

Healthy Church – Good Labor Enhances the Church

1 Timothy 5

It is Labor Day weekend – a time where we get to rest from our labors.

Those who labor well in the church deserve rest too...

They also deserve our respect for the work they do to enhance the church!

Remember that 1 Timothy is a letter from the Apostle Paul to a young pastor, intended to help him lead & labor well in the church of Ephesus!

1 Timothy 5 lays out very practical advice on how Timothy is to labor well:

- Part of leading well involves rebuke... There are times when ideas, behaviors, actions, & beliefs need to be addressed & corrected... But there is an appropriate way to do it... **Vs. 1-2**
 - To an older man, rebuke with encouragement appealing to him as a father!
 - To younger men, rebuke with an approach of brotherly love!
 - To older women, rebuke like you would your mother!
 - To younger women, rebuke as you would your own sister (it's who she is)!
 - In all purity... godly intentions... w/repentance & reconciliation as the goal!

Sin, false beliefs, & harmful responses compromise the testimony of church!

- Discern the legitimate needs of the church & how best to see them met!
 - *"Honor widows who are truly widows"...* **Vs. 3**
 - Teach children & grandchildren their responsibility to their parents. - **Vs. 4**
 - It's not the responsibility of the church to provide for the needs of everyone, especially those with family who can step in to help first! – **Vs. 8**
- Provide opportunities for a "hand up", not just a "hand out"!
 - A screening process is important, even for widows, because there will always be those who try to take advantage of the system... Also because resources are limited, especially in smaller churches. - **Vs. 9-13**
- Be advocates for marriage and raising children, because family units are the building blocks of a healthy church! **Vs. 14-16**

Healthy families produce healthy churches! Multi-generational model!
- Show honor, even double honor, to those who lead & rule well... especially those who labor in preaching & teaching in the church! – **Vs. 17**

- Our Consistory (elders & deacons) labor tirelessly to keep our church healthy! They deserve our gratitude, honor and respect!

- Pastors do not work only one day a week! Besides all the responsibilities of keeping a church running, they have the authority & responsibility to proclaim the Words of Truth – God's Words! - **Vs. 18**

- Protect those who lead by not entertaining false accusations! - **Vs. 19**
 - If there aren't multiple witnesses don't lend your ear! - **Matthew 18**
- Hold leaders accountable to a high standard! - **Vs. 20**
 - If correction isn't made at the highest level, then corruption will trickle down! Leaders must set the example in godliness & repentance!
- Do not show favoritism, partiality or prejudice! - **Vs. 21**
 - Leadership is not based upon a popularity contest! We elect leaders not by popular vote, but by discernment of gifts & character!
- Do not be hasty in the discerning, & retaining, of leadership! – **Vs. 22**
 - The right time may come... But don't be afraid to say, "Not yet!"
- Keep yourself healthy... Because the church needs you! **Vs. 23**
 - Neglecting our physical health can lead to forfeiting our opportunity to lead, or lead well! Our mental, emotional, & spiritual health too!
- Know your limits... - **Vs. 24-25**
 - You won't see, & know, all the good, or the bad, of your leaders, but be diligent in addressing what comes to your attention credibly!

I feel for Timothy... he seems to have his hands full with leading this church in Ephesus! I hope Labor Day was coming for him to give him some R & R!

May we all be mindful of the labor that goes into the work of the church!

May we express our gratitude to those who labor diligently & effectively!

May we join them where we have opportunity to lighten the load!

May we care for one another, especially those in our own families!

May we be generous in our giving so the church can help those truly in need!

May we be diligent in electing the right people for the different church offices!

May we not lend our ear to gossip, unsubstantiated claims, or false accusations!

May we nominate leaders who will lead us in both godliness & repentance!

May we not show favoritism but discern the leading of the Holy Spirit!

May we remain healthy, know our limits, & pursue God's glory in all our labors!

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 - **In all** _____ godly intensions... w/repentance & reconciliation as the goal!Sin, false beliefs, & harmful responses compromise the _____ of church!
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