

Church: Living in the Household of God (1 Timothy 5:17 – 6:2)
For the week of November 27, 2016

Spiritual Disciplines = Spiritual Maturity

As your group breaks for the holidays, take this opportunity to encourage each other to make the spiritual disciplines a part of your daily schedule. Take time as a group to pray for each person's diligence in embracing spiritual disciplines and becoming a more mature disciple of Christ.

1 Timothy 5:17 – 6:2

1. As a group read 1 Timothy 5:17 – 6:2 and then share the main points of the passage.

Verses 17-18

2. What do verses 17-18 say we are to do for those who labor as pastor-teachers?
3. How does this benefit pastor-teachers?
4. How does it benefit the church?
5. What qualifies an elder to receive double honor (honor included both respect and an honorarium for the work done)?

6. How do you think showing honor for our pastor-teachers impacts the church's witness in the community?

Verse 19-20

7. According to verse 19, the church was not to listen to accusations against leaders unless there were two or three witnesses. Why do you think Paul instructed the church to require witnesses (consider Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15)?
8. According to verse 20, what is the church to do when a leader continuously practices sin?
9. What impact does public discipline of a leader have on other elders and the congregation?

10. Have you ever experienced watching or participating in a church that had to impart this kind of discipline on a leader? How did it impact you emotionally and how did it impact you spiritually?

Verses 21-24

11. In verses 21-24 we see responsibilities Paul laid out for Timothy toward leadership. What did Paul want those carrying out church discipline of a church leader to guard against? Why is this important?

New American Commentary states, "The absence of a bad reputation is no evidence of the presence of truly desirable qualities. On the other hand, the absence of a good reputation should not automatically lead to rejection. Some excellent qualities require time for appearance, and the people who have these excellent qualities can eventually establish themselves." This quote may help you answer the following questions. Why did Paul instruct Timothy not to "lay hands" on or reject people prematurely as leaders? What are the potential dangers of either happening? Disciplining church leaders is one of the hardest things to which leaders are called. Sometimes people are also hesitant to carry out church discipline, because it requires the revelation of someone's sin and they believe such revelation hurts the church's reputation. But the truth is a church that deals Biblically with continuous sin is a church that people trust and feel safe in. The purpose of discipline is not to harm, but to restore a person's relationship to the Lord. In addition, it's common for leaders and parishioners alike to reflect on personal holiness and to recommit to personal purity in the process of public discipline. When sin isn't dealt with at a leadership level, Satan has a path cleared for his involvement in that body.

Chapter 6:1-2

12. Paul instructs Timothy on the importance of believers who were slaves and how they should respond to their masters. How were believing slaves to respond to unbelieving masters?

13. How were they to respond to believing masters?

14. The equivalent for us today would be how do we respond to unbelieving bosses and how do we respond to believing bosses? Again, why were these instructions given?

Personal Application

Consider the importance of understanding and accepting our responsibility of living out the gospel. 2 Corinthians 3:2 says, "You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all." This can refer to the individual as well as the church body. Examine your own life for sinful patterns that may be impacting your witness both at church and in public. Also, consider our church body. Is it known for proclaiming truth, for people characterized by integrity, people who love other believers and people who care about the lost? Is it balanced with both truth and grace like Jesus was?

Pray

Pray that God would give us hearts sensitive towards sin, that He would expose sinful patterns that He would give us each the desire to pursue holiness and to develop hearts of compassion as we work out our salvation and grow to be more like Him.