

BRIDE**RELATIONALLY SUPPORTIVE**

1 Thessalonians 5:12 – 15

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MESSAGE NOTES**1. About those who serve as leaders in the church. (5:12 – 13)**

- Be respectful even in differing perspectives.
- Follow their lead toward Jesus.
- Receive their correctives from the Word of God.
- Love them as flawed but sincere workers.
- Contribute to peace under their leadership.

The church itself is not made up of natural "friends." It is made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything of the sort. Christians come together, not because they form a natural collocation, but because they have been saved by Jesus Christ and owe Him a common allegiance. In the light of this common allegiance, in light of the fact that they have all been loved by Jesus Himself, they commit themselves to doing what He says — and He commands them to love one another. — D.A. Carson, Love In Hard Places

2. About those who require extra patience. (5:14 – 15)

- Live in peace with each other.
- Warn those who are divisive.
- Encourage the discouraged.
- Help the weak.
- Be patient with everyone.
- Don't take revenge.
- Be kind to each other.

When we get serious about the Christian life we eventually end up in a place and among a people undecidedly uncongenial to what we had expected. That place and people is often called a church. It's hard to get over the disappointment that God, having made an exception in my case, doesn't call nice people to repentance. — Eugene Peterson, Leap over a Wall

This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ... A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out, till He has brought justice through to victory. In His name the nations will put their hope. — Matthew 12:17 – 21

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. — Romans 15:1

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. — Galatians 6:2

How strange that we should ordinarily feel compelled to hide our wounds when we are all wounded! Community requires the ability to expose our wounds and weaknesses to our fellow creatures. It also requires the ability to be affected by the wounds of others ... But even more important is the love that arises among us when we share, both ways, our woundedness. — Scott Peck, A Different Drum

Personalizing this:

- How do you support leaders in the church, while being realistic about their limitations?
- How might you expand your ministry of encouragement here at ENCOUNTER?
- How do you go about showing a spirit of grace toward those who are struggling?

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. — 1 Peter 4:8 – 10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is one thing that you recall from the sermon this past weekend?

- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12 – 15.

- Why do you think this is being discussed right on the heels of Paul's description of the return of Christ?

- How would you respond to someone who said, "Why should I bother with church? I don't really like those people. I can follow Christ on my own."

- Why is community essential for genuine maturity to develop in us?

- How have you personally matured through the ups and downs of real community? What makes real community actually quite difficult? What are some of the greatest benefits?

Take some time to talk about how you answered these questions from the weekend:

- How do you support leaders in the church, while being realistic about their limitations?

- How might you expand your ministry of encouragement here at ENCOUNTER?

- How do you go about showing a spirit of grace toward those who are struggling?