

Small Group Guide THE FAMILY OF GOD

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

September 18, 2011

1 Timothy 3:1—5:16

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Sermon Outline

THE FAMILY OF GOD

1 Timothy 3:1-5:16

Who We Are...

- The significance of the church...
 - We are the expression of God's family _____.
 - We are the inhabitance of God's _____ presence _____.
 - We are the guardians of God's Word _____.
 - Preserving God's Word: We hold it _____ firm _____.
 - Proclaiming God's Word: We hold it _____ high _____.
 - The awe-inspiring reality: God dwells _____ among _____ us!
- The supremacy of Christ...
 - He reveals the _____ mystery _____ of godliness.
 - He displays the _____ majesty _____ of God.
 - Incarnated as the Son.
 - Verified by the _____ Spirit _____.
 - Praised among the heavens.
 - _____ Proclaimed _____ across the earth.
 - The Savior of all the world.
 - The _____ King _____ over all the universe.
 - The awe-inspiring reality: Christ lives _____ within _____ you!

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How We Are Led...

- Elders : Servant leaders in the church.
 - They lead under the authority of Christ.
 - They are appointed by God.
 - They aspire to serve.
 - They are affirmed by the church.
 - They shepherd the body of Christ.
 - They teach the Word of Christ.
 - They model the character of Christ.
- Deacons : Leading servants in the church.
 - Their lives exalt Christ.
 - Their leadership edifies the church.

What We Do...

- We detect error in the church.
 - The source....
 - Demonic teachings.
 - Deceptive teachers.
 - We should not be surprised by them.
 - We should always be saddened by them.
 - The substance...
 - They deny the goodness of God.
 - They distort the Word of God.
- We declare truth in the church.
 - Teach with authority .
 - Live with purity .
 - Train for eternity .
 - Work out your own salvation progressively and persistently .
 - Work hard for others' salvation locally and globally .

The Way We Live...

- We love each other like we are a family .
- We care for those who have no family.
 - Honor destitute widows through support .
 - They must be devoid of relatives .
 - Relatives should support their parents and grandparents.
 - This pleases God.
 - This demonstrates your faith .
 - This relieves the church.
 - They must be dependent on God.
 - They must be devoted to prayer .
 - Enlist older widows for service .
 - They must be mature women.
 - They must have been faithful wives.
 - They must care for children.
 - They must be hospitable hosts
 - They must be humble servants.
 - They must be unselfish.

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- They must be _____ kind _____.
- Encourage younger widows to _____ marry _____.
- They must avoid laziness.
- They must abhor _____ gossip _____.

Why We Exist...

- To show what it means to have God as our _____ Father _____.
- To say to the world that God is the _____ Savior _____.
- Today...
 - We are a family on a _____ mission _____ to every nation.
- One day...
 - We will be a family with _____ members _____ from every nation.

Message Summary

The Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy offers great instruction about how we are to live as the family of God, the Church. Today's message focuses on who God's family is, how we are led, what we do, the way we live, and why we exist based on 1 Timothy 3:1—5:16. God's family plays a significant role in the world as it expresses God to the world in word and deed, constantly pointing the world to Christ's supremacy. The truths that God dwells among us and that Christ lives within us are awe-inspiring!

As God's family, we are led by elders and deacons, and Paul outlines the ways in which these servants and leaders should lead, shepherd, teach, model, and edify the Body of Christ. The health of the Church and the spread of the gospel depend greatly on the health of church leaders.

God's family must be desperately dependent on His Word as we detect error in the Church and declare truth to the Church. The way we live as a family should be full of love for each other, specifically and intentionally toward those with no physical family. Paul gave Timothy specific instructions on caring for widows and for calling older widows to maximize their time through serving the Church in unique opportunities.

The message concluded by considering why the family of God exists: to show what it means to have God as Father and to say to the world that God is the Savior. We must remember that as God's family we are on a mission to every nation and for eternity, we will be a family with members from every nation.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review the Head (What does God want me to know?), Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and Hands (What does God want me to do?) aspects of the message.

- When you think of the phrase, "the family of God," what comes to mind? Why is a proper understanding of God's family crucial to your walk with Christ?
- Read through the description of the significance of the Church on your notes. How do you value these responsibilities?
- How should the awe-inspiring realities that God dwells among us and that Christ lives within you change the way you view yourself and others?
- How would you articulate the roles of elders and deacons to someone who was unfamiliar with church structure? Why is it important to understand their roles and qualifications?
- Why and how does God want you to value the roles of elders and deacons?
- Pastor David referred to Hebrews 13:7 where we are encouraged to follow the examples of our spiritual leaders. What would your small group or church be like if everyone followed your example?
- How should church members support elders and deacons? How should elders and deacons support church members?
- Share an example of a specific time when an elder or deacon played a significant role in your life.

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- Why are detecting error in the Church and declaring truth to the Church inseparable responsibilities?
- Practically, how can the people of God love each other like we are a family?
- Did the truths of today's message change the way you value your role in widows' lives? How?
- Have you viewed caring for widows as a biblical mandate—a primary responsible—in the past? If not, what steps will you take toward obedience to God?
- What are the unique ministry opportunities of older widows? How can you encourage them as they serve?
- How can your small group plan to minister to widows together? What blessings might you receive from doing so?
- The family of God exists to show what it means to have God as our Father and to say to the world that God is the Savior. How effectively is your small group fulfilling these purposes? What can you do both individually and as a group to live for the world to see God in us and to share about Jesus as Savior?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.

Weekly Prayer Focus . . . (from the worship guide)

- **Lives and Church:** *Pray that we would be faithful to care for the widows in our church. Pray for our widows, that God would comfort them and be their satisfaction. Pray for younger widows, that they might remarry. Pray for older widows, that they might actively engage in making disciples of all nations.*
- **Local:** *This week we are praying for the men and women at Brook Hills who lead our Disciple-Making efforts through our Small Groups. We are also praying for North Highlands Baptist, Doug O'Brian, Pastor.*
- **Global:** *This week we are praying for our partner Compassion International and the mothers and children Brook Hills sponsors in the Child Survival Program of India. We are also praying for Brook Hills Short-Term teams serving in Southeast Asia and the Middle East.*

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