

We Are Family!

1 Timothy 5:1-6:2

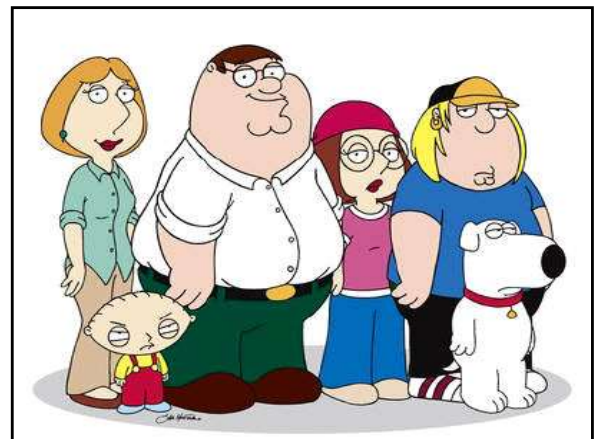
Introduction

Paul has covered a lot of ground in this letter to his young friend, Timothy. As he begins to wrap things up, he now has some very practical advice about how people are to relate to one another in church life. This was nothing new in Paul's letters, as a lot of his time was taken up with addressing how the Gospel of the Kingdom worked out practically for Christians in day to day life.

The Gospel is all about how every barrier between people has been brought down in Christ. No longer should culture, economics, gender, education or upbringing create dividing lines between us because in Christ we become one. That is the theory...in reality, Christians have to work at putting Jesus first in their relationships and applying love and grace in large measures.

Paul begins by looking at the nature of our relationships and draws parallels with the family unit – mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers. How we relate to our Christian family should speak volumes in a world of broken families and broken relationships.

Next, Paul speaks about those in the church who are vulnerable and in need of care –



namely the widows without family. His comments pre-date the British Welfare State by nineteen centuries, but give us a glimpse into how early Christians took responsibility for one another's care and how they put God's love into action in very practical ways.

Then Paul quickly touches on a number of subjects: i.e. the ministry of elders, Timothy's health and the work ethic of slaves. He points out that we all have responsibility to contribute to church life using the gifts and talents the Lord has given us and that we all have a part to play in seeing Christians growing up as part of the family of believers. This is a challenge to us all.

Life Group questions...

- 1. Shared some of your experiences of when church has felt like family.**
- 2. Read vs1-2. Paul teaches Timothy how to bring correction in the appropriate way. What principles should we apply if we were dealing with conflict/broken relationships with somebody in the church?**
- 3. Why do you think Paul was asking Timothy to treat people in the church like family? In what ways is this a challenge to you?**
- 4. Read v3. Why did Paul make a distinction between the widows who were 'really in need' (see also v16) and the other widows? How can we apply this principle to church life today?**
- 5. Read v8. Why do you think Paul states this in such strong terms (see also Mark 7:9-14)? How does God feel when we neglect to care for our families?**
- 6. As the church gets bigger, how can we make sure that people who are really in need are not being overlooked?**
- 7. In every family, each member has a role to play. Church life is no different. How do we discover the role God has for us in the church family?**
- 8. What role do you think you have in Hope Church?**