

DIOCESE OF EVO

DIOCESAN

COUNSELLING MANUAL

ON MARRIAGE AND

FAMILY LIFE

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PREFACE

“Marriage in every religion and culture is a happy thing. God ordained it and Jesus demonstrated his support for the marriage institution with his presence at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. As a gift of God in creation and a means of His grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman became one flesh, it is the duty of the church not only to encourage its members to go into it but most importantly, to advise and prepare their minds properly before they are joined. The church is strongly opposed to premarital sex.”

It was this concern that inspired the Bishop of the Diocese of Edo, His Lordship, Rt. Revd Innocent U. Ordu, to set up a five-man committee with a mandate to develop a Diocesan Counselling Manual on Marriage and Family Life. The work in your hand is the outcome of the overall effort geared towards building stable Christian homes in our generation.

To this end, topics such as What is Marriage? (God’s Definition of Marriage), Knowing God’s Will, Choosing a Marriage Partner, Dating, Principles of Courtship, Dimensions of Marriage, Communication, Christian Wedding, The Christian Family or Couples Indeed, Spouses as Partners in Ministry, The Young Home: Building on a Solid Foundation, Your Home as a City of Refuge, Your Role in Evangelism, The Mandate to Subdue Kingdom, The Place of In-Laws, The Place of Children, Divorce and The Care for the Widows are discussed in this manual.

In all, there are eighteen lessons divided into two parts with homework attached at the end of some of the lessons. Part one includes lessons one to five while part two includes lessons six to seventeen. The eighteenth lesson considers the widows. The part one is a prerequisite for all singles within the age bracket of eighteen and above for female and twenty-four and above for male. The part two is for the engaged and the married. This is with the understanding that pre-marital and marital counselling is of immense importance in our generation. Study and practise all therein for a happy home.

Ven. G. B. Chinda
For: The Committee

FOREWORD

It was during the presentation of our address as President of our Maiden Diocesan Synod on Saturday, 31st July , 2010 that we set up a five –man committee headed by the then Rev. Canon Godwin B. Chinda to produce a common Marriage Counselling Manual for the Diocese of Evo.

After several months of strenuous labours behind the scene, the efforts of the members of the committee have yielded what we now have as the Diocesan Counselling Manual on Marriage and Family Life.

I welcome this material warmly because I believe that it will prove an enrichment to the ministry of the church in general, and a help to clergy in particular as they prepare would-be couples for their future lives together as husbands and wives.

This manual has been put together by The Venerable Godwin Chinda, The Rev. Chimaobi Chieme, Mrs. Uju Opara, Mr. Godwin Chinda and Mrs. Ijeoma Anagbogu against the background of years of parochial and stable family life experiences on their individual parts.

Again, I welcome this manual because I think it will help the individual at his/her private studies, and not only the clergy and members of the Local Church Marriage Committees. At such a time as this in which the marriage institution has come under intense attack from the wicked one, those who are married and all others wishing to go into it must be fully equipped to face the challenges. This carefully packaged manual will definitely come in handy to offer the much needed help.

Consequently, we prayerfully commend it to everyone for use, as we believe that the Lord has greatly blessed the efforts of his servants.

Every Blessing

Rt. Rev. Innocent U. Ordu, JP
Bishop, Diocese of Evo

LESSON ONE

WHAT IS MARRIAGE? (GOD'S DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE)

TEXT: Gen. 2:18-25

INTRODUCTION

The marriage institution has been so bastardised and abused in contemporary times that it is important to go back to the basics. From the Scriptures, it is clear that no one brought up the idea of marriage but the Almighty God Himself. From the same source we also understand that marriage is the rock base of humanity since Adam was all alone till Eve joined him. Therefore, to venture into it without God's compass can be disastrous not only to the persons directly involved but also to society at large.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is marriage?
2. How does God view marriage?
Gen. 2:18-25; Eph. 5:31-32; Matt. 19:4-6, 9-12
3. What is the purpose of marriage? Gen. 1:28b; 2:18-22; 1Cor. 7:1-6
4. Critically examine Matt.19:6. (a)Has God really joined all couples together?
(b) Could this be one of the reasons for the increasing divorce rates?
5. What other forms of union has man invented?
Gen. 4:19; 19:31-38; Rom.1:26-28.

CONCLUSION

Think deeply if your convictions and perspective of marriage are in line with God's. If they are not, be wise to make quick and genuine adjustments.

LESSON TWO

KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

TEXT: Acts 10:9-20

INTRODUCTION

From the previous study, on God's definition of marriage, it is obvious that failure to involve Him from the outset is a grievous error. It is therefore imperative for any child of God contemplating marriage to earnestly seek His will before making any move. Unfortunately, though, many people do not know how to understand God's will. Some have tried unsuccessfully in the past and given up the idea, choosing to operate as they think best.

This is very sad because Jesus said in John 10:3-4, "...the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth them by name and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice". See v 27 also.

One thing that should be understood is that to know the will of God requires intimacy with Him. It also requires training of some sort and practice on our part for mortal man to be able to hear Him accurately. Moreover, God's will is the greatest navigating asset anyone who wishes to please God should covet.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does God want us to know His will?
Gen. 2:16-17; Exod. 19:9-11; Hebrews 1:1-2.

2. How does He reveal His will?
Isa.30:21; 1Kings 19:12-13; Deut. 6:23-25; Acts 10:9-10, 13-20; Gen. 24:10-12; Judges 6:36-40; Ps. 119:105.

3. How can one hear accurately/clearly from God?
It must be said that this is a gradual process that requires training by God Himself. Consider the following Scriptures to elicit the part man can play in the process.
Joshua 9:14; 1Sam. 30:7-9; Acts 13:1-2.

CONCLUSION

If you have not been seeking God's face over other issues of life, great or small, it may be difficult to discern His perfect will when it comes to marriage. It can be seen that God reveals His will in diverse ways and times to His people. It is wrong to feel that He will reveal His will in a particular way or method. One thing stands out very clearly: we must develop intimacy with Him before we can understand how He reveals His will. In almost all cases, the will of God is made clear to us when we pray. So, you must learn to be in a prayerful mood if you must hear from Him.

