

June 9, 2019

1 Timothy 2:1-15

Instructions for the Church

Introduction In this first letter to Timothy, Paul shared many thoughts as he sought to help Timothy deal with the issues that had surfaced in Ephesus. Last week, we noted how Paul reminded Timothy why he needed him in Ephesus: a problem existed with false teachers (1 Tim. 1:3). Besides the issues associated with false teachers, Paul also addressed concerns in the church. Chapters two and three of 1 Timothy form a unit and challenge the church in specific ways. To summarize these two chapters, Paul wrote: “I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God” (1 Tim. 3:15). What do we discover in this week’s lesson?

The Importance of Prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-7). After the opening chapter of this letter, Paul begins to offer guidelines for the believers in Ephesus. 1 Tim. 2 focuses on prayer. “First of all,” Paul wrote, “I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone” (1 Tim. 2:1). In this one verse, Paul included the four major Greek terms which described various types of prayer. Paul not only described the types of prayers to be offered, he also mentioned groups of people who should be the focus of their prayers: “everyone, kings and all those who are in authority” (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Besides describing the groups who need prayer, Paul went even further to discuss why prayer was so important. He highlighted two reasons. First, they needed to pray “so that we (they) may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Tim. 2:2). One of the results of their praying would be that they would live as they ought to live! The second reason given was this: “This is good, and it pleases God our Savior; who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4). They needed to pray because prayer pleases God.

The Importance of the People (1 Tim. 2:8-15). Having addressed the concept of prayer, now Paul turned his attention to the people who should be praying. As Paul spoke to the men and the women of the church, he wanted to make sure that each group understood certain concepts which were important for them as a part of their worship. First, Paul concentrated on the men. Men should pray “lifting up holy hands without anger or argument” (1 Tim. 2:8). In other words, the men in the church in Ephesus needed to be right with God as they prayed. Certain things needed to be true of the women, too. Paul affirmed the fact that what needed to mark a woman was not her appearance, but her actions (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Another defining trait of women in the church that Paul highlighted dealt with how they learn. Paul explained that “A woman is to learn quietly with full submission” (1 Tim. 2:11). At this point in this letter, Paul sought to communicate that there were certain guidelines that needed to be followed in a worship context. Two of those are expressed in these verses: 1) women needed to learn quietly; and, 2) women could not take the lead role (1 Tim. 2:12-14). Unfortunately, historically, these verses have been taken out of context to deny women opportunities to serve in the church. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. More positively, Paul states here that women can learn. So, in a culture that generally did not value women or their education, Paul went against the grain and noted that women can learn. In addition to this, Paul does not prohibit women from serving in the church as

some might have us believe. He simply seeks to help us understand what our roles are from a biblical perspective. Men and women alike are designed by God for specific tasks.

Conclusion Paul wrote to help Timothy handle issues that had surfaced in the church in Ephesus. Part of Paul's instructions focused on the believers themselves. In this week's lesson, we noted how important prayer was for the congregation. This is a good reminder for believers today, also.