

SOUND WORK IN THE CHURCH

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: Know the principles that God has given us to help needy people in the church.

Suggestion: The teacher lesson will call attention to some important truths to teach. After the lesson, give your class next week's Student Lesson so they can share their answers in class next week.

Introduction: In this chapter Paul gives instructions to Timothy on how to work with certain groups of people in the local church when they need special attention to meet their needs. These principles are still valid for churches today. "Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" (Rom 12:10).

How should a leader treat the people in his church? 5:1-2

He should treat older people with respect, speaking to them like they would to their father and mother. He should treat young people like brothers and sisters. If young men sin, they are to be corrected with concern as brothers in Christ, not with contempt. If young women need correction, he is to do it with pure actions. In dealing with any member in the church, he is not to use harsh words, but to admonish them firmly with gentleness.

How should the church take care of its widows? 5:3-16

The church must understand that widows of different ages have different needs. Young Christian widows should ask God for another Christian husband, bear children and take care of her home. While she waits for this to happen, she must find some kind of work to take care of her needs like Ruth did (Ruth 2). She must not be supported by the church and remain idle. "Idleness is the Devil's workshop."

A widow that lives in pleasure is spiritually dead (5:6). She is not earnestly seeking God to find His will for her future. She is carelessly pursuing her own will and desires. She must not be supported by the church.

Old widows that are too weak to work or too feeble to take care of themselves need someone to help them. Children or grandchildren are responsible to take care of their widows (5:4). If they are Christians and do not take care of their widow, they have denied the faith and are worse than unbelievers (5:8). Even unbelievers usually take care of their widows. However, if a widow has no relative to care for her and she is destitute, earnestly seeking God each day to provide for her food, clothing and a place to live, the church must determine whether or not she is their responsibility. Paul told them to ask several questions to know if she was a faithful believer before they should give her their support (5:9-10). The questions may be different today, but the principle is valid for churches to follow. If a widow meets the qualifications for support, she is a widow indeed, and the church is responsible to provide for her needs. In many countries, most physical needs are met by the government, but the church is still responsible to see that her spiritual needs as well as all of her physical needs are met.

How should a church care for its elders (pastors)? 5:17-18

The church needs to respect and richly reward their pastor and his assistants when they "rule well" in teaching the Word of God faithfully and in leading them to obey it fully so God can bless them spiritually. They are worthy of "double honor." Honor refers to the income they receive. This is evident from the two illustrations that Paul gives. The ox is free to eat the grain that it threshes (Deut 25:4 and Jesus said, "The laborer is worthy of his hire" (Lk 10:7). The principle of these verses show that elders must be respected as honored members of the church family and should be treated with loving care. It has been suggested that the elders should be given a salary at least equal to the average income of the members in the church where they are laboring. So "double honor" would mean a much higher salary than average.