Note: Please read Genesis 24 in preparation for lesson three.

LESSON THREE

CHOOSING A MARRIAGE PARTNER

TEXT: Gen. 24:1-7, 10-14

INTRODUCTION

God ordained marriage from the beginning. The first union (Adam and Eve) was solely arranged by God. He has not changed and is therefore still in the business of matching His children. God has not delegated this part of His work to man (Gen. 2:18). God's desire is that a man shall not live alone, so He provided a help meet for him. We are to understand that marriage is a life-long satisfying relationship that is not subject to changes of partners. Sexual satisfaction shall never be sought outside marriage so that our choice of a marriage partner should be prayerfully considered (Gen. 24:13-14) to avoid any form of adultery (1Cor. 7:2). As we trust God to reveal His total counsel on this issue, it will deliver us from the danger of failed marriages that has eaten deep into most of our present day families. Total obedience to God on this subject is the only way to avoid future pains and regrets.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Considering the following Scriptures, and from the Christian perspectives who is suitable for marriage? Gen.2:18; John 1:12-13; 3:6-7.
2. How would you know that a man or a woman is ready for marriage?
Read Matt. 19:5-6; Gen.2: 15, 18, 24
3. What are the steps to knowing the right person for marriage?
 - To have a correct disposition of heart –Gen. 2:21-22; Phil. 4:6-7; Prov. 3:5-6; Job 14:14; Ps. 37:4-5; Prov. 6:25-26; 19:14; 23:26-28; Ps. 25:3-5; 27:14; 37:7a; 62:5.
 - Have an inner witness of the Holy Spirit – Ps.32:8-9; Jn. 16:13-14; Rom. 8:9, 14, 16; 1John 3:24.
 - Through Scriptures, dreams, visions, testimonies and the counsel of some other matured brethren- Ps. 119:105; Job 33:15,16; 2Tim.3:16-17; Jer.23:28; Gen. 15:1; 46:2; Acts 10:1-3
4. How do you recognise the voice of God so as to avoid confusion?
 - There is no contradiction in God's word- Jn.16:13.
 - When Jesus and not man is glorified- Jn.16:14.
 - Receiving confirmation from some other mature Christians-2Cor. 13:1
 - There is joy, peace and assurance after taking the decision-Isa.32:17; Rom.14:17; Phil.4:6-7.

CONCLUSION

Although the Bible does not emphasize age in marriage, it is generally accepted that those who would get married should be mature physically, spiritually and financially. Only when God initiates and directs a marriage does it succeed. See Genesis 2:22b. But this is only possible when the man or lady in question co-operates with God and allows Him to choose the partner. Do not be actively engaged in arranging a life partner for yourself or others without God. Setting up idols (woman or man) in their hearts (Ezek. 14:1-7; 2Tim. 4:3-4), being disobedient to the word of God and having a low self-esteem are some of the common mistakes singles make. Avoid them!

LESSON FOUR

DATING

TEXT: 1 Cor.6:9-20

INTRODUCTION

Dating in this context is a romantic meeting arranged between a boyfriend and a girlfriend or with somebody who might become a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Dating is characterized by emotion and fleshly desire, but usually camouflaged with some logic and morality, depending on the spirituality and maturity of those involved. This highly emotional, erotic and sentimental system has become almost a cultural norm today despite its failure in producing Godly marriages. The dating system now enjoys tremendous popularity among pagans and believers alike. There is no indication that this romantic system is declining. On the contrary, it is on the increase. It is characterised by fleshly values of the world. It is heading toward an outright “barnyard morality” where bestial desire and selfish interest predominate. We need to understand God’s mind about dating.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is dating? Discuss
2. From the following Scriptures, can we say that dating has God’s approval? 1Thess.4:3-4; 5:22; 2Tim. 2:22 Discuss
3. What should rather be our attitude in relationship before marriage? Hebrews 13:4; Prov. 11:22; 31:30; Eccl. 12:1; 2Tim. 2:22; 1Tim. 5:22b
4. How can you handle someone who is pushing you to physical relationship in a friendly set up? 1Timothy 4:12

CONCLUSION

The social appointment with a person of opposite sex (dating) is wrong for a child of God. It has the tendency to encourage sexual immorality. Getting involved in dating relationship is not in accordance with the word of God. The extent of physical touch, treating others with respect and honour, purity of speech, and setting spiritual tone to a relationship are some strategies to avoid the danger of dating. Read 2Timothy 2:22 “Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteousness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure heart”.

LESSON FIVE PRINCIPLES OF COURTSHIP

TEXT: Matt. 1:18-21, 24-25

INTRODUCTION

The presumption here is that both parties have discovered God's will; and that a proposal has been made and accepted.

The courtship period is the period between the acceptance of the proposal and the wedding day. It is also advised that except for uncontrollable circumstances, the period should not exceed six months. This is to ensure that purity prevails. The longer the period the more exposed to temptation the intended couple would be.

The Scriptures guiding the principles to be maintained within the courtship period are: Rom. 12:1; 1Thess. 4:4; 5:22; 1Cor. 3:16-17; Matt. 1:24-25.

Aims and Objectives of Courtship

Ordinarily, in the Christian context, courtship is a period of praying, and other preparations by both parties concerning their proposed marriage. Therefore it should be geared towards the following objectives:

- setting goals (spiritual, material, etc.) and financial management for the would-be family.
- getting to know each other better;
- sharing visions and aspirations (spiritual and otherwise);
- discussing issues pertaining to the future life together;
- planning the traditional marriage and white wedding;
- spiritually dealing with family foundations;
- getting to know extended family members;
- affording parents and relations the opportunity of investigating the proposed in-law's family;
- attending Church marriage counselling sessions together.
- assessing each other's spiritual conditions with the aim of offering help where required.

If these goals are pursued, then each meeting between the courting couple should be well planned and with a clear focus.

Meeting Time and Venue

It is advised that to avoid temptations and suspicions, the couple should always meet in a quiet but not secluded place like a corner of the Church; in their Pastor's house or a friend's house. A neutral ground is the consideration here. Wherever it holds, the windows and the doors should be open. It should not be late at night.

It is best to come fasting, with specific time allotted to the duration of meetings. Effort should be made to keep to the time.

