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## **33 COMMANDS TO THE CHURCH**

These commands and examples are for each group of believers (a church) to accomplish collectively. There is too much—too many people in need—for any one individual to do it all. The ministry that has captured our passion is directed to the frail elderly, particularly those in nursing homes and those with dementia. Note that these commands apply not just to widows but to *all* vulnerable people.

**By direct statements, God condemns oppressors of widows:** Exodus 22:22-24; Isaiah 1:23-25, 10:1-2; Jeremiah 7:2-7; Ezekiel 22:7; Malachi 3:5; Luke 20:45-47

**By direct statements, God defends widows:** Deuteronomy 10:17-18, Psalm 68:5, Luke 18:2-8

**By direct statements, God forbids oppression of widows:** Jeremiah 22:3, Zechariah 7:10

**By direct statements, God protects and provides for widows:** Leviticus 19:9, 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:17-19, 26:12-13; Jeremiah 49:11

**By direct statements, believers are to abhor the oppression of widows:** Job 24:3, 21-22, 24

**By direct statements, believers are to appeal to God for deliverance:** Job 24:1-3, Psalm 94:1-6

**By direct statements, believers are to be considerate:** Deuteronomy 24:17-21

**By direct statements, believers are to care for widows (1 Timothy 5:3-18, James 1:27) and to grant equal justice to widows, orphans, foreigners, and the oppressed (Deuteronomy 27:19, Isaiah 1:17).**

**By direct statements, believers are to involve widows in worship:** Deuteronomy 16:9-11, 13-15

**By Jesus' direct instruction:** When, early on, Jesus was criticized by the Pharisees for associating with Matthew, part of his reply was “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” This repeats Old Testament commands and anticipates Jesus’ later teaching, including familiar parables (the prodigal son, the good Samaritan).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (2005) State of Oklahoma Health Department and (2006) Texas Department of Aging and Disability Service

<sup>2</sup> (2006) Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

<sup>3</sup> (2001) Port, CL. “Resident contact with family and friends following nursing home admission.” *Gerontologist*, 41(5), 589-596.

<sup>4</sup> Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8. The parables: Luke 10:30, 15:11-32. See also Matthew 28:19 and Luke 9:35-38, 19:10.

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