

Women's Ministry in the Local Church

Chapter 7: *Community*

In this chapter, Ligon Duncan explains more fully his third reason why a women's ministry is important in every healthy evangelical church. (This was first mentioned on pages 37, 39-40.)

Women's ministry is important because:

- 1 *biblical manhood and womanhood can be addressed*
- 2 *safe environment to present biblical teaching on role relationships in the home*
- 3 *opportunity to address social issues such as gender identity or same sex marriage*

THE TEXT: 1 Timothy 5:1-16

The text for this chapter calls the church to nurture community life among God's covenant family. True covenant life will exemplify biblical manhood and womanhood in the home and the church.

Jesus' High Priestly prayer gives the description and destiny of the covenant community:

- 1 *that God's people may all be one*
- 2 *that God's people will be abiding in the Father and the Son*
- 3 *that God's people will reflect His glory*
- 4 *that God's people may be with Jesus to see His glory*

The Apostles' Creed describes the communion of the saints:

- 1 *a holy fellowship*
- 2 *a Christian community found in our unity with Christ*
- 3 *unity and community are fixed by and in Christ Himself*
- 4 *a heavenly community that we participate in now*

Covenant consciousness means:

- 1 *a way of thinking that begins with the assembly rather than the individual*
- 2 *an "us-ness" of true covenant life*

Q. What are the biblical principles regarding our ministry to widows:

- 1 Deut. 10:17-18 *God executes justice for the widow.*
- 2 Prov. 15:25 *God is the protector of widows.*
- 3 Luke 7:13-15 *Jesus had compassion on the widow.*
- 4 James 1:27 *God's people are to visit orphans and widows in their affliction.*
- 5 1 Tim. 5:3-8 *We are to honor widows and care for those who have no means of support.*

The ministry of widows (1 Timothy 5:9-10) is consistent with woman's design and calling as a helper and life-giver. Some of her "good works" would include:

- 1 *physically or spiritually cared for children*
- 2 *showed hospitality*
- 3 *washed the feet of the saints*
- 4 *helped those in trouble*

Paul instructs younger widows:

- 1 *to be engaged in the self-sacrifice that is needed to care for a family*
- 2 *domestic duties become an aroma of Christ, the fragrance of life*

A women's ministry should encourage all younger women to look to older women who will:

- 1 *teach them to serve others*
- 2 *help them learn to find the balance between ministry to family and ministry beyond family*

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

The story of Dorcas is a compelling example of community and compassion:

- 1 *She shared her gifts and graces for the mutual good.*
- 2 *She displayed the characteristics listed in 1 Timothy 5:9-10.*
- 3 *She was not a high profile personality, but a disciple who served in ordinary ways.*
- 4 *Her death affected the heart and soul of the church.*

THE TASK is to think big –to think biblically!

Submission, community, and compassion are inseparable parts of the whole covenant life. Their synchronization is imperative for mature ministry.

- 1 *Covenantal community and compassion cannot exist in a vacuum of autonomy.*
- 2 *Covenant compassion invigorates community.*
- 3 *A community without compassion ceases to be a covenant community.*

A critical task is for women’s ministry today:

- 1 *Challenge older women to take up the mantle of Dorcas.*
- 2 *Disciple women to think biblically and live covenantally.*

THE TOOLS

There are endless ways that a women’s ministry can breathe community life into a church:

- 1 *Language: Use covenant language to raise covenant consciousness.*
- 2 *Stories: Provide opportunities for women to share their stories.*
- 3 *Celebrations: Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. (Rom. 12:15)*
- 4 *Encouragement: Encourage one another. (1 Thessalonians 5:11)*
- 5 *Enfolding: Think creatively and strategically to intentionally enfold and embrace.*

Pastor Ron Gleason describes how women in his church play a major role in the covenant life of his church:

- 1 *lunch bunch after Sunday worship*
- 2 *participating in small groups*
- 3 *visiting new moms and/or meeting special needs*
- 4 *writing cards of encouragement*
- 5 *welcoming newcomers and others in our home*
- 6 *organizing specialty groups*
- 7 *spending time with covenant children*
- 8 *participating in Titus 2 discipleship*

Biblical Foundations for Womanhood resources:

1 Topic: *Community*

Book: *The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood* (chapters 2, 3, 4)

2 Topic: *Ministry examples of widows*

Book: *The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood* (Naomi to Ruth)

Book: *By Design* (Anna to Mary)

3 Topic: *Domesticity*

Book: *The True Woman* (chapter 9)

4 Topic: *Language of faith*

Book: *Heirs of the Covenant* (chapter 6)

5 Topic: *Encouragement*

Book: *Treasures of Encouragement*