

## **The Church and The Blessed Hope** **“Life in the Local Church”** **I Thessalonians 5:12-28**

**Introduction** - We've come to the end of the I Thessalonians! Paul has:

- Commended them, chp. 1
- Vindicated himself, chps. 2-3
- Admonished them, chp. 4:1-12
- Instructed them, chp. 4:13-5:11

Now Paul ends with “*how we are to live in the Christian community!*” What life is to be like in the local church! One of Paul’s favorite pictures of the church is that of a family. We are born into God’s family by faith in Christ, God is our father and we are brothers and sisters. Paul’s use of the word “brethren” vs. 12, 14, 26.

It’s sad when believers neglect or ignore the local church family! No church is perfect, yet we need one another, vs. 11. The child of God needs the family of God to grow and to bring glory to God.

So how should we live in the local church? Paul’s instruction focuses on three essential aspects of church life!

1. It’s leadership.
2. It’s fellowship.
3. It’s worship.

### **I. It’s Leadership**, vv. 12-13

Paul is addressing his words, not to the Pastors, but to the people. The importance of God-ordained leadership in the local church, Eph. 4 & 1 Tim. 3. Bishop; elder; Pastor, Acts 20:17, 28. The problems between the people and the pastor.

**Paul describes the Pastors**, vs. 12.

- a. **“They work hard”** vs. 12 “which labor” literally “toil”. I Tim. 5:17, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.”
- b. **“They are over you,”** in the Lord, vs. 12. The problem “among you and over you in the Lord.” Servant-leadership. “Authority with humility.”
- c. **“They admonish you,”** vs. 12 literally, to put in mind. It means to warn against bad behavior and its consequences to reprove even discipline those who have done wrong. How? Lovingly throw the word of God!

**How should the congregation respond to its leadership? What attitude should they have toward their pastors?** Don't run to a new church!

a. **“Know them,”** vs. 12. “It means to appreciate them, to respect them.”

“I know of churches where pastors are treated as hired servants; they are there to respond to the whims of the board of the church or the vote of the congregation. They are accorded little or no respect and at times are severely mistreated. That kind of treatment is shameful. Here the apostle is saying, ‘Get to know your leaders. Understand that they are people and do not ignore them’.”

-Ray Stedman

b. **“Esteem them very highly in love,”** vs. 13.

N.I.V. “Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.”

Don't worship them, but do value them and love them. Eph. 4:11-12.

c. **“Live in peace with them,”** vs. 13.

It's a command! Don't attack them or gossip about them.

d. **“Pray for them,”** vs. 25. They are targets of Satan.

e. **“Obey them and submit to them,”** Heb. 13:17.

## II. **It's Fellowship**, vv. 14-15.

Paul is talking to the same people as in verses 12-13, “Now we exhort you brethren.” It's now the people's relationships to other people.” The existence of pastors and leaders in the church does not relieve its members of their responsibility to care for one another!

Illus.: The church is a “body”! “Body life....” I Cor. 12:14-27.

### **Paul names three types of people that need special care from the family of God:**

1. **The Idlers**, vs. 14. - “Unruly” literally “to step out of rank” or “careless”; “out of line.” So warn them.
2. **The Timid**, vs. 14 - “Feeble-minded”; “fainthearted”; or “small souled”. So comfort them.
3. **The Weak**, vs. 14 - It's spirituality! They fall into sin, so support them.
4. **All Men**, vs. 14 - Literally “to all”. Patient, vs. 14. It's long-suffering. It takes a lot of patience to raise a family. It's the fruit of the Spirit. Don't take revenge, vs. 15. Demonic, “evil for good”; Human, “evil for evil”; Divine, “good for evil”, I Pet. 3:8-11. Jesus said, “Like your Father in Heaven!”