Discussions

Likes/Dislikes; Visions/Aspirations/Goal -Setting

Each party should be very careful to note what the other says on the above at this time. This is because whatever that party says matters most in the life of that person, and he/she wishes his or her partner to take note, and consider them. If possible, such disclosures should be privately documented by the partner, as they will form the basis for their adjustments during marriage.

Although it is natural to put up one's best behaviour at this time, it is advised that discussions be frank, natural and realistic. As believers, we do not need to deceive anyone. Any foundation of pretence or falsehood laid during courtship could prove fatal later. Spiritual goals on how to serve the Lord together within the Church or Christian Group should be discussed and settled at this stage.

Family Foundations

Difficult and embarrassing as the above issue may seem, it will eventually save the couple much grief if issues of curses, covenants, satanic altars and spiritual marriages are tackled as much as possible at this stage.

Read Psalm 11:3; Judges 6:25-27; Numbers 25:2-3. Almost every African family is in one way or the other associated with a foundation of idolatry, which according to Exodus 20:4-6 attracts generational curses; besides, according to Numbers 25:1-3, a spiritual marriage contract exists between a man/woman and any god he bows down to at any point in time. Such spiritual marriages affect the physical ones negatively. Apart from family foundations, use this time to tell your would be spouse any other negative experiences you must have had in time past. If you had had a child before, tell your partner in a frank manner. Tell him or her if you had been involved in abortions. He or she should not hear it from outside. This helps to build up openness and mutual respect.

Wedding Plans

Each aspect of the marriage rites must be carefully discussed in detail. As the wedding day approaches, action plans will be laid out and allocated; subsequent meetings will then consist of reports on assigned duties and further assignments.

Future Life Together

Issues that will naturally crop up as the two individuals eventually start life together should also be discussed at this point and agreed upon. These include the following:

- relocation-where necessary;
- where to worship and areas of involvement or ministry;

- number of children and their education;
- when to have general family devotion;
- spiritual tone of the family- the 'musts' and 'must nots';
- Finance as one of the factors responsible for problems in marriages has been identified to be the most common of all of them. Majority of family problems have been traced to this very factor, hence the need to talk more about finance in this manual.

Below are suggestions, though not exhaustive, that could help ameliorate if not completely remove likely finance related problems in the family if adopted;

1 **Joint Financial Planning (Budgeting)**

In doing this there is absolute need for openness by the husband and wife to each other. Transparent and sincere declaration of the financial position of each spouse is the beginning of the success of this approach. They should literally lay their money on the table, pray over it, thanking God for the provision. Then jointly outline the family needs in a very comprehensive manner and allocate funds to them. The budget items to be allocated funds should include **family savings**. In the event that the couple are salary earners, this exercise will be a monthly affair. Discipline is required in the administration of the budget to ensure strict compliance. If it happens that an item was not spent at all or partly spent, the unspent portion could be used to service any aspect that is experiencing pressure or passed to the family savings.

2 **Allocation of Responsibilities**

On agreement the couple can prayerfully look at the areas of expenditure in the family generally and allocate responsibilities for each to either of them. This system will enable both parties to take care of specific areas. If this system is operated by each one in a faithful and transparent manner there will be no friction. Each party should draw up his or her budget based on the areas of responsibility as this will help you administer your part effectively. However it is encouraged that each party should be disposed to helping out if there should be any pressure on the opposite side.

3 **Contribution to Budget items**

A couple can decide after prayerfully drawing up a budget, to contribute to the items at an agreed ratio that is based on their individual financial capacity.

Any of these options can be adopted depending on the nature of financial resources at the family's disposal. However, it should be noted that even the best of options will not work if both or either of the couple does not have JESUS CHRIST as his/her Lord and Saviour and under the full control of the Holy Spirit.

Some of the decisions taken over these issues may be reviewed later, depending on circumstances.

CONCLUSION

It is very important to note here that courtship is not marriage and that the agreements to get married could break down. A broken engagement is better than a broken marriage. It is only a time to prepare for marriage. Therefore at this stage any sexual indulgence between the intending couple is tantamount to fornication, and God views it as a serious offence. Therefore, concerted effort should be made to avoid falling into sexual defilement. The example to follow is that of Mary and Joseph in the Bible (Matt. 1:24-25).

Homework: Discuss when you will spend time together investing in your marriage on a daily/weekly/ annual basis. Write down your plans. This is planning time together

LESSON SIX

CHRISTIAN WEDDING

TEXT: John 2:1-11

INTRODUCTION

A Christian wedding ceremony is a public event to witness the union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. This Church solemnization of the marriage is expected of true believers. It is to glorify and worship Jesus, reach out to the unsaved and make the couple receive blessings from the Lord and His Church. It is a further demonstration of the biblical teaching of one man to one wife since the issue of polygamy/polyandry is not an acceptable New Testament practice.

This wedding may involve some form of entertainment that is done without any pretence, falsehood, or show-off and should not lead the couple to going into debt. As believers we must be contented with the Lord's provisions at all times as God does not encourage borrowing (Deut. 15:6, Prov. 22:7; Heb 13:5-6).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Gen. 24:50-55; 29:18; Prov. 21:1; Rom 13:7
 - a. Do we need parental consent in marriage?
 - b. Is bride price biblical?
- c. Should our Churches (Pastors or appointed marriage counsellors) be involved in our marriages rites?
2. Read the following Scriptures and discuss the significance of Christian wedding- Jn. 2:1-2; Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 13:16
3.
 - a. What is the relevance of a wedding dress?
 - b. Is traditional marriage biblical?
4. What should be avoided in a Christian wedding?
 - a. Alcoholism – Prov. 31:4-5
 - b. Worldly music and idolatrous dance troupes- 1Jn. 2:15-17; James. 4:4
 - c. Ostentation (show of wealth)- Rom. 12:16; Ps. 138:6; Lk.21:34-35; Phil. 2:5-9
 - d. Borrowing – Deut 15: 6; Prov. 22:7; Heb. 13:5-6
 - e. Nakedness through the type of wedding dress- Gen. 3:21
5. The common problems associated with the wedding ceremony that must be avoided to avert early problems in a marriage.
 - a. The would-be couple shall sort out how to take care of their in-laws and friends in order to avoid any embarrassment on that day.

