

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

I. 1 Timothy: Basic Local Church Ministry

K. God's Use Of The Healthy Family Template For Church Relationships (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

I. Introduction

- A. In view of reports of great needs and problems in various churches, much of which has been produced by church leaders themselves, we view the Pastoral Epistles, handbooks on local pastoral ministry.
- B. Church relationships are an important issue, for not only have "high church" groups divided congregations into "clerical" and "lay" classes, but sometimes ministers have been elevated to an almost "Protestant pope" status, leading to emotional and physical abuses of some in congregations. In addition, many people in today's churches have come from dysfunctional family backgrounds, creating behavioral problems in relationships.
- C. 1 Timothy 5:1-2 provides the Biblical template for relationships in the Church, that template being the healthy family unit, and we view this passage for our insight and application (as follows):

II. God's Use Of The Healthy Family Template For Church Relationships, 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

- A. When Paul told Timothy to treat an older man as a father, the younger men as brothers, the elder women as mothers and the younger women as sisters, he mentioned relationships that exist in a family, 1 Timothy 5:1-2.
- B. This command coordinates beautifully with Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 3:4-5 ESV (as follows):
 - 1. Paul taught that to qualify for the office of elder, a man had to know how to manage his own household well with all dignity, keeping his children submissive to him, 1 Timothy 3:4 ESV.
 - 2. The apostle then explained that if a man did not know how to manage his own family, he could not then take care of the church of God, 1 Timothy 3:5 ESV.
 - 3. Thus, the relationships of a man in his family is the template for his relationships in the local church.
- C. Accordingly, we can understand the proper relationships people should have in a church setting (as follows):
 - 1. Scripture gives guidelines on the relationships of Biblical "fathers" in a local church:
 - a. First, just as a family is not composed of a "clerical" and a "laity" class, but the relationships are close, gentle and informal, church leaders must be close, gentle, informal "father" figures to the rest of the body.
 - b. Second, since fathers are to love and care for their wives and children, church leaders must assume oversight in a considerate way, leading not in a dictatorial manner, but by way of example, 1 Peter 5:3.
 - c. Third, since fathers are to lead their homes in a self-sacrificial way (Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:14b), church leaders must nurture the rest of the body in a selfless way, never abusing anyone in the body of Christ.
 - d. Fourth, since fathers are to lead, the rest of the congregation must submit to church leaders, Heb. 13:17.
 - 2. Scripture gives guidelines on the relationships of Biblical "mothers" in a local church:
 - a. Since mothers are to submit to their husbands as keepers of the home and rear their children (1 Timothy 2:12-15), programs in the church that involve motherly-aged women should involve their ministering to children and be in submission to the church's men and its leaders.
 - b. Since mothers teach their daughters how to become good wives and mothers, Titus 2:3-5 directs older women to teach younger women in the church to love their husbands and children and to be homemakers.
 - 3. Scripture gives guidelines on the relationships of Biblical "brothers" and "sisters" in a local church:
 - a. Younger "brothers" and "sisters" in a family are to honor and obey their parents in the Lord for God's blessing (Ephesians 6:1-3), so younger men and women need to submit to their Church leaders (1 Peter 5:5) in humility that God in due time might elevate them to their respective roles of leadership as either older men (leading the younger men) or older women (leading the younger women), 1 Peter 5:6.
 - b. Younger "brothers" and younger "sisters" alike mature and often marry and have families of their own, so both parties should prepare themselves before God for this transition into these future roles in life.

Lesson: *God wants believers to use the template of Biblically healthy family relationships to pattern their Biblically healthy relationships in the local church. Older men should be like fathers, older women like mothers, younger men like brothers and younger women like sisters in all righteousness, holiness and love, with an emphasis on having close, gentle and informal rapport with one another.*

Application: *(1) If we have come from a formal "high church" background where there is a sharp distinction between pastoral "clerical" and congregational "laity" classes, we need to relearn to relate as a spiritual family in the local church. (2) May we then fit within our Biblical father, mother, brother or sister role with God's blessing.*