

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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## The Church as a Family

*1 Timothy 5:1-16*

**Keywords:** Communication, Widows, Money, Care, Mercy, Rebuke

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**Sermon Audio Blurb:** Paul describes the church as a family and in doing so prepares Timothy to be able to dispense correction and rebukes in a manner pleasing to God. In this sermon we consider what it means to rebuke one another and how we are to treat one another if we are truly family members in Christ.

## Dismiss

### I. Introduction.

- A. Read 1 Timothy 5:1-2.
- B. The image given to us here is one of several images that God gives us to describe the Church.
  1. The Church has been described as a flock, a kingdom, or a priesthood. Also we will find a holy nation, a temple and a vine and branches. The idea of a body and an assembly are also common description.
  2. In many of these descriptors there is a picture that is being painted.
    - a. The idea of a flock reminds us that we are all one and we need a shepherd to lead us
    - b. As a body it speaks of the diversity of roles and yet intimate interdependency that exists.
    - c. When you think of a temple it is a picture of a building where God dwells, not in something made with human hands but one built by God himself, where Jesus Christ is the cornerstone.
  3. But here we have it described in familial terms. The Church is a family. And it is one of my favorites personally because it is something we can relate to rather easily.
- C. The family is a place where you belong simply because you are family.
  1. There are no requirements to be a part of the family, by reason of birth you simply belong.

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2. In the same way through the baptism in the Holy Spirit a person is placed into the family of God. We become His Children and as such we are much loved.
  3. And the neat thing about a family is there is always room for one more.
- D. The family is a place where you know and are known in truth.
1. In many areas of our life we cannot just be ourselves. There are societal pressures, corporate expectations and prying eyes that require wisdom from us.
  2. But in the family the secrets are known.
    - a. Moms and Dads are not real impressed with their children because they remember all the stupid and embarrassing things they did in their lives.
    - b. Watch the eyes of a mother when she hears her daughter expressing frustration with her own children because they did not do their chores. There will be a little smile on the corner of her lips.
  3. I come from a big family and there have been many things that have taken place in that family. Good and bad, they are simply there. But they are still family.
  4. My children like it when they have visited my family.
    - a. They have only known me as father and pastor.
    - b. My family know me as their little brother.
  5. When your family hear you, they listen with ears that have heard it all before.
    - a. So if your words are empty, they just ignore you and maybe roll their eyes at you.
    - b. If you are speaking consistent to your life, they will listen.
    - c. They know you like no one else.
- E. The family is a place where even at the worst of times you are still family.
1. If you have ruined your reputation, even if they have been forced to put you out of the house, you still remain family.

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2. It is one of those unique things about family. On one hand you are ready to 'ring their necks' and on the other hand you are there to help them.
  3. I have been at hospitals with a dying person and watched as one after another people in the family come in to say goodbye. You have those who long ago abandoned the family and those who have been thrown out, but at the point of death of grandpa they all come together again—they are family. You seen estranged grandchildren and rebellious nephews all welcomed as they grieve as family.
- F. That is what Paul is speaking about in vss 1-2, caring for the church as a family.
1. There are two key aspects to these verses:
  2. How to rebuke each other.
  3. How to treat each other.

## **II. The Church as a Family.**

- A. How to rebuke one another (1-2).
1. Notice that the point in vss 1-2 is about how to rebuke. So keep that in mind, the central point to these verses is on the issue of correction.
    - a. Timothy is in a situation where he is not the oldest and he is not the youngest and it can create some challenges for him. He has to do a lot of rebuking and correcting and Paul is giving him sound advice on how to do that.
    - b. And isn't this something that is so common in families?
      - (1) Mom and Dad correcting each other, the children, dog, and just yelling at the cats only to be ignored.
      - (2) The kids are correcting each other and on occasion, their parents.
      - (3) The family is just one big rebuke-a-thon.
    - c. The same is true of the church.
      - (1) At any given time several of you are confronting another regarding something in their life. You are doing it bluntly or subtly, but it is going on.
      - (2) The elders are doing it on a consistent basis, in fact at times it seems that for every one pleasant talk I have I have to give five unpleasant ones.

