



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 5: Our Relationships
Suggested Week of Use: March 30, 2025
Core Passage: 1 Peter 3:1-12

News Story Summary

As believers, we live in relationship with one another. While we must be careful about how we represent Christ outside of the church, our relationships within the church also are important.

Recently, Thom Rainer interviewed an anonymous pastor who did not survive a difficult church situation due to toxic relationships. Reflecting on his experience, the pastor spoke about factions and divisions that resulted from a “history of conflict” and a staunch resistance to change. He also admitted that his own administrative and ministerial weak spots made some matters worse.

A few weeks into his new role, the pastor discovered a blatant sexual sin had become public knowledge. The congregation, however, refused to practice church discipline. This led to more resistance and damaged relationships. The pastor eventually resigned, stating that the congregation was marked by “factions that care more about their vision for the church than obedience to Scripture.”

For more about this story, search “Baptist Press, pastor did not survive a difficult church.”

Engage

To supplement the Engage activities, add “church relationships” to the list of identified relationships. Ask: *What can happen when people get frustrated within the church?* Share the information about the pastor in the Thom Rainer interview. Discuss the factors that made this a difficult situation for him. Ask: *What makes this type of story so sad?* Remind adults that Christians interact with others in a variety of contexts, but God expects us to reflect Him in every situation. Explain that this session focuses on relationships within the family and within the church. Challenge adults to examine their relationships through the lens of Scripture and to ask God about necessary adjustments and changes.

Challenge

To supplement the Challenge activities, direct attention to the third Apply the Text statement. Ask: *When this statement says “one another,” who is that specifically addressing? Why is the instruction from 1 Peter 3:8-12 vital to the local church?* Remind adults about Thom Rainer’s interview with the anonymous pastor and his struggles. Discuss the responsibility of individual believers to pursue harmony, starting at home and spreading to the church and the community.