

“The Beauty of a Family in Ministry”
The Book of Philemon May 20, 2018

Two weeks ago we examined a passage from Malachi which contained several truths related to God’s unchangeable design for marriage. On Mother’s Day we considered some timeless principles on family life from the Old Testament book of Proverbs. Our family emphasis continues today as we look at the beauty of a family in ministry. Our passage is the New Testament postcard-type epistle called Philemon

Philemon, to whom the Apostle Paul was writing, was a slave owner and a leader of the church in Colossae. When this letter was written, slavery was a common practice with slaves making up a high percentage of the population. Slaves could be doctors, musicians, teachers, artists, librarians, and accountants. In practice, almost every job could be filled by slaves. Paul was writing from his prison cell in Rome on behalf of Onesimus, one of Philemon’s slaves who fled to Rome, running away from his owner. Because it was written from prison, Philemon is classified as one of the prison epistles, along with Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, all written to churches. Philemon alone is the recipient of this short but very instructive and uplifting letter.

Our plan this morning is to examine several ministries highlighted in this short epistle, ministries similar to the ones taking place in our church. One of the most significant ministries was that of Philemon and his family, including his wife, Apphia, and their son, Archippus.

1. The ministry of _____ and discipleship by Paul, first to Philemon and then to Onesimus.

2. The ministry of useful _____ by Onesimus to the Apostle Paul, and potentially to Philemon.

3. The ministry of biblical _____ by Paul to Philemon.

4. The ministry of _____ by Paul between Philemon, the slave owner, and Onesimus, his runaway slave.

5. The ministry of generous _____ by Paul on behalf of Onesimus.

6. The ministry of refreshing _____ by Philemon and his family toward the church in Colossae.