because sin in the leadership was not properly dealt with. It's important that everyone understands that leadership in the church does not shield a leader from accountability. In fact - church leaders are even more accountable, because if they sin they can lead many astray!

According to John Calvin, in the Middle Ages, the church protected its corrupt bishops against accusation by demanding that 72 witnesses be brought forward to confirm any accusation against a bishop. This is an extreme example of corrupt leaders protecting other corrupt leaders.

Paul also instructs Timothy in v21 - to act *without partiality or favouritism* because decisions concerning church leaders can be very sensitive and potentially divisive issues. Timothy must judge leadership matters fairly and impartially, regardless of someone's position, personality, influence or relationship with him. Paul places Timothy under a solemn *charge before God, Christ Jesus and the elect angels.*

Timothy must also v22 – *not be too hasty in the laying on of hands*

By “*laying on of hands*” Paul means “ordaining” ministers/elders.

Good wise leadership does not rush to ordain ministers or elders – but allows time for the person to be ordained to develop and demonstrate their God-given

gifts and to demonstrate their faithfulness and suitability for leadership and ministry!

Paul goes on to say – still in v22 – “*do not share in the sins of others*”

What Paul means here is we must not appoint someone to leadership before we have properly assessed their character. If we knowingly put an unsuitable or sinful person into leadership, we ourselves can become responsible for the consequences of that person's leadership.

And that is why Paul also says in v22 – “*[Timothy], keep yourself pure*”

If Timothy is called to observe and assess the lives of others, it is important that he pay even more close attention to his own life. Paul's intention of the warning “*keep yourself pure*” was that Timothy would best avoid leadership scandals by being very cautious from the outset as to the character of those whom he ordains.

This same practical wisdom “*to keep themselves pure*” equally applies to leaders today! Leaders keep themselves pure by sticking to God's Word and ensuring the leaders they wish to ordain also stick to God's Word faithfully BEFORE ordaining them!

Then v23 -Paul gives some personal advice to Timothy *to stop drinking only water and use a little wine* because Timothy had a delicate stomach and frequent illnesses. In Paul and Timothy's day the water was impure and so the fermentation process of a little wine would remove a lot of the bugs in the water.

It's a reminder to us as Christians, that we should neither neglect our bodies nor make health an idol. We should take reasonable and appropriate care of the bodies God has given us!

Finally on the subject of leadership, in vv24-25 - Paul reminds Timothy that *some people's sins are obvious, while others become apparent only later*.

Likewise, good deeds may be immediately evident, while others take time to become visible.

This reinforces the warning in verse 22: not to rush to appoint people to leadership; instead, their character needs to be observed over time.

4th point then – How to Treat People We Work with — that's 1 Timothy 6:1-2

[Slide-4th]

How to Treat People We Work with — 1 Timothy 6:1-2

In vv1-2 Paul is talking about how slaves are to work for their masters.

In our context today we don't have master/slave roles.

We do have **employer/employee relationships**.

And we do have **church leaders and ministry team members working together in ministry**.

In other words, whether inside or outside the church, we will often find ourselves in a situation where we are working under the direction or authority of someone else.

So while we cannot simply equate slavery with modern employment, **the principles Paul gives about how Christians conduct themselves in a working relationship are still relevant to us today.**

Paul makes it clear that our Christian faith should affect the way we work and the way we treat those we work with.

As Christians, we are to **work with respect, integrity and a desire to honour Christ.** We should not take advantage of someone simply because they are a Christian, nor should we treat our Christian brothers and sisters with less respect because we know them personally.

Ultimately, **the way we work and the way we treat people we work with should bring honour to Jesus' Name and demonstrate the difference that Jesus makes in our lives.**

When I worked in IT – and I had a difficult or rude boss – I found it much easier to work well – when I decided I was working to honour God rather than the difficult boss. People notice how we conduct ourselves – even when facing difficult bosses – and this can have them asking why or how we are able to do this. And the answer is – ***I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*** (Phil 4:13)

Conclusion

So here in 1 Timothy 5:1-6:2 we have seen detailed instructions how to care for our Church Family.

The Apostle Paul summarizes this idea well in **Galatians 6:10**

[Slide-Gal 6:10]

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Let's pray...

Benediction (Galatians 6:9-10)

⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Amen.