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- (3) But that is not a bad thing, it is the reality of being part of God's family.
  - (4) But it is important to learn how to give a rebuke and receive one.
2. Paul's advice is simple and to the point, 'treat fellow believers like you would members of your family.'
  - a. Talk to the older men and women like fathers and mothers. Talk to the younger men and women like your brothers and sisters.
  - b. This is such a simple, practical answer for each of us to consider.
3. Let me give you a very simple thought to take with you today–If in doubt, show respect.
  - a. Respect is never a bad choice, especially when you have to confront problems and trouble.
  - b. When you speak out of arrogance people will usually just turn you off in their minds.
  - c. It is a simple reality that how you speak is as important as what you say.
  - d. To speak in a disrespectful manner toward an older man or woman will turn the opinion of the church away from you, even if what you say is true.
4. I am going to invest some time with you related to speech in general and the focus on correction.
5. Speech in general.
  - a. This is something that is like humility, it is something you never truly achieve but hopefully are pursuing.
  - b. Speech is a major theme in the bible and one worthy of your extended, private study.
    - (1) Luke 6:45 says, "For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

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- (2) James 3:2 says, “For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his wholly body.”
- c. If we were to look for a basic ‘umbrella’ for speech there are a few that would work, but let me give you one that is a good starting point:
  - (1) Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. (Eph 4:29 NAU)
  - (2) That verse alone is enough to silence most of us in most situations.
    - (a) “Unwholesome” speaks of that which is putrid, rotten, of no value.
    - (b) Words should build up rather than tear down. “Good” refers to that which is beneficial.
    - (c) They should be used because of the need, rather than just what you want to say.
    - (d) They are to give grace to those who hear it.
      - i) Doesn’t make them fun to hear.
      - ii) But it gives them the words they need to hear.
- d. I don’t have time to go into these points but I want to quickly say that in the book of Proverbs we find that words can lure a person into sexual sin and destruction ((7:5, 11); they can destroy a person’s reputation (11:9); words are able to cut a person into pieces like a sword (12:18); and a person with a big mouth bring ruin to his life (13:3).
- e. At the same time we find that words are like pure silver when spoken from a righteous heart (10:21), they can bring healing to another (12:18); a gentle word can turn anger away (15:1); and when our words are guarded they keep us out of trouble (21:23).
- f. With these in mind, let us consider the task of rebuking.

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6. How to rebuke.
  - a. There is simply no way you can be part of a church and not face this situation. The question is not if you do it, but rather, when you have to do it will you do it well.
  - b. Lesson one: Remember that you too are a sinner.
    - (1) Galatians 6:1.
    - (2) All of us will be and have been rebuked, the fool is one who hates it and the wise is one who receives it.
    - (3) But when we remember the gospel it helps us as we approach another to speak of a sin we see.
  - c. Lesson two, Remember that restoration is the goal.
    - (1) Matthew 18:15ff.
    - (2) The rebuke is not designed to express your anger or to get a vengeance.
    - (3) It is designed to correct.
    - (4) This is the same as when a parent disciplines his child properly.
      - (a) it is not merely a venting of anger and frustration out on the child, that is sin.
      - (b) It is designed to be part of the training and instruction of the child in the way he is to go.
    - (5) The Christian rebuke is very gospel oriented because it is seeking the good of others rather than ourselves.
      - (a) In fact, for those of you who are refusing to correct others realize that you are doing it for selfish reasons.
  - d. Lesson three: Remember that there are times to put up with wrongs.
    - (1) Colossians 3:12-13.

