

Sermon Based Discussion

Sermon Title: Ministry to the Old

Sermon Series: Growing Older: Better With Age

Sermon Texts: 1 Timothy 5:1-8, 16-20; Mark 7:10-13

OPENING QUESTION

1. What images or feelings come to mind when you think of serving the elderly? What ways have you experienced spending time or serving those who are older?
2. Who is the oldest person you know that you have a personal relationship with? Describe your relationship.

INTO THE BIBLE

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-8, 16-20

3. When the Bible says to "not rebuke an older man harshly" but to encourage him "as if he were your father," how should we consider applying that?
4. How does the Bible describe the widow "truly in need" (or some translations have "who are truly widows") and how to minister to them?
5. How does the Bible describe the treatment of those who hold the office of "elder" in the church?

GOING DEEPER (Sharing/Application)

6. When the Bible uses our treatment of our parents as the model for treating older people in general, what does that imply about our relationship with our parents?
7. The biblical image of an undervalued, powerless person is a widow in ancient times. They had no family to turn to, and there were little social services. In addition to older people with no family, what may be other cases of senior citizens who are undervalued and in great need?

How can we meet their needs and/or empower them to greater discipleship and ministry?

8. The biblical image of an older person includes greater godliness and wisdom attained over a longer life. This is seen in the respect, compensation, and expectations towards church elders and other leaders. What does this suggest about growth (spiritual or otherwise) in later life?

How does this compare with popular views today? How do you feel about you in old age?

9. Do you need to make space in your life to engage in relationships with those who are significantly older (or younger, if you're a senior)? What activities will you have to cut back on or give up to make this happen? Who would you engage?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:32, NIV)

Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old. (Prov. 23:22, NIV)