

Sermon Text from 3/11/12

Advice about Widows, Elders, and Slaves

17 Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain." And in another place, "Those who work deserve their pay!"

19 Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is confirmed by two or three witnesses. 20 Those who sin should be reprimanded in front of the whole church; this will serve as a strong warning to others.

21 I solemnly command you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and the highest angels to obey these instructions without taking sides or showing favoritism to anyone.

22 Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader. Do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

23 Don't drink only water. You ought to drink a little wine for the sake of your stomach because you are sick so often.

24 Remember, the sins of some people are obvious, leading them to certain judgment. But there are others whose sins will not be revealed until later. 25 In the same way, the good deeds of some people are obvious. And the good deeds done in secret will someday come to light.

1 Timothy 5:17-25 (NLT)

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- What does it mean (for you) for someone to show YOU respect?
 - How do you feel when someone you know respects you?
 - Or, when they don't respect you?
- : What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

Note: in the Sermon, Keith Walked through the passage, and then discussed how this passage and others from 1st Timothy could look at Riverside in action. He did this through discussing the church covenant (page 2 of this guide). It might be good to revisit the covenant as a group. Discuss how our church could look/operate/feel if we were each committed to pursuing community as laid out in the covenant. **DO NOT** let the conversation go towards "is Membership a big deal, important, biblical", there will be time after church on April 1st and 22nd for folks to have that conversation with the leadership of the church (as well as there were two articles in the back this past week that give great perspective on this discussion, which were also attached in the email sent to group leaders this week).

v.17 - 25

- : This passage of 1 Timothy refers to the leaders of the church. Put in your own words the main idea of Paul's (the writer of the letter) instructions.
 - Follow-up: What are ways that you, as a member of the church, can assist the leaders in their hard work (v. 17)?
- : Verses 19 – 20 expresses how the church should handle accusations towards leaders. Why is this important?
 - Follow-up: If we, as the church, are to be a *family* of faith, how does this portion play out practically?
- l: Verse 17 specifically singles out "both preaching and teaching." Why do you think this is?
 - Follow-up: What does this say about the roles of the leaders (as well as the role of the scriptures in the church)?
 - * If these are parts of the roles of the leaders, how can we, as members of the church, take on other roles?
- l: Paul, in verse 21, seems to place a great deal of emphasis to "obey these instructions without taking sides or showing favoritism to anyone." What is the importance behind this?
 - Follow-up: What implications does the charge, "I solemnly command you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and the highest angels..." have?
- A: Verse 17 states that Elders should be respected. In reference to *all* areas of leadership (i.e. employers, teachers, etc.) do you ever find it hard to respect them/show respect to them?
 - Follow-up: What are ways to get past these barriers?
 - Follow-up: If love, which can be shown through respect, was to be looked at as an action, rather than an emotion, how does that change the perspective?
- A: Look again at verses 19 – 20. With the idea of a church being a *family* of faith, how does this make dealing with accusation and shortcomings different?
 - Follow-up: What are ways that we, with love, can help each other with our own shortcomings?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Read:** Next week's sermon (3/18/12) will focus on 1 Timothy 6:1-10. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time.

Riverside Church Covenant

I, _____, am committed to the Riverside Church faith community.

I have begun a journey to follow Jesus for the rest of my life.

I will pursue Jesus and His Kingdom as an individual through biblical spiritual practices.

I will pursue Jesus and His Kingdom in active community with others beyond Sundays.

I will live out our shared mission, values, and statement of faith.

I will participate in the mission of the church using my gifts, abilities, and resources.

I will protect personal relationships and church unity by a commitment to love unconditionally, work through conflict, and submit to leaders.

I will be honest and vulnerable about personal sin, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with anyone I may have offended.

I will be a visible example of Christ to people in my family, neighborhood, workplace, community, and Riverside Church.

Leaders of Riverside Church commit to support _____ in keeping this covenant.

We submit to Jesus Christ, as Lord, Savior, and Head of the Church.

We will provide leadership and teaching in pursuing Jesus and His Kingdom through biblical spiritual practices.

We will provide opportunity to pursue Jesus and His Kingdom in community with others beyond Sundays.

We will maintain simplicity in the life of the church and not let church activities get in the way of following Jesus.

We will exemplify and be faithful to the mission, values, and statement of faith.

We will provide opportunities and training to participate in the mission of the church.

We will protect personal relationships and church unity by a commitment to love unconditionally, work through conflict, and serve humbly.

We will be honest and vulnerable about personal sin, seeking forgiveness, reconciliation, and stepping away from leadership if sin has compromised an ability to lead.

We will be a visible example of Christ to Riverside Church and our surrounding community.