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- (a) “bear” speaks of putting up with something. Just like a family, there are things we are willing to put up with because they are family.
  - (b) notice the gospel is the guiding force here for us to consider.
  - (c) We forgive like Christ has forgiven. And I would argue that we put up with others like Christ puts up with us.
- (2) 1 Peter 4:8.
- (a) There are things we overlook simply because we love that person.
  - (b) Love asks itself whether it really needs to say something in this situation.
- e. Lesson four: Remember that your time will come to be rebuked.
- f. A few thoughts on receiving a rebuke.
- (1) The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel. (Pro 12:1 NAU)
  - (2) It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man Than for one to listen to the song of fools. (Ecc 7:5 NAU)
    - (a) Some who rebuke are not worth embracing.
    - (b) But they should at least be heard.
  - (3) A man who hardens his neck after much reproof Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy. (Pro 29:1 NAU)
    - (a) Are you being corrected and are you stiffening your neck? Nothing good will come from it.
    - (b) I know of marriages utterly destroyed because of a refusal to be corrected.
    - (c) I know of careers destroyed for the same reason,
    - (d) And reputations, and a myriad of other relationships.

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- (e) I have met men who sit in solitary confinement for years, hard and proud and they still think that they are “tough” when it reality they are merely broken fools.
- B. How to treat each other.
- 1. This is a simply issue. We treat each other as family members.
  - 2. The older man and woman is to be treated with respect.
    - a. We are called to appeal to them.
    - b. The word is to urge and encourage. It is not yelling or threatening, it is not loud, it is coming alongside and urging them to stop or change.
    - c. The command of the Scripture is to honor our mother and father. This means that we must honor those older than us in the church as well.
    - d. It is a sad thing to see children treat their elders with a flippant and familiar attitude. But often it is taught to them by their parents.
    - e. We all may be one in Jesus Christ but that does not make us all the same in how we respond and speak to one another.
  - 3. When we talk to a younger man we treat him as a brother and with a younger woman, we treat them as a sister.
    - a. In this passage it is specifically speaking to a young man (Timothy) on how he is to treat the younger ladies.
    - b. But we can apply this same requirement to women speaking to a younger man.
    - c. The men of the church are to protect the purity of the women in the church, especially younger women.
    - d. I have had to confront too many young men over the years for inappropriate relationships with a young lady. And every time I rebuke them I emphasize that their job is to guard that young lady not exploit her. What saddens me is how they often look at me with eyes that do not understand.



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- e. The church is a place where purity of both the men and women are encouraged. Where the hearts of both of them are protected.
  - f. When we look at those younger than us, we are to see them and speak to them as sisters and brothers.
4. Men and women who are wise do not let themselves be alone with the other.
- a. This is for both people's protection.
  - b. This is why I will not counsel a woman alone and try to have most of them counseled by a godly woman.
  - c. There are predators in both genders and a wise person knows this.
  - d. I know of more than one man who was targeted by evil people by the use of a woman who tried to work her way into his life.
  - e. And I know of even more men who took advantage of a woman who was too trusting or in an emotionally vulnerable situation.
5. Proverbs 6 and 7, this is for the young man because Solomon is speaking to his sons, but I think we can apply this to both young men and women.
- a. First, don't be impressed with words (24).
  - b. Second, don't let your eyes consider their body (25a)
  - c. Third, watch their eye, they way they look at you (25b).
  - d. Fourth, don't find yourself alone with them (7:8).
  - e. Fifth, don't touch (7:13).

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. The church is to be a place where we see brothers and sister and mother and fathers, not just people.
- B. It is a place where broken people from broken homes can see relationships as God intends.
- C. The church is a place where we are to speak the truth to one another and receive correction in the process. But it is to be done in love and for the well-being of the other.
- D. And lastly, the church is to be a place of safety.

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### Small Group Questions

- How do you rebuke and correct without being disrespectful? What does it look like when it is younger to older vs older to younger?
- What do you find easier to do, rebuke or not rebuke? Why?
- Can you describe a time you were corrected well compared to a time you were corrected poorly (Make sure you control this so as to not allow gossip or merely complaint.)