

The Local Church: All in the Family **1 Timothy 5:1-8**

Introduction:

1. All of us that know Christ as our Savior are part of the same family and household (Ephesians 2:19). We have the same Father (Ephesians 4:6) and are members of the same body (Ephesians 4:4). We are a spiritual family in Christ. We are all in the family of God.
2. There are many of you like me. Your physical family is separated from you by distance. Or maybe they are geographically close to you and you love them, but you really don't share a lot in common. You are in Christ, and they are not.
3. Jesus taught that there can be a group of fellow believers in your life that are closer to you than physical family. Isn't this amazing? Matthew 12:46-50
4. God has designed the church to be a place where you can literally gain an extended family (1 Timothy 5:1-2). I know many of you have experienced this, and it has revolutionized your life.
5. But just as physical families can experience conflict and turmoil, spiritual families can too! Paul realized this and gave us some good practical instruction in this chapter.
6. We must carefully guard and protect our spiritual relationships. How can we do this? There are three key words that we must always remember in regards to our spiritual relationships in the local church.

Unity – vs. 1

1. In Bible days, when a person became a Christian and he was a Jew, he was thrown out of the synagogue. If he was a Gentile, he was ostracized from the local pagan fellowship of idolatry.
2. Christians were brought together in fellowship and local assemblies, and there was a very strong sense of closeness, like family.
3. So Paul first deals with the issue of unity and showing common courtesy to one another in the family of God. Friction can develop in physical families. Why? Common courtesy simply is not shown to one another. Therefore Paul says:
 - *“Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father...”*
 - This isn't necessarily talking about an official elder of the church. He is saying, “Show respect to those who are older than you.”
 - You don't go around chewing people out when they cross you or disagree with you. You get them aside privately and talk to them with respect, as a father. When people fly off the handle, they show their lack of submission to the Holy Spirit.
 - Paul also says, *“...the younger men as brethren.”*
 - Don't look down your nose at another person just because he is younger. Treat him as a brother. Brothers are equals. Treat them as brothers, and as equals.

- Paul is saying, “Treat people right, and with respect and courtesy.” It is possible to be right in principle, but wrong in practice. This hurts and destroys people and brings disunity and division in the family of God.
4. Many people pride themselves in the fact that they always speak their mind, no matter where they are or who they’re speaking to. This is not an admirable trait. It simply shows that the person has little discretion and little respect for other members of the family.
 5. God desires unity within His family. It pleases him to see that unity and camaraderie.

Purity – vs. 2

1. Now Paul deals with Timothy and members of the opposite sex. God not only desires for us to exercise unity in our spiritual family relationships, but also purity.
2. Sexual sin within a local church will destroy it from within. It will wreak havoc among the family of God and bring reproach to Christ in the community.
3. Paul says to treat the older women with the respect you would want your own mother to be treated with. What a beautiful thought. Have a reverent attitude toward her as you would your mother and be ready to help her in any way.
4. Treat the younger ladies with the respect you would want your own sister to be treated with.
5. How do we maintain purity in our relationships?
 - Stay pure in your thought life. 1 Peter 1:13
 - Flee from the appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Do not put yourself in compromising situations. Set up common sense safeguards.

Responsibility – vs. 3-8

1. Remember, the church is a spiritual family. In Paul and Timothy’s day, there were times when an elderly person would have no means of support. They didn’t have pensions, Social Security, Medicare, and nursing homes that were government funded.
2. So notice what Paul says in verse 3. “*Honour*” is from the root word that we get “*honorarium*” from. It has to do with money and taking care of physical needs. But only those who were “*widows indeed.*” They were truly needy and godly widows. vs. 5
3. The church was to step up to the plate and assume responsibility, but only if the elderly person had no family to take care of her. She was truly alone. vs. 4
4. There is a biblical principle that is taught here that we must understand. Children have a God-given responsibility towards their elderly parents. They are to show piety (to respect; support) towards their parents and requite them (pay back).
5. Every young man or woman should remember when they were helpless (couldn’t put clothes on, feed yourself, clean yourself, etc.). The Bible says that “*this is*

good and acceptable before God.” God takes notice when a child assumes this responsibility.

- Paul said in Ephesians 6:2, “*Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise.*”
6. Verse 8 explains how God feels about kids who will not provide for their parents. This is very strong. Paul was very concerned about this being a testimony issue. He points out that even unbelievers in his day knew that they should do this.
 7. When people won’t take care of their loved ones, they are denying that which our faith teaches us. 1 Thessalonians 4:9
 8. The direct doctrinal application of verse 8 deals with children taking care of elderly parents, but certainly this principle applies to others areas. We are each to take responsibility for our own lives and homes and use wise stewardship. We cannot expect others to take care of us or our loved ones. 2 Thessalonians 3:10
 - The local church is a family, and each member of the family must carry his or her own weight. But if there are elderly people who simply have no viable means of support and no family to care for them, God, in His love and grace, makes provision.

In Conclusion:

1. The church truly is a spiritual family. We are all joined together in Christ.
2. We learned from our text three key words in regards to how to protect our spiritual relationships in God’s family.
 - Unity – each believer should proactively seek to promote peace in the family.
 - Purity – each believer should treat members of the opposite sex with all purity.
 - Responsibility – each believer should take responsibility for his or her own physical family.