- b. It is necessary to agree before hand on the level of entertainment and the possible number of invitees as well as venue for the reception.
- c. The issue of accommodation especially for the relations coming for the wedding should be considered and settled before inviting them.
Discuss. How can this be handled to avoid problems?
- d. Are there other issues that can present difficulties in a wedding?
Discuss.
- e. Discuss the steps that will encourage a good wedding outing.
- f. Agree on and confirm venue for honey-moon just before the wedding.

CONCLUSION

The wisdom to cope with the complicated demands and expectations of people as they concern your wedding day comes only from God. Make up your mind to know and to hold on to the standard of God's word that it may be well with your future.

LESSON SEVEN

DIMENSIONS OF MARRIAGE

TEXTS: Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25

INTRODUCTION

When God, who is a tripartite Being, said, "Let us make man in our own image," He meant that man should also have a tripartite nature. Meanwhile by "us", He meant Himself, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Thus, just as a man has three dimensions- spirit, soul and body – so also does marriage; it has three dimensions. A married couple should, therefore, aim at attaining unity at these three levels. Adjustments in marriage- during courtship, discussions were held on 'likes' and 'dislikes', visions/aspirations/goal setting. This is the time to re-visit those discussions and recall the note taken. Recalling them and putting them into action will be the duty of each party in marriage. It is never an easy task as it requires adjustments from both parties. But each must resolve to work hard, as much as possible, to adjust to the taste of the other. This helps fusion in marriage.

Physical Marriage

This level of marriage is the easiest to attain, and is in fact the entry point. It is the union of the two bodies in sexual intercourse. However, easy though it may be, it still requires skill and divine link for fulfilment and enduring satisfaction to be maintained in marriage through it. Consider the following Scriptures: Prov. 5:15; Heb. 13:4.

Failure to heed the above injunctions has unleashed promiscuity and its attendant avalanche of woes on earth. Moreover, it should be noted that effort to satisfy one's partner is crucial to the stability and happiness of the home. Frustrations emanating from this area are deadly and have wrecked many homes.

We eat physical food for satisfaction and nourishment and we go into sexual intercourse in marriage for satisfaction. We pray over our food before we eat it, why will we not pray to God before we begin each sexual activity? Is it too much of a prayer? Or do we feel God does not care about it?

To help each other, a couple should ensure that evergreen romance pervades their relationship. Adam and Eve were naked but not ashamed; Africans generally shy away from expressing love verbally or through gestures, but this is wrong. Even if it is not done in public, it should be freely expressed in the bedroom; also through little notes, text messages and gifts – big or tiny- should be regularly exchanged between couple.

Women are highly emotional and so rate romance above sex while it is the other way round for men. Couples should therefore seek a harmonised balance in this regard. Songs of Solomon 1:2, 12-16; 2:4-7; 4:1-12, 16.

Over time, the physical marriage can grow to the point of the couple actually looking alike.

Soul Mates

“Soul” here refers to the mind. The soul is the seat of rational thought or reason and so encapsulates all psychological and mental activity. Motivations that propel or guide actions are lodged in the soul, which is why the Bible states thus, “For as he thinketh in his heart so is he” Prov. 23:7a

For two independent minds to be bound together is the second level/dimension in marriage. This process takes time since it involves a patient study of the spouse. With this comes increasing understanding of the other’s character; how the person will likely respond to a given situation. Thus, in the person’s absence, the partner can take appropriate action on his/her behalf. Tastes, likes and dislikes may not actually blend but will be accepted and respected. This minimizes argument, disagreement, conflict and their attendant tensions in the home.

As the two souls/minds blend, companionship and friendship grow between the couple. They are not just united as husband and wife but also as confidants and best of friends to each other. It will be almost impossible for an outsider to know something about one of which the partner is ignorant.

Spiritual Union

This is the ultimate; the highest dimension of marriage. A careful look at the Scriptures indicates that many marriages do not actually attain this height, which is why we should solicit God’s grace and help even more. Examples of lopsided marriages in the Bible are Moses and Zipporah; Eli and his unnamed wife; Lot and his wife; Isaac and Rebecca; Jacob and Rachael.

Spiritual unity is achieved when a couple is spiritually compatible in their zeal and commitment to the things of God; this includes the depth of their understanding of spiritual concepts, principles and values. Some Biblical examples of couples that came close to the mark are: Abraham and Sarah; Manoah and his wife; Joseph and Mary; Priscilla and Aquilla.

In this case, one person may be the actual arrowhead, but the spouse willingly co-operates and follows his or her vision.

It should be noted that a couple may not actually start off marriage at the same spiritual level, but it is the duty of the more mature spouse to pray for the other till God unites them spiritually. Nevertheless, spiritual union does not necessarily mean being equally gifted but one complementing the other. The couple here makes use of what was discussed during the assessment of each other’s spiritual condition when they were in courtship. Each works on the other to help him or her attain acceptable levels.

When a couple attains spiritual union, they can then chase ten thousand with ease and thus become great assets to God.

LESSON EIGHT

COMMUNICATION – A VITAL ISSUE

Text: Gen 25:57-67; 1 Cor. 2:11; Gen. 2:25

Have you ever wondered how Isaac and Rebecca, who had neither ever seen nor known each other, started life together?

So it is in a strictly Christian setting in our society except two brethren had been in the same Christian Fellowship before marriage otherwise, both usually started married life as near-total strangers; reason being that close association, occurs only during courtship, after which, as earlier discussed, should not last for too long. Besides, human behaviour (likes and dislikes) can change naturally over time; age, experience and life's challenges can equally affect one's character. Thus, the communication line between couples should always be open and regular; otherwise they will begin to misunderstand each other.

What is in the heart can only be revealed to another through clear communication. This ensures that what is said is properly understood by the hearer in the way the speaker wishes to be understood. Thus, where the listener has not properly understood, questions should be asked for further clarification.

But alas! This is hardly so between couples; a lot of assumptions are made that lead to frequent quarrels. Moreover, men by nature talk less and can be quite irritated by women's much talk about little and irrelevant things. The plea is for patience on their part. On the other hand, women, like children, need full attention when they are speaking; otherwise they clam up, sulk and are piqued. Yet a lot of husbands leaf through newspapers or have their eyes glued to the television when their wives are talking. Meanwhile they expect the wives to stand at attention when they are talking.

