

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

Analysis

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men—parakaloumen de hymas, adelphoi, noutheteite tous ataktous, paramytheisthe tous oligopsychous, antechesthe tōn asthenōn, makrothymeite pros pantas (παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους, παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους, ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀσθενῶν, μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας). Paul gives specific pastoral counsel for different needs.

1. Noutheteite tous ataktous (νουθετεῖτε τοὺς ἀτάκτους, 'warn the unruly')—ataktos means 'disorderly, out of rank' (military term), here describing idle busybodies (v. 11; 2 Thess 3:6-12). They need admonition, not comfort.
2. Paramytheisthe tous oligopsychous (παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους, 'comfort the fainthearted')—oligopsychos means 'small-souled, fainthearted,' those discouraged by persecution or death of loved ones (4:13). They need encouragement, not rebuke.
3. Antechesthe tōn asthenōn (ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀσθενῶν, 'support the weak')—asthenēs indicates those weak in faith, morals, or physical strength. They need patient support.
4. Makrothymeite pros pantas (μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας, 'be patient toward all')—makrothymia is longsuffering patience.

Different people need different ministry; discernment determines appropriate response.

Historical Context

The Thessalonian church included diverse needs: some were idle (v. 11), some grieving (4:13), some weak in faith. Paul teaches differentiated ministry—one-size-fits-all approaches fail. The unruly need confrontation; the fainthearted need comfort; the weak need support; all need patience. This pastoral wisdom remains essential—churches that only confront become harsh; churches that only comfort become permissive; churches that support without accountability enable immaturity. Balanced ministry requires discernment to apply appropriate responses to varying needs while maintaining patience toward all.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do you discern which believers need warning (confrontation) versus comfort (encouragement) versus support (patience)?
2. What evidence demonstrates that you practice differentiated ministry rather than one-size-fits-all approaches?
3. How do you maintain patience 'toward all' while also warning the unruly when necessary?

Interlinear Text

παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀδελφοί νουθετεῖτε τοὺς
we exhort Now you brethren warn G3588
G3870 G1161 G5209 G80 G3560

ἀτάκτους παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους ἀντέχεσθε
them that are unruly comfort G3588 the feebleminded support G472
G813 G3888 G3642 G472

τῶν ἀσθενῶν μακροθυμεῖτε πρὸς πάντας
the weak be patient toward all G3956
G3588 G772 G3114 G4314 G3956

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 4:2 (Parallel theme): Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Romans 14:1 (Parallel theme): Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

Acts 20:35 (Parallel theme): I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Colossians 1:28 (Parallel theme): Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Hebrews 13:3 (Parallel theme): Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Ephesians 4:2 (Parallel theme): With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

1 Corinthians 4:14 (Parallel theme): I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

1 Timothy 6:11 (Parallel theme): But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Ezekiel 34:16 (Parallel theme): I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Isaiah 40:11 (Parallel theme): He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

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