

The
New
Testament
in a Year

Week 36
1st Timothy 2-6

*This week's reflector is
Diane Walker, who serves in ministry
with Pelham Community Church.*

General Questions for Reflection

You might pick one part of each chapter and think about these questions.

- What does this tell me about God (including Jesus and the Holy Spirit)?
- What does this tell me about our world?
- What does it tell me about me?
- What does it say about following Jesus?
- Is there something here I'd like to learn more about?

Why not use these thoughts to shape your prayer today.

Monday

1st Timothy 2

Paul does not avoid the hard topics. Neither shall we: "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man."

Sigh. The profound sigh of a preacher, teacher, pastor – and woman.

Here's good news: women are permitted to learn. Clear progress in a day when women were banned from serious learning of religious texts. Permitted to learn in quietness (hesuchia: calm, peace, tranquility) – the way many of us learn best, with sufficient inner and outer peace and calm that we can fruitfully listen, discern.

Women are not to take, assume, usurp the place of those designated to teach. Was Paul laying down a policy for all times, all places, all cultures? Or was he addressing the particular situation at Ephesus: a group of women influenced by false teachers, who disrupt worship and, in a domineering manner, try to take over the role of those appointed to teach?

Tuesday

1st Timothy 3

The Christian church is now in its third generation and is developing an organizing principle for managing and leading the community of faith. The survival of the Christian community seemed tenuous and leadership is critical.

The qualities required of those leaders seem curiously relevant. Faithfulness within marriage, proven care of one's own family, tested and proven personal faith, sobriety, respect, generosity, honesty: aren't these qualities particularly beneficial in those men and women we look to to lead us, guide us, challenge us and pastor us?

Which of the qualifications listed in the chapter strike you as most necessary in the leaders of our church today? How do you see such traits manifested? What is the consequence if these are absent?

Wednesday

1st Timothy 4

The false teachers who have infected the church at Ephesus promote a twisted message: the created order is itself evil and so sex and food are under attack. Marriage (the covenant protective framework for sex) and many foods are forbidden. Paul encourages Timothy to go on the offensive against the lies, to hold fast to his faith (verse 1) and to “command and teach” (v. 11) the gospel message in the face of the “hypocritical liars” (v.2) who are wreaking such havoc in the community of faith.

Not only should Timothy preach, but he must set an example, by his conduct, in love faith and purity. This requires great diligence.

“Watch your faith and doctrine closely” (v16). Do you find that this is difficult to do on your own? Do you have others who help you keep accountable in your belief and example?

Thursday

1st Timothy 5

As a pastor, Timothy is urged to develop respectful, nurturing relationships within the church, based on the model of the ideal family. Care for those in need is a Christian responsibility and basic health and welfare for widows is a prime responsibility. The system has some underlying principles: those most in need get the most help, those who can help must help, each must take responsibility for one’s own family, don’t encourage dependence.

In our culture, many of these responsibilities have devolved to the government. What is the role of the church in providing for basic needs of those within and beyond, the circle of care?

Verses 17-20 outline how pastors are to be recompensed and how misconduct is to be investigated and dealt with. How are such passages relevant today? Is there wisdom here that can be applied in your church?

Friday

1st Timothy 6

Verses one and two were regularly quoted (along with other biblical passages) by those who argued, from a theological standpoint, for the retention of slavery as an honourable and justifiable institution. *Do you believe that Paul is justifying slavery here?*

What is the situation in your life where your chosen path of humility (rather than asserting your rights) is proving a blessing to others and a proclamation of the gospel?

Paul warns against “unhealthy interests in controversies and quarrels about words” in verse four. Sometimes, Christians and Christian communities fall into patterns of fruitless conflict over minor issues. *Why does this happen? What is the remedy?* Similarly, Paul warns against the temptations of wealth. You live in a wealthy country. *What disciplines do you undertake to help you to ‘flee’ from the temptations of wealth?*