All the same, wives should understand that men usually speak little and listen with double attention to whatever they have to say and strive to promptly act when occasion warrants. Furthermore, men have little time for details – in almost everything – this makes them more or less slow to understand. Thus, it is usually frustrating to communicate with them in public through gestures, whispers, innuendoes or hints- they will likely fail to understand. Wives are thus warned to minimise the use of these with their husbands in order to stave off the irritability that can arise from such seeming dullness on the man's part.

Furthermore, when instructions are issued, courtesy demands that reasons should be given. This makes for a better understanding and compliance. All these help to secure the serenity of the relationship.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read Genesis 2:25 – how does this apply to communication?
- How does eye contact affect communication?
- How do you feel when talking to someone whose attention seems to be elsewhere?

CONCLUSION

It is apt to conclude this session with Matthew 7:12, “Therefore, all things whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets”. Therefore in whatever way we wish others to address us or communicate with us, let each partner strive to do same to the other.

Homework: Discuss as a couple what possible areas of tension you can foresee with your parents/parents in-laws and other relatives.

LESSON NINE

CHRISTAIN FAMILY OR COUPLE INDEED

TEXT: Matt. 4:18-22; 28:18-20; ACTS 1:8

INTRODUCTION

Evangelism is God's heart-beat! Hence, Jesus declared to His disciples, the married and the unmarried alike, at the beginning of His ministry "I will make you fishers of men" and commanded them at the end of His earthly ministry thus, "Go into the world and make disciples, baptizing ... teaching them". This means that the main if not the sole reason Christians exist here on earth is to take Christ into lives. Therefore, in any context a Christian finds him or herself that ought to be a platform for him or her to reach out. Christian couples or family ought to see marriage primarily as a tool to reach out to lives with the Gospel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. From the following Scriptures, what is "Church"? Mat. 18:17-20; Acts 2:47; 5:11-12; 9:31; 15:36-41; 1Cor. 7:17
2. Where are the Churches found? Acts 2:44-46; 5: 12-13; Phile. Vs 1-2; 2 John Vs 1-2; Rom. 16: 4
3. What are the duties of the Christian(s)? Mat. 6:11-12; Luke 11:3-4; 9:23; Acts 2:43-44; Mat. 25:31-46; 26:55, Luke 19:47; Acts 2:47; 16:4-5; 5:42; 17:11; 19:9-10; 2 Cor. 11:28; Heb 3:13
4. What are the classes of people Christians are to minister to? Luke 4:18; 7:22; Acts 11:19-20; Mat. 14:16-21; Eph.3:8; Gal. 1:16; Rev. 14:6; Mk 16:16
5. Where are the Christians to minister? Mat.24:14; Acts 8:4; Mat. 11:1; Acts 8:40; Mk. 1:38, 39; Luke. 4: 44; Mat 10:29; 2 Cor. 10:16
6. In view of the above what make a family a Christian family indeed? Consider questions 2, 3, 4, etc. Give examples of such couples. See Acts 18:24-28.

CONCLUSION

The Church is made of singles and the married called out to give meaning and hope to life. Those in or coming into it are charged with the responsibility of fulfilling its divine mandate. It becomes counterproductive if a Christian couple or family is indifferent about Church's assignment.

In Christendom there are ministries, which Christian couples should effectively and responsibly sustain. Prayer, counselling, Sunday School, Bible study, children, youth, missions, welfare, foundations, house fellowship, decoration of God's house (Church), etc. are ministries one of which could be a calling or hobby for any Christian family or couple. Identify yours and pursue it with vigour.

Homework: Discuss together on what ministry your family can effectively be involved in.

LESSON TEN

SPOUSES AS PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

TEXT: Gen. 2:7-9, 15-22; Acts 18:1-3, 24-28.

Memory Verse: Lev. 26:8 *“And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword”.*

INTRODUCTION

A closer look at the Scriptures reveals that apart from procreation to replenish the earth, one major assignment for which God made man is to labour to maintain or preserve His creation. Reading from the Scriptures we observe that in the details or sequence of creation, immediately after God formed man and breathed into his nostrils, the next thing God did was to plant a garden eastward in Eden (Gen. 2:7-8). God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it, thereby maintaining or preserving its original beauty (Gen. 2:15). This is responsibility!

And God understood that if man was to succeed in his assigned responsibility, then he needed a help-meet or suitable companion. Therefore, God in His divine wisdom announced, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion who will help him” (Gen. 2:18 – NLT).

In Christian marriage (and indeed every marriage), therefore, where this divine intent is lacking, there will hardly be progress made in such homes. Show me a successful home, and I will show you a marriage where the spouses complement each other. This indeed also confirms the age-long saying that, beside a successful man is a suitable companion or woman. This divine intent applies even more to our ministries or different areas of service in the Church of God.

We shall briefly look at the benefits of spouses working together as partners in ministry.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What can you see as God’s purposes in creating man? Gen. 1:26-28; 2:8,15; Isaiah 43:7.
2. Discuss the command, “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). Is this relevant or applicable to our ministries? Is there a possible relationship between Gen. 2:15 and 18? Please explain.
3. What is the usual benefit of people working together in partnership, complementing one another’s efforts? Lev. 26:8; Eccl. 4:9-12.

4. With respect to our topic, 'Spouses as partners in ministry', what kind of couple do you see in Aquila and Priscilla? Discuss. Acts 18:26.
5. Discuss the direct benefit of the partnership in Aquila and Priscilla's ministry to the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Cor. 16:19; Acts 18:25-28; (Lev. 26:7-8).
6. Using Aquila and Priscilla as a case study discuss and identify the benefits of their working together (as husband and wife) to the Church, and how couples can apply this lesson to themselves.
7. What could be the reasons why some spouses are unable to work together in their ministries? Discuss and suggest solutions.

