

The Care of the Senior Citizens of the Church

([Gen 46:28](#), [47:10-12](#), [1 Tim 5:1-10](#), [Mk 7:5-23](#))

God is love and good all the time .He loves everyone all the time irrespective of their age or anything. He wants His children also to do the same. He even commanded them to do so ([John 13:34](#)). Apostle John said those who say they love God should also love others ([1 John 4:19-21](#)). Our Lord also taught that the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets is to do to others whatever we would like them to do to us ([Mat 7:12](#)). We will not be young all the time. A day will come when we shall become old and somebody has to look after us. Therefore it is always good for us to do that if we are in a position to do that .This is God's call in today's scripture lessons.

In today's Old Testament lesson we see a very god scriptural model in Joseph of a loving son who cares for his parents. In today's gospel lesson we see the bad example of sons in the most religious Pharisees and Sadducees who want to evade their responsibility of caring their parents in the name of religion. Jesus who chided them for this will He not do the same to us? In today's epistle lesson we find Paul giving instructions to the young pastor Timothy regarding the care of his flock specially those who are old and widowed.

The Old Testament Lesson: [Gen 46:28](#), [47:10-12](#)

Let us take care of our old parents like Joseph

Joseph in the Old Testament is a type of Jesus Christ. Even though he was in a highest position to take revenge on his brothers for what they had done to him he

showed them love like Jesus in turn by providing everything for his elder brothers who must be quiet old when they met Joseph in Egypt. Another point to note is Joseph had no law at that time .Yet he was like one in whose heart the law was written ([Rom 2:14,15](#)). He feared the Lord in reverence always and loved his father immensely and honored him by proudly introducing his old father to the Pharaoh. He did everything to keep his old Father comfortable in his old age by providing everything his father needed thus setting a good example for all of us to follow. On the other hand the so called religious Pharisees and Sadducees even though they had the law which commands them to honor their parents interpreted the law cunningly to their convenience to evade their responsibility towards their ageing parents. This is today's gospel lesson

The Gospel Lesson: [Mark 7:5-23](#)

Let us not forsake our responsibility to our ageing parents.

In those days the Pharisees behaved like the Brahmins of our country. They treated Samaritans as untouchables. They were always concerned about outward purity and were not at all concerned with the inward condition of their hearts. In those days the so called Jewish Rabbis introduced so many traditions. They even didn't go back to cancel the word of God in order to hand down their own tradition. Jesus never dishonored the traditions but never spared if the law of God was broken to observe the traditions. Today we see so many in our churches doing many things in the churches and think that they are very religious but never bother to think about the well fare of their parents. They forget what all their parents had done to them and that they were in this position because of their parents' love, care

and what they had done to them. When one of the two parents dies we must understand how difficult it will be for the one who is left to cope up and we must do everything and show utmost devotion and love to comfort them.

In those days the Pharisees evaded their responsibility towards their needy parents by just saying, "Sorry, I can't help you, for I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you". But they can use for their own comforts and needs that which was owed to God. Jesus, who didn't spare them will he spare us if we do the same to our parents? In this way the Pharisees ignored God's law (v8), side stepped God's law (v9), and canceled God's law (v13). We will be like them if we don't care for the welfare of our parents. One day we will also become old .Are not our children watching what we do to our parents. They will do the same to us when we become old. So let us not be selfish and take care of our ageing parents and live long on earth. Let us even be more concerned about our widowed mothers. This is something that pleases God, says Paul in today's epistle lesson.

The Epistle Lesson: [1 Timothy 5:1-10](#)

Let us foster caring culture in our churches.

We find Paul instructing young Pastor Timothy to have a program for caring various kinds of people in need in his church especially those who are aging and widowed. He instructed him how he had to talk to young people and elderly people of both sexes in all purity. Here is a reminder for all of us that caring our own parents and those of our own house hold in need as sons and grandsons, is putting our religion into practice. Let us not be rude to our parents when we talk to them. Let us remember none of us are perfect but as followers of Jesus Christ let us press

on to achieve perfection in everything we do and in our relationships. How we love our parents and honor our parents reflects our maturity in Christ. Has not our master set an example by thinking of his widowed mother even in the agony of cross and arranging for her welfare?

Paul instructed Timothy that his Church as a body of Christ should have to take care of those good old destitute widows of noble character and who are serving in the church and who are above sixty. Even apostle James said that the true religion would involve taking care of widows ([James 1:27](#)). If we don't care to take care of our widowed parents there will not be any one in the world who is more wicked and heartless than us.

Churches should have a well organized ministry of looking after destitute widows especially in our Indian villages if they are really interested in pleasing God .May God help us today i.e. on this special Sunday which is dedicated to senior citizens of our church to honor our aged parents and do what the Lord asks us to do in His word to the old destitute noble widows in our churches .Amen.

Life Application:

1. The reason why we are unable to love even our parents is the dreadful disease of our heart whose symptoms Jesus has shown in today's gospel lesson .Here Jesus listed out the symptoms of the incurable heart about which Jeremiah spoke([Jer 17:9](#)).Many people are unaware of their heart's disease. That's why today Jesus is showing us the state of our heart and is eager to give all those who ask for healing a new heart. Let us not harden

our hearts and be heartless towards our old parents or anyone who is in need in the family of God.

2. Let all those committees who think of decorating the church buildings during festivals with whopping budgets sincerely think of doing something to the destitute widows of our church.
3. May we all jointly pledge today to do our best to make our parents happy by taking care of them in their old age like Joseph in today's Old Testament lesson!

Jyothi prakash Ethakoti

jyothi.prakash@mail.com