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# Sermon Notes

May 9, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Family Matters 1 Timothy 5:1-8

### The Church

- ❖ Scripture uses many different word pictures to describe the unique qualities and characteristics that make a church a church
  - a holy nation
  - a kingdom
  - a priesthood
  - a vine
  - a temple
  - a body
  - an assembly
  - a flock
  - a family
- ❖ Paul underscores the intimacy, care, openness and love shared among the members of God's family (Ephesians 2:19, Galatians 6:10)

### What Family Is

- ❖ Every Christian has the same Father (“Our Father”)
- ❖ We all become members of God's family in the same way, through adoption
- ❖ Once we become members of God's family, we enter into a close relationship with our Father through the Holy Spirit
  - we cry out: *Abba, Father*
  - we eat at the same table
  - we look forward to sharing in the same family reunion in heaven
- ❖ Jesus' words on family ties: Mark 3:31-35
- ❖ God calls Christians to find their personal and their family identity in Jesus Christ

### What Family Does

- ❖ Lovingly confronts sin
  - disobedience must be dealt with
  - protecting one another against sin is the true sign of a loving family
- ❖ Problems and issues that plague the early church
  - the condition of the spiritual family in Ephesus needs some straightening out
  - the effects of sin spread around among God's people like leaven (yeast) spreads in bread dough
- ❖ Respecting those who are older

- this does not mean “anything goes”
- the heresies and scandalous behavior of the Ephesian elders cannot simply be overlooked or ignored
- the issue is not **whether** this is to be done but **how** it is to be done
- an exhortation is meant to be an encouragement for the one to whom it is addressed
  - a reminder, not a reprimand
  - such rebukes are meant to be restorative, redemptive and remedial
- ❖ Respect flows both ways
  - treat younger men as brothers
  - don’t “talk down” to those who are younger
  - “Older men should treat their juniors with fraternity; younger men should treat their seniors with humility.” (Philip Ryken)
- ❖ Older women should be treated as mothers **should** be treated
  - mothers are to be loved and listened to
  - mothers must be protected and cared for
- ❖ Treat *younger women as sisters, in all purity*
  - tender affection
  - no impropriety

- ❖ Looking out for widows
  - Paul provides extended teaching about how God’s family is intended to care for widows
  - the Ephesians needed help knowing how to care for their widows
- ❖ God is frequently referred to as “the protector of widows” in the Old Testament (Deu 10:17-18, Psalm 68:5)
  - widows were especially vulnerable in the ancient world
  - God wants His children to share His heart for the fatherless and husbandless
- ❖ ***Honor widows who are truly widows***
  - “A widow in need is a widow indeed”
  - watching out for widows not only demonstrates family loyalty but it is also pleasing to God
  - those who are ***left all alone***
- ❖ The example of Anna in Luke 2:36-37
  - the prayers of widows give strength to the church
  - all who make up the body of Christ are blessed by and benefit from their prayers

### Personal Application

1. After reading and considering what Paul writes in 1 Timothy 5:1-8, where do you “fit” in the family of faith? What role do you believe God is calling you to in terms of serving either fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers and/or widows within the church? What practical steps will you pursue to fulfill this calling?