
RESPECT, CARE, AND HONOUR

OBJECTIVES

1. To be able to give reasons why the Church should be comprised of different generations.
2. To identify who qualifies for a church to practically support.
3. To formulate a strategy for being a single follower of Christ.
4. To describe the reasons why teaching elders should be both honoured and possibly publicly shamed.



BACKGROUND

The Ephesian church was learning how the gospel informed their relationships with each despite their Greco-Roman culture. Some years earlier, Caesar Augustus had attempted to regulate how widows were to conduct themselves after the death of their husbands by introducing the concept of a 'widow for life'. It appears that there was an unforeseen cultural response to this edict that had led many widows to behave like Roman men. This promiscuous behaviour among widows had apparently infiltrated into

the church and cast all widows into an unfair social stigma. This needed to be addressed by Timothy through the various teaching elders within the Ephesians householder churches.

Objective 1 - To be able to give reasons why the Church should be comprised of different generations.

Some churches are now choosing to separate their youth and children from their adults as they each enter for their weekly church service. While having people of the same age bracket enabled to fellowship with each other may have some benefits, it may also unnecessarily send an unhealthy message.

1. Based on First Timothy 5:1-2, what might be an unhealthy message from the practice of separating a church's youth and children from its adults be?

2. How does acceptance of the Gospel change the way believers of different ages interact with each other? (1Tim. 5:1-2)

3. What challenges does a multi-generational church face with its weekly worship service?

Objective 2 - To identify who qualifies for a church to practically support.

The Gospel not only informs how we interact with each other within our church, it also informs how we interact *within* our families.

3. Who does the primary responsibility for a family member in need fall to, and why? (Note 1Tim. 5:8, 16)

4. What traits qualified an older widow for financial support from her church according to First Timothy 5:9-10?

Women are often the backbone of a church. Paul has particularly identified these *older* widowed ladies as filling a vital role of service within the church that younger women (often with their parenting responsibilities) were not able to devote themselves to. The service these older ladies rendered within the church would have enabled those called to minister the Word to do _____ themselves that task (refer also to Acts 6:3-4).

5. What does James 1:27 tell us about what the obligations of a believer were, who wanted to live a godly life?

The early Church quickly developed a relief ministry by caring for widows who had no other means of support (Acts 6:1-6). But it's important to note that they appointed 'specialists' to oversee this work and that the apostles refused to make the Church's relief work their sole priority.

Objective 3 - To formulate a strategy for being a single follower of Christ.

Not everyone is called by God to marry. In First Corinthians 7:8, Paul encourages some believers to serve God as *singles*. The call to remain single is not sensed by all singles. These believers must resist the temptation to make their hope of marriage their main priority in life.

6. Based on Matthew 6:33 what should be the single person's highest priority?

7. Note the imperative for believers stated by Paul in Romans 12:15. How might those believers who are single yet desire to be married find this difficult?
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For those of us who are married and perhaps already have families of our own, there is a need for us to be *sensitive* toward those who are singles. This might include being sensitive about including singles in our conversations and discussing *their* interests rather than talking about our spouse or children. It might also involve including them in social events without making it look obvious that they are the only single. Perhaps you are aware of other ways we can be sensitive to those single believers in our church?

Objective 4 - To describe the reasons why teaching elders should be honoured and possibly publicly shamed.

We notice that from the outset of the Church, the apostles did not want to forsake the urgent need to preach the gospel and teach the Word (Acts 6:4). This kind of ministry calls for enormous times of prayer and preparation and even years of preparation (each of the apostles was trained for three and half years by Jesus).

8. According to First Timothy 5:17, how should these teaching elders be treated and why?
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9. Some people claim that *paying* a pastor to preach is wrong. How does First Timothy 5:18 correct this idea?
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We generally refer to a *teaching elder* as a p _ _ _ _ r. Pastors and elders have a lot of influence within a church which is why they should not be hastily commissioned into their role (note 1Tim. 5:22). As with any leadership position, the more responsibility and authority someone has, the more a _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ e they must be as well.

10. How are elders and pastors to be held to account based on First Timothy 5:19-21?

APPLICATION

13. What are some ways that you could suggest that a church could ensure that it welcomes and integrates people from a wide age-range into its fellowship so that there is a healthy multi-generational interaction?

14. How could our church assist and care for its older widows who do not have any nearby family?

15. If an eligible single person confided in you that they were battling with loneliness and found it difficult to find their place in our church that seemed to be focused on couples and families, what Biblically-based advice would you give them?

16. If you were approached by the senior leadership of our church to consider being appointed as an elder, why might you be both honoured and hesitant at the same time?
