

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

August 2014

LEADER DEVELOPMENT: CARING FOR OTHERS

INTRODUCTION

What are some memorable ways people have ministered to you or your family?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-25

Note: Widows in first century Jewish culture were usually poor and often destitute, without any means of earning a living. There was no such thing as life insurance. That situation is illustrated by the story of the widow recorded in Mark 12:41-44 where the poor widow gave out of her poverty. We have also seen that in Acts 6, the very first deacons were chosen in order to meet the needs of the Hellenistic Jewish widows. Some of the widows may have turned to prostitution for support or were sexually exploited by the false teachers. Some widows received a stipend from the church in exchange for a vow to help. The church encouraged widows to be (re)married rather than church wards. This also showed that the church considered these second marriages were good and not evil. Widows were also encouraged to marry other believers so they would not abandon their original faith and vows to God.

1. How should believers treat men and women of different ages? Why? Vv 1-2
 2. Why does Paul describe different approaches for ministering to widows? Vv 3-8
 3. How does failing to care for immediate family make one 'worse than an unbeliever'? v 8
 4. Why shouldn't younger widows be 'be put on the list'? v 11
 5. What does Paul encourage these younger widows to do? Why? v 14
 6. Why are some people today reluctant to care for the elderly?
 7. How can a believer's attitude/actions toward the elderly impact their witness?
 8. What important role do church elders fulfill? v 17
 9. Why should great care be taken in the selection of church elders?
 10. How should accusations against church elders be handled? Why is this important? Vv 19-20
- Note: The tense of "sin" (v 20) implies that the elder continues to sin, not a one-time act.*
11. Why should leaders avoid favoritism? v 21
 12. How can leaders keep themselves pure? v 22

EVALUATION/APPLICATION

What are some creative ways you can minister to someone in need this week?

Our cultural situation is much different today. Many women work outside the home and are able to support themselves if they become widows. In other cases, they have the proceeds from life insurance policies to meet their needs. But I think we can take the principles that Paul writes about here and apply them to our current day culture. It seems to me that Paul was concerned about the weakest, neediest and most vulnerable people in his culture – the widows. So I think it would be fair for us to say that today God wants the church family to care of its own family members who are in the most need. That might be widows, but it probably includes a much broader spectrum of people.

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