

Dealing With Partiality

Description

1 Timothy 5:16-21

The Church fought the battle against favoritism quite early (Acts 6:1-7). In Jerusalem a number of widows came under the church's care. Doubtless these were women who had been cut off by their families because of their faith in Jesus. This group was divided between those who spoke Aramaic and those who spoke Greek. Some from the Greek speaking community felt that their widows were being overlooked in daily food distribution. Division could destroy the community and compromise its ability to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

The apostles' response is a guide for leaders responding to charges of unfairness today. 1.) They listened carefully to the concern. They did not minimize, excuse, or defend themselves. 2.) They gathered the whole community together to address the problem. 3.) They stated clearly their guiding principles. 4.) They allowed the entire community to select who would address the problem. 5.) They set clear requirements for how to choose leaders. 6.) They publicly prayed for and commissioned those selected to serve. We would do well to follow their example.

Author: Duane Brush

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