

PASTORAL RESPONSE TO WIDOWS IN CRISIS: A CASE STUDY OF SOME  
SELECTED BAPTIST CHURCHES IN OGBOMOSO METROPOLIS

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## ABSTRACT

The title of this study is "Pastoral Response to widows in crisis: A case study of some selected Baptist Churches in Ogbomoso Metropolis". The study is an empirical one with descriptive survey option. The purpose of this study was to examine the crisis of widowhood and to emphasize the importance of effective pastoral care ministry to the widows and encourage churches to be involved actively if need be. There is an increase in the number of widows in the society. Those passing through this phase of life are also known to be exposed to a lot of dangers, temptations and challenges for which they are not prepared. This brings about unsatisfied needs in the lives of many widows. Today, widowhood is in a pitiable stage requiring an understanding and assistance. Yet in many societies, those passing through this stage of life, especially the women are known to have been subjected to a lot of ugly and unpleasant treatment, thereby, compounding their problems. Questionnaire was used to gather data to investigate some of the problems faced by the widows and how the church can be of help to them. The questionnaire was administered to 80 widows and 80 other church members in Ogbomoso metropolis. Findings showed that transition to widowhood goes with problems. This is because widows have many responsibilities to cope with all alone. Also widows are highly mal-treated based upon the consideration that they are lonely. This research revealed that widows are also liable to behavioural problems. It was apparently true that they are passing through grief process, such as shock, depression, hostility, anger, guilt and loneliness. In addition, the research established that widows are likely to become emotionally disturbed and spiritually sick because grief can drive widows into futility and loss of confidence in God's power. Also the researcher found out that pastoral care and counselling involved special care and prayer for damaged emotions and healed memories. Based on these findings, it was recommended that Widows should try and shake off their grief as quickly as possible and think of how to carry on well in life. Also, widowhood cultural practices that are dehumanizing them should be condemned by the church. It is therefore, the duty of the pastor to teach continually basic principles of grief and loss and how to live with the loss of loved ones before its occurrence, and to offer meaningful and productive caring ministry approach to widows. It was observed that with godly help from the pastors, widows may even come to find God in their widowhood.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings, one can conclude that widowhood cuts across all race and culture. Immediately a woman loses her husband she goes into the period of

mourning. During this period of mourning she is expected to go through some widowhood rites and practices in some cultures. Widows go through difficult situations which affect them psychologically, socially, economically and spiritually. This research has considered some of the widowhood practices widows are subjected to in Yoruba land. Most of the practices rather than bringing comfort, joy and relief to widows, compound their problems over the loss of their husbands.

God gave regulations to the Israelites that widows should be protected and cared for. In the New Testament, the care of widows laid in the hand of the church. Therefore, it is the duty of the pastors and other members of the churches to come to their aid and for them to be able to see themselves as accepted members in the church and society and this will make life more bearable for the widows.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

- 1 Widows should try and shake off their grief as quickly as possible and think of how to carry on well in life again. The mentality of some of them that they are the most unfortunate victims should not be carried forever. They can start to live well again and must not be timid but rather courageous to keep on with life.
- 2 Pastors should encourage speaking against and condemning some of the widowhood cultural practices that have dehumanizing effects on widows.
- 3 The pastors should ensure that they are well equipped with necessary resources to ministering to widows.
- 4 Christian professionals like doctors, lawyers, engineers, counselors and teachers can offer their expertise knowledge at little or no cost to widows and their family members where and when needed.

- 5 The pastor should teach continually the basic principles of grief and loss clearly at home and church. People should be made to understand and learn how they can live with the loss of loved ones before its occurrence.