
Sermon Notes

May 16, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Caring For Widows
1 Timothy 5:9-16

True Religion

- ❖ The heartbeat of true religion
 - Micah 6:8
 - the two greatest commandments
 - James 1:27
- ❖ Caring for women who are alone is one of the best ways to honor God and love your neighbor
 - Christianity at its best
 - pure, undefiled religion
 - widows are an extremely important and valuable resource within the church

A Two-Way Street

- ❖ Paul provides the most consolidated teaching in Scripture on caring for widows
 - the church is to maintain a “list” on which widows are enrolled if they meet certain criteria
 - this practice continues the custom began in Acts 6

- ❖ The list addresses both the support given to and the services provided by widows
 - widows not only receive according to their need, but they give according to their ability
 - Dorcas, Acts 9:36
 - Anna, Luke 2:36
 - widows have a distinctive identity in the early church, and, by the 3rd century, there is an official order of widows within the church
 - the important role women can and should play in the life and ministry of the church
- ❖ Paul notes qualifications widows should meet if they intend to devote themselves to the ministry of the church.
 - the age of maturity (seasoned seniors)
 - a “one-man woman” (a proven track record for faithfulness)
 - a reputation for charity and hospitality
 - care for the afflicted and devoted to every good work
 - Paul’s list of qualifications is not exhaustive but representative
- ❖ The church has always been a leader in mercy ministries, and women have been especially prominent in pioneering such ministries

Boundaries To Maintain

- ❖ *Refuse to enroll younger widows*
 - not a “put-down”: by Paul
 - a reminder not to make promises that you may later be unable or unwilling to keep
 - Scripture never asks anyone to make a “vow of singleness”, but once such a commitment is made, it is meant to be kept
- ❖ Paul is NOT against remarriage: *I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households...*
 - Paul DOES want to protect the church’s reputation against slander
 - better to remarry than to be idle, a gossip, or a busybody
 - since the early church met in homes, “going house to house” may mean “going church to church”
 - spreading false teaching and bad theology
- ❖ Instead of gossip, the focus of staying in close contact with one another should be to encourage one another, help those in need, point the way of salvation to those who are lost, and share together in prayer
- ❖ Stay busy with things that really matter

Summing It All Up

- ❖ Among Christians, the family is to be the first line of defense when it comes to meeting the needs of widows
 - when family is not present or non-existent, the church is to step up and *care for those who are truly widows*
 - if you belong to the church of Jesus Christ, one always has family
- ❖ Widows who are able are encouraged to serve the body of Christ through worship, prayer, witness, providing hospitality, or training and discipling younger women

Personal Application

1. Think of widows you know. What are some tangible ways in which you could serve them by sharing Christ’s love with them?
2. For those who are widows, what are some tangible ways that you can use this season of life to help minister to and build up the body of Christ?
3. Are there any ways in which we as a church can or should do more to apply the message of this section of Scripture?