CONCLUSION

It would appear from the Scriptures that it was in the context of work (tending the garden) Gen. 2:15, 18, that God saw the need of providing a help-meet for the man. If this is right, partnership in ministry by both spouses squarely fits into that objective. Concerning Aquila and Priscilla, Paul wrote, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom. 16:3-4). What a letter of commendation for a Christian couple! It will therefore be unfulfilling to be partners in marriage without being partners in ministry.

LESSON ELEVEN

THE YOUNG HOME, BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

TEXT: Proverbs 24:3-4

INTRODUCTION

It is Scripturally known that marriage is good and honourable, that whosoever marries a wife (husband) is wise, and that happy is the man (woman) whose quivers are full of children (the product of marriage).

After the choice of the partner has been made through God's involvement and after a reasonable courtship period that is profitable, utilized to define a chart of successful expectations and desires, the marriage is finally consummated under God's guidance with fanfare, singing, dancing, etc. It will most likely be concluded with a beautiful honeymoon. With the above, it is believed that the marriage has been established on Jesus, the Rock of Ages that can never sink.

Then the reality of marriage sets in. To make it succeed, both partners have to be careful on how they build on that foundation-1Cor.3:10. The immediate period (from time zero to about 5 years) after the wedding is very crucial and critical to what the marriage will be. It will determine the fate and life of the marriage. How you handle some of the following matters a lot.

1. **Integration of both families** (the bride's and the bridegroom's). In the African setting the marriage is not between the bride and the bridegroom alone. It is a marriage of the two families. Both parties must see it as it is.

Discuss in the context of Ruth 1:16-18, the following: doing things in common; working together for God like Pricilla and Aquilla. They had a Church in their house; they took young Apollos into their house to guide him in his spiritual development, etc.

2. **Relationship between husband and wife** Gen. 2: 25; Prov. 5:17. No secret, no hold backs, no 50/50 plan. The relationship should be based on openness, sincerity and trust. No cheating.

3. **Divine wisdom is absolutely necessary for both parties.** Hos 4:6; Prov. 3:5-6; Prov. 24:3-4; No room for worldly wisdom that destroys Jam. 3:13-18. It was Abigail's (Nabal's wife) wisdom and love that saved her husband, her entire family and all that they had on earth- 1 Sam. 25:8-26.

4. **You must demonstrate absolute love for each other.** Jn. 13:34-35; Rom. 13:9; pay no wrong with wrong: Jn. 3:20 Rom. 12:16-17, 21. Love each other to the extent of even being prepared to die for the other-1 Sam. 25:8-26

5. **Do not deny each other sex under any guise.** Do not use sex to settle scores. It is not a weapon. It is designed by God for both husband and wife-1Cor. 7:3-5. Your body does not belong to you only.

6. **Composition of the New Home.** Husband, wife, children plus relatives? Discuss. Remember Abraham and Lot. Gen 13:1, 4, 7. No relative lives permanently with you either in the guise that such has come to help you or that you are helping such. This is a time you need to grow together, make

mistakes and resolve them together, study each other and grow. Help relations but keep them at arm's length. Provide for your immediate family before any other person. He who cannot provide for his family is worse than an infidel-1 Timothy 5:8. The young husband/wife still thinks first of his/her own biological relations. He/she considers his/her partner's as outsiders whose needs could only be attended to after his/her own biological family's needs have been met. Be guided by Ruth's confession- Ruth 1:16-18

7. **Your look.** Discuss. It must be nice, honourable, presentable and beautiful as when you were single. Take care of your looks/appearance. Dress well.

8. **Watch your tongue**-Col 4:6; Prov. 12:18; 15:2 James 3:3-8

9. **No substitute for prayers**-Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17. With prayer and thanksgiving make your supplication known unto God. Pray without ceasing. A prayerless home is a weak and powerless home. Establish an altar in your house and have a regular time of devotion at home. Attend church services, programmes and fellowships together.

CONCLUSION

See Proverbs. 24:3-4. Let there be room in your house for Jesus and not in the manger. Let He that ordained marriage run your home for without Him we can do nothing. Jn. 15:4-7 Prov. 3:5-7

Homework: Talk together about whatever you think is important for you to build a good sexual relationship.

LESSON TWELVE

YOUR HOME AS A CITY OF REFUGE

TEXT: Num. 35:6; Rom. 16:1-2

INTRODUCTION

The Christian race is a life of serious and consistent warfare that leaves many wounds on the combatants. It moreover takes a toll on one's strength, determination and perseverance. When Christian soldiers sustain injuries, therefore, they need to retreat; have the wounds nursed, their strength and confidence spiritually restored in order to continue. For these reasons, Christian homes should be built with such functions in view.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read the following passages and identify the categories of people that need succour from Christian homes. Rom. 16:1-2; 11Kings 4:8-11; 1 Sam. 22:2; Acts 23:12; Acts 9:39.
2. What atmosphere should prevail in a home positioned as a city of refuge? Gen 18:1-5; Rom. 4:18-22; Prov. 11:25; 1 Cor13; Phil. 4:7
3. In what ways can a home perform the above function? Josh2:4; Eph 1:15-16 James 2:14-16; Phil 4:15-16; Esther 2:15a Jn. 19:26

CONCLUSION

The Christian home should be imbued with God's Presence that will easily grant anyone seeking refuge there access into God's Presence – where such a one can receive all the strength and healing needed at that particular time.

LESSON THIRTEEN

YOUR ROLE IN EVAGELISM

TEXT: Gen. 1:28; 4:25-26

INTRODUCTION

A close look at the second scripture above gives a clearer picture of the first. In other words, the multiplication God means is filling the earth with godly children. Until Seth was born, though Cain was alive, Eve regarded herself as barren, and not until Enoch was born did men begin to call on God.

It is God's desire, therefore, that the home should form the nucleus of His evangelical programme for the earth, ultimately bringing all creation under His dominion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Although most couples, especially the men, spend much of their time outside the home, yet it is in the home that our truest nature and character is revealed. How can this factor influence the following people in their relationship with the Lord? (i) Your Children (ii) House helps (iii) Neighbours.
2. Ruth 1:16-17,21. What could Ruth have found in Naomi that made her cling to the God of Israel in the midst of such hopelessness?
3. Read Acts 18:2; 18-19.24-26; Rom 16:3 1 Cor. 16:19. What account can you give of this couple as evangelists? Were they ordained?
4. Read Acts 16:1-5; 17:14-15; Rom 16:21; 11 Tim 1:5. Compare Timothy's life and upbringing with the vision you have for your children deep down in your heart. The truth is that many parents sincerely are not excited about their children being actively involved in the ministry. What about you?
5. Consider the pattern of the Jehovah's Witnesses who go on evangelism even with their little ones. Any lesson to learn from there?
6. In the light of Prov. 22:6 and Exodus 10:9-11, how seriously should the evangelization of our children and house helps be taken?

