

# Widow's Ministry: The New Testament Pattern

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The mission of our Lord Jesus Christ and the mandate left to His Church is perhaps best summarized in His reading from the prophet Isaiah at the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath. Standing up to read He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord*" (Luke 4:18 NASB). Essential to the fulfillment of that mission, indeed, the integrating core of everything we say and do as His followers is care.

Care by definition is the feeling and demonstration of positive regard and concern. It is the expression of a sense of responsibility and affection. Care is the casting aside of indifference and becoming actively involved in the lives and for the well being of others.

We preach because we care. We witness to others because we care. We baptize believers because we care. We nurture and train disciples because we care. We solemnize marriages and dedicate babies because we care. We counsel the bereaved and anxiety-ridden because we care. We observe the table of the Lord because we care. We deploy ushers, greeters and parking lot attendants because we care.

We must refuse to be as the priest on the road to Jericho who saw the man stripped of his clothes, beaten and half dead. Though sharing the same road and seeing the man in his condition, he simply "passed by on the other side." We must refuse to be as the Levite, blinded by duty, though seeing the wounded he simply "passed by on the other side." Rather, we must be as the Samaritan, who disregarded his ethnic and cultural difference and saw the wounded, went where he was, felt compassion, bandaged the wounds, poured in the wine and the oil of the Spirit, and spared no expense for the care of one in need.

At no time are the wounds deeper or the need for care greater than at the time of death. It is for this reason that James in his epistle while exhorting those dispersed abroad to be not merely hearers but doers of the Word said, "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:27 NASB).

## I. The Presence of Widows

- A. The Presence of Widows in Society
- B. The Presence of Widows in Scripture

**II. The Plight of Widows**

- A. The Plight of Grief
- B. The Plight of Social Disorientation
- C. The Plight of Economic Upheaval
- D. The Plight of Life Adjustment

**III. The Plea of Widows**

**IV. The Provision for Widows**

- A. The Response of God
- B. The Response of Family
- C. The Response of the Church

**V. The Power of Widows**

- A. The Power of Godly Example
- B. The Power of Faithful Service
- C. The Power of Sacramental Worship
- D. The Power of Intercessory Prayer
- E. The Power of Comfort