

1 Timothy 5:1-16. Caring for Widows.

Overall, remember to exhort an elder [Πρεσβυτέρω; elder, member of the Sanhedrin or an elder of a Christian assembly; 4245]⁵ as if he were your father, and certainly do not rebuke them harshly. As for younger men, treat them as brothers; older women as if they were your mother, and younger women—as if they were your sisters, absolutely pure in motive, pure in deed, and pure in consequence.

As to widows—do not ignore them, but provide proper recognition for those really in need. Now, if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should care for their own family, put their religion in practice and thus please the Lord our God. The widow who is alone and truly in need puts her hope in God, and continues to pray and ask God for help. But, the widow who “lives for pleasure” [living wantonly, luxuriously] is “dead even while she lives.”

Make sure people follow these instructions for those who fail to provide for their relatives, and especially their immediate family, have denied the faith and are worse than unbelievers.

A widow’s list is comprised of women over sixty, women have been faithful to their husband, and are well known for their good deeds. Consider, for example, bringing up children, showing hospitality [ἐξενδοχῆσεν, “she entertained strangers;” 3580], washing the feet of the

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Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, 2older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

3Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. 4But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

5The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. 6But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

7Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. 8If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, [or *has had but one husband*] 10and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

11As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. 12Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. 13Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. 14So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. 15Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

16If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

⁵According to the *Helps Word-studies* (see <https://biblehub.com/greek/4245.htm>) “The NT specifies elders are *men*. (The feminine singular, *presbyterā*, never occurs in the Bible.” Note, however, in the next sentence, Paul uses this same word root, *presbyter*..., *πρεσβυτέρας*, to refer to *women* in the church. Interestingly, *Helps Word-studies* claims 1 Timothy 5:2 refers to *aged* women, not women with an official church office or title. A little more than lexical analyses going on here?

saints, helping those in trouble, and devotion to all kinds of good deeds.

Younger women should not be on your list. When their sensuality becomes more important than their devotion to Christ, they want to marry. In doing so, they bring judgment on themselves—they've broken their "first pledge." [ἀθετέω; to do away with what has been laid down, set aside, "cast off their first faith;" 114] Often they become habitually idle, and gossip saying things they shouldn't.

So? I counsel younger widows to get married, have children, and manage their homes well so no opportunity for the enemy to slander will be afforded. In fact, some have already done that. If any believing woman has widows in her family, she should help them; don't let the church be burdened; the church then can help those widows truly in need.

Q Why are taking care of widows such an important issue for the church then? Now?

Q What's a clear sign that one has lost their faith? (verse 8) So?

Q Should widows who have not been faithful to their husbands, or had more than one husband, not be helped? And those who despise washing other people's feet? What about those who are not totally devoted to all kinds of good deeds? Should they be helped? What's going on here?

Q To what extent was Paul aware of women's fertility, or was it much later in the 1st century?

Q To what extent do you conclude sexism is occurring here?

Q What guidelines for assisting those in need can you glean from Paul's advice on assisting widows?

1 Timothy 5:17-25. Handling Elders. Now when it comes to those who lead the church, elders, they are worthy of being paid [or “honor” with a “price” root; τιμῆς], especially [most of all] those who work/strain in the word [κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ, 2872] and teach [διδασκαλία]. Scripture says we are not to muzzle the ox who treads out the grain, and Scripture also says the worker deserves his wages.

Also don’t receive or even acknowledge [παράδεχου, 3858] an accusation against an elder unless presented by two or three witnesses [μαρτύρων], not just complainers. Those who are publically sinning should be rebuked publically so others may learn, and take warning.

Now, as for you Timothy, I challenge you right here in front of God, Christ Jesus and selected angels, keep these instructions, without favoritism—do nothing with partiality. Don’t be hasty to lay on hands; don’t share in the sins of others. Bottom line? Keep yourself pure.

Drink a little wine for your stomach’s sake and frequent illnesses; stop drinking only water.

Remember, the sins of some people are right up front and judgment is right there; whereas, the sins of others have consequences which happen later. Similarly, good deeds are obvious, and even those can’t be hidden.

- Q Why are elders who work in the word and teach to be paid? Why do we resist this notion?
- Q What is significant about Paul’s comment that Scripture says “The worker deserves his wages?”
- Q What unique characteristics must people have if bringing an accusation against an elder/pastor? Does this apply also to “associate” or “assistant” pastors/elders?
- Q Why do we usually sweep under the rug sins of elders/pastors? Is this what Scripture calls for?
- Q How often do you have stomach aches?
- Q How do we know good deeds are indeed good deeds?

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The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸For the Scripture says, “Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,” [Deuteronomy 25:4] and “The worker deserves his wages.” [Luke 10:7] ¹⁹Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. ²⁰Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

²¹I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

²²Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

²³Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

²⁴The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. ²⁵In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.