CONCLUSION

The home is a mini-church and should be actively involved at that level in all Scriptural functions of the Church. When individual homes that make up a local Church fail in this, that assembly will be ailing.

Besides, the family's budget must include allocations to charity, mission and evangelism.

LESSON FOURTEEN

THE MANDATE TO SUBDUE KINGDOMS

TEXT: GEN. 1:28b; Ps 2:1-9; Luke 11:12c

INTRODUCTION

It is interesting that as soon as Adam was created, God instructed him to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. The reason is that Lucifer, who turns everything wild (Isa 14:17) was there already on earth before man was created. Moreover, by Adam's fall, Satan's hold on God's creation was doubly strengthened. He bluntly told Jesus in Luke 4:6 that all the glories of the world had been delivered to him. But He (Jesus) reclaimed all from him by His death and resurrection, which is why Psalm 2 and Phil. 4:11 are now valid.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways can the home subdue darkness? (i) within itself (ii) in its environment.
2. What can hinder a family from fulfilling this mandate? Hosea 4:6; 1 Peter 3:7; 11 Cor. 6:17; Josh. 7:20-21
3. Compare and contrast Abraham's and Lot's families – Gen 14:14-24; Gen 19.
4. Read Eccles. 4:12. How can the entire family have the same vision and understanding of spiritual warfare so that the hedges can remain intact?

CONCLUSION

God's expectation from the family is yet to be fully understood by many Christian families. The earlier we rise to the challenge, the more diligent we shall be in taking family matters beyond economic and social concerns.

LESSON FIFTEEN

THE PLACE OF IN-LAWS

TEXTS: Gen. 29:25; 30:33-42; Exod.18:1-12; Luke. 4:38-39

INTRODUCTION

The general attitude to the in-laws should be that of gratitude – for bringing up and nurturing the one we love till we found him/her. Besides, in the African context, marriage is actually a union of two families, not two people. It is also understandable that each group approaches the other with reservations that can only melt away or crystallise depending on the treatment received by their own representative in the

However, on given marriage, no account should the couple allow either side to come in-between them since they are one indivisible unit. Thus privately discuss and agree on:

- when in-laws should visit;
- the duration of the visit;
- what liberties they can exercise in the couple's home during the visit;
- what to give to them when they are leaving;
- when the couple or one of the spouses can visit the in-laws/the duration of the visit;
- what to take on such a visit;
- what financial assistance to give to either side and when.

Family discussions during a visit to any of the in-laws should not exclude any of the couple because they are one and jointly part of that family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. From the relationship between Laban and Jacob, point out the ills that can arise when in-laws deal treacherously with one another.
2. Analyse the relationship between Moses and Jethro; Peter and his in-laws.
3. In the light of Matthew 5:43-44 and Romans 8:7-8; 10, how can we handle wicked and diabolical in-laws?

CONCLUSION

In-laws are not to be neglected. They are to be treated with some degree of respect and regard. They are to play advisory role and not to dictate for the couple. Far more attention should be paid to one's immediate family than to extended family.

LESSON SIXTEEN

THE PLACE OF CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

“God not only pays attention to the activity of the womb, He is the God of the womb”. One of the purposes of marriage is procreation. So when once marriage is contracted and consummation takes place, the general expectation of our society is arrival of children. When they begin to arrive if their place in the family is not properly defined, unprecedented problems that can rock the marriage may ensue. Hence, the necessity of this lesson cannot be over emphasized. Therefore let’s take time and see what we can make out of the following discussion questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Gen 1:26-28, Gen 38:6-10 and Ps 127:3-4 and
 - i. identify how important it is to God for there to be children in a home;
 - ii. state what functions these children are supposed to perform.
2. Read 1 Sam. 1:7-8 and Gen. 25:20-21 and answer the following questions.
 - a. Identify similarities and differences between Isaac’s situation and Elkanah’s.
 - b. Compare the two men’s attitudes.
 - c. Compare Rebekah’s and Hannah’s attitudes.
- d. From the two women, explain how a woman feels when she is married but has no children of her own.
- e. How can the man help her?
3. Read Eph. 5:22-end; 6:1-4
 - a. Is it significant that the Holy Spirit spoke extensively on husband/ wife relationship before going on to speak about children?
 - b. What does this teach about the place of children in the relationship between a husband and his wife?
 - c. Read Mk 10:8-9. What further lesson do we learn on the order of priority as regards spouse and children?

CONCLUSION

Experience has shown that the moment children begin to arrive in a home; attention seems to be diverted somewhat to them. This is understandable and even necessary because of their tenderness. However, delicate as the situation may be, a couple should try to maintain their intimacy and romance while caring for the children. The latter should also be lovingly made to respect the special relationship between Mum and Dad and not feel jealous about it. Parents whose love wanes in the process of training or caring for their children end up being strangers to each other when the children are grown and have left home.

Moreover, parents should strive to take a common stand on issues, especially those bordering on discipline and spirituality. Where there is a crack in their relationship arising from divided opinion, children will take advantage of it to their detriment in the long run.

