

A PILLAR AND BUTTRESS OF THE TRUTH

Rob Robinson

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. 1 Tim 3:14-15

People often disagree about how things ought to be done in church. There are differing opinions on how worship is to be conducted, what must be done to receive salvation, what moral standards should be taught and expected, or how the church's leadership should be structured. Currently, hot-button issues include women's roles in church leadership and various issues involving homosexuality. The church is subject to pressure on one side from those who feel compelled by the traditional positions on such issues. On the other side, there is pressure to conform to or at least give way to the evolving standards of the culture around us that we live in. We want to be loyal to our identity, but we do not want to alienate ourselves from those around us.

For Christians who have a healthy regard for the Holy Scriptures and for the expressed will of God, the answer is not necessarily easy, but it is simple: What does the Bible teach us? The passage above is the explanation given by the apostle Paul for his authorship of his letter to Timothy; it is also the purpose of all the other writings of the New Testament. These documents were written so that we who believe in and follow Christ may know how things ought to be done in and by the church. During the life and ministry of this apostolic writer, his practice was to instruct the Christians in such things when he was with them personally. But most of the time and for most of the churches, he was not able to be that available. So, he said, that is why I write these things to you. These words were written so that they, and we, and all Christians of subsequent generations, could know the truth about how to practice our faith. And it is the job of the church to be a solid pillar and buttress of the truth, to hold firmly to it and to support solidly the truth that Scripture reveals to us and to practice it faithfully.