

July 21, 2024

1 Thessalonians 5:11-15

Encourage Others

Samuel pastors the Typical Baptist Church. He is frustrated and discouraged because his church members don't follow his leadership, and personally they ignore him. After the deacons and church voted overwhelmingly to start a visitation program, Samuel expected great participation. The "visitation program" ended up being Samuel and one Sunday School teacher. Samuel and his family live in the parsonage next door to the church, but they are seldom invited to class fellowships, showers, birthday parties, or other social events.

Ann is a member of the Average Baptist Church. After her husband left her and she lost her job, she became very discouraged. When she missed church one Sunday, she expected her teacher or someone from her class to call. No one did. Ann is struggling and needs friendship, but no one from church is reaching out to her.

Toby was excited about becoming the pastor of the Common Baptist Church, until he got out in the community and started making outreach visits. He soon learned that Common Baptist Church had a bad reputation in the community because of its many fights, splits, and pastor firings. One man who lived near the church said if his TV went out and he couldn't watch wrestling, he would come to a church business meeting for entertainment!

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ should **NOT** be like those described above. The church should be a warm, loving, accepting place where people receive encouragement. In this week's passage we will learn what the Bible says about encouraging others.

Encourage Other Believers

1 Thess. 5:11 What two things should we do for one another?

1. _____
2. _____

Encourage Spiritual Leaders

1 Thess. 5:12 The word **beseech** means to beg or implore. What did Paul beg the Thessalonians to do?

The word **know** literally means to have experiential knowledge of, understand and consider. We must understand the seriousness and importance of our pastors and spiritual leaders. The Bible says our leaders in the church do the following three things:

1. "Who _____ among you"
2. "Are _____ in the Lord"
3. "_____ you"

Our pastors and leaders work hard among us, they oversee us as one carrying responsibility, and they reprove and warn us. We should **recognize** and **appreciate** this very important work that they do.

1 Thess. 5:13 How should we think of our spiritual leaders?

Why should we do this?

Because of the very important work they do, we should love our pastors and leaders. It is impossible to think **too highly** of your pastor (1 Tim. 5:17). There is one final thing that will encourage your pastor: “And be at _____ among yourselves.”

Encourage the Weak and Needy

1 Thess. 5:14 This verse contains four instructions about encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ.

1. “_____ them that are _____,”
2. “_____ the _____,”
3. “_____ the _____,”
4. “be _____ toward _____.”

Let’s examine those words. The **unruly** are those who are disobedient and refuse to be ruled, and they must be warned. The **feble-minded** are those who are fainthearted, and we must encourage them. The **weak** are physically without strength, and they must be supported. We should be **patient** with everyone because we are all different.

1 Thess. 5:15 How should we treat those who treat us badly?

“But ever _____ that which is _____.”

Rather than returning evil for evil, we should purposely do good to everyone. This instruction is especially for brothers and sisters in Christ (“*among yourselves*”), but also applies to our relationships in the world (“*and to all men*”). If you want to baffle and disarm an “enemy,” do something good for him or her.

Concluding Thoughts: We should respect and encourage our pastors and other spiritual leaders. We should intentionally encourage and do good things for our fellow believers. Can you imagine what our church would be like if every Christian followed those guidelines. We would live in a continual state of revival, and people would be eager to join.

How can you be an encouragement to your pastor and spiritual leaders? First, you should confess any sin of ignoring them, and thank God for all they do for your church. You must think highly of them and love them. What is a practical way you can show love for your spiritual leaders this week? Finally, you need to maintain peace within the church.

How can you help and encourage Christian brothers and sisters? Do you know someone who needs a warning? Who do you know that needs encouragement and support? Do you know someone who just needs some patience and understanding? Be sure not to return evil for evil, and intentionally do good to others.

Project: Think of practical ways to encourage others. Write a note. Give a gift. Spend time with a struggler. Maintain peace. Refuse to return evil for evil. Do it this week.