LESSON SEVENTEEN

DIVORCE

INTRODUCTION

Divorce is the ending of a marriage. The Bible is not silent about it and other related subjects. At the heart of divorce is a deterioration of that special something that honours a person's spouse as someone of great worth. Jesus connected his teaching on this issue with earliest truths taught about marriage. At the beginning divorce was impossible even to imagine. But after Adam and Eve sinned, the nature of marriage changed and there came laws permitting divorce. However, God's attitude toward divorce never changed- he hated it. And then finally, when Jesus came on board, he reaffirmed God's original design for marriage. Jesus said that in marriage, a union is formed that ought never to be dissolved. But the rate of divorce today is highly alarming. The biblical stand, reasons for and against, its consequences and ways to prevent divorce are the main thrust of this lesson.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the Bible say about divorce? Deut. 24:1-4; Mal. 2:4-16; Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mk. 10:1-12.
2. Why do people still embark on divorce? Deut. 24:1-4; Matt. 19:8-9; 1Cor. 7:12-15.
3. Considering the following Scriptures, should we encourage divorce? Why? Mal. 2:16; Matt. 18:21-22; Luke. 17:1-4; 1 Cor. 7:39.
4. What is the consequence of divorce? Discuss. Rev. 21:8 Cf. Mk. 10:9-11.
5. What are some ways to prevent divorce? Discuss. Eph. 5:24-25; 1 Thess. 5:11.

CONCLUSION

The Greek word for fornication (Matt.19:9) is *pornea* which includes all manner of sexual immorality but limitedly refers to sex outside of marriage for singles. The Greek word for adultery is *moicheia* which specifically refers to extra-marital sexual activity. Jesus does not mince words. If Jesus had meant adultery at the first instance, he would have used *moicheia* rather than *pornea*. The married do not commit fornication. If Matthew 18:22-35; Luke 17:3-4; 1Cor. 7:12-16, 39, etc., are still guides to Christians then divorce is highly discouraged and to be a divorcee may be an easy way to hell. Be wise!

LESSON EIGHTEEN
THE CARE OF WIDOWS (5:3-16)

INTRODUCTION

1. In the New Testament Church, the care of widows was an important concern...
 - a. The Church at Jerusalem made sure none were neglected - cf. Ac 6: 1-7
 - b. James described caring for widows as "pure and undefiled religion" - [James 1:27](#)
 - c. Paul charged Timothy to "Honor widows who are really widows" - [1Ti 5:3](#)
2. Yet it was not a responsibility simply to be thrust upon the Church...
 - a. The local church has its limitations
 - b. Family members have their obligations
 - c. Even widows themselves bear some responsibility

[In the text for this study, [1Ti 5:3-16](#), the apostle Paul instructs Timothy regarding "The Care of Widows." We first note the care to be given widows...]

I. BY THEIR FAMILIES

A. TO SHOW PIETY AT HOME...

1. "...let them first learn to show piety at home" - [1Ti 5:4](#)
2. "The word is commonly used to denote piety toward God, but it is also used to denote proper reverence and respect for a parent." - Robinson

3. This is one way that children "honor" their parents - cf. Ep 6:
1-2

B. TO REPAY THEIR PARENTS...

1. "and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God" - [1Ti 5:4](#)
2. Think of the care and sacrifice parents make for their children
3. "This debt can never be wholly repaid, but still a child should feel it a matter of sacred obligation to do as much toward it as possible." - Barnes

C. TO PROFESS TRUE FAITH...

1. Refusal to provide for one's own family is a denial of true religion - [1Ti 5:8](#); cf. [Jm 1:27](#)
2. Even unbelievers care for their own: "Every man should take care of his own family" - Cicero
3. Dare we do any less?

[Families should care for their widows, for "widows indeed" are those who are left alone and trust in God through prayers night and day ([1 Ti 5:5](#)). They are certainly not ones who "live in pleasure" ([1Ti 5:6-7](#)), of which Paul will say more later. Next Paul writes of the care given to "widows indeed"...]

II. BY THE CHURCH

A. THEY MAY BE TAKEN "INTO THE NUMBER"...

1. I.e., included on a list of those cared for by the church
- [1Ti 5:9](#); cf. [Ac 6:1-7](#)

2. From the qualifications (see below), some conclude these widows would be given special duties to fulfill for the church
3. Since it was not uncommon for the church to provide for its own on special occasions (cf. [Ac 4:34-35](#)), this appears to be list for those given long-term care by the church

B. PROVIDED QUALIFICATIONS WERE MET...

1. Over sixty years old, the reasons for which given later - [1 Ti 5:9](#)
2. The wife of one man - [1Ti 5:9](#)
 - a. Assumed by many to mean one husband at a time
 - b. Otherwise Paul would later tell younger widows to do that which disqualify them for any help in the future - cf. [1 Ti 5:14](#)
3. Well reported for good works - [1Ti 5:10](#); cf. Dorcas, Ac 9:
36-39
 - a. Brought up children
 - b. Lodged strangers
 - c. Washed the saints' feet
 - d. Relieved the afflicted
 - e. Diligently followed every good work

[Such qualifications were required because the church does not have the ability to help everyone (cf. [1Ti 5:16](#)). For younger widows especially, Paul writes of the care given to widows...]

III. BY THEMSELVES

A. YOUNGER WIDOWS ARE TO BE REFUSED...

1. The church is not take younger widows "into the number" - [1 Ti 5:11](#); cf. 5:

- a. That is, into long term care by the church
- b. Though short term care might be provided along with others

2. Reasons to refuse younger widow

- a. They will want to remarry, forsaking the commitment expected of those taken into the number - [1Ti 5:11-12](#)
- b. They will become idle gossips and busybodies, saying and doing things they should not - [1Ti 5:13](#); cf. [2Th 3:11](#); [1Pe 4:15](#)

B. YOUNGER WIDOWS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REMARRY...

1. This is what Paul "desires", it is his opinion or counsel

- [1Ti 5:14](#)

2. For younger widows to marry, bear children, manage the household - cf. [Tit 2:4-5](#)

3. To give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully

- cf. [Tit 2:5,8](#)

4. For some have already turned aside to Satan - [1Ti 5:15](#); cf. Ph

3:18-19

CONCLUSION

1. "The Care Of Widows" should be an important concern for us today...

- a. Such care is a mark of pure religion
- b. Such care is an expression of due respect toward those who have done so much

2. Yet the church has many obligations, it cannot afford to become

burdened by this one - [1Ti 5:16](#)

- a. For this reason families must accept their responsibilities
- b. Younger widows must accept their own responsibility
- c. Today, even governmental assistance is often available

For those who do really widows”, left alone, trust in God, and who meet the qualifications listed in our text, then "The Care Of Widows" is a duty not to be neglected by the Lord's church...