

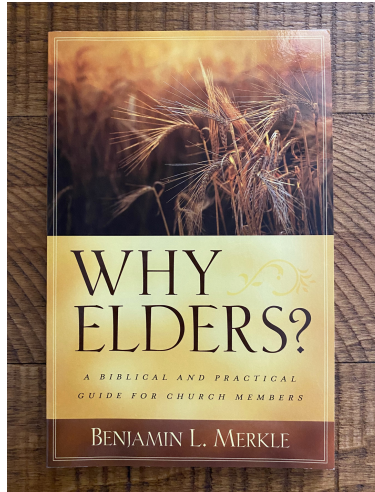
PASTORAL EPISTLES

GOAL

WHY STUDY THIS?

You may be asking yourself the question "Why study about elders?". There are three main reasons to read and study the concept of elders. The first reason is: it is in the Bible and we know that all of Scripture is God's Word and is profitable for all Christians to learn and grow in (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The second reason is: it allows us to take a look at our own church polity (operational leadership structure) to ensure that we as a church are functioning in a healthy way that is in harmony with Scripture. And the third reason for us to study is: it helps us engage, not only the Church body but, the world around us so that we can clearly articulate what the Bible says about church leadership as a result of study and trusting the Holy Spirit.

We study so that we can be faithful and obedient Christians. When studying the Word of God, we seek to gain understanding, we seek clarity of the Scriptures, we seek wisdom, and we seek to be humble, learning as the Spirit teaches us. I have prayed for you and your group to have a fruitful and enlightening time as you study "*Why Elders?*" and the Scriptures.



REQ. READING

The joy of growing your own food can be one of the best feelings in the world. To realize that you have taken a small seed and have provided care for it so that it could grow into a vegetable or fruit is exhilarating. It takes a specific environment where that seed can properly grow into a plant that produces healthy vegetables. And the church should be a specific environment where healthy disciples are made. Chapter 3 explores how elders contribute to the environment so that a healthy church is produced.



OPENING

- Consider a job or role that you have done free of charge. What was that job/role? Why did you do it free of charge? If you haven't done a role without payment, why is that?
- Consider a time where you have been the least knowledgeable person in the room. How was it beneficial for you to be in a group where others had more knowledge, wisdom, and/or education? What do you carry with you to this day as a result of that interaction? Why was it beneficial to others to have you in the room?
- Consider your ideal leader. What are some of the qualities of leadership that you would expect that person to have? List for the group those qualities and explain why you have chosen them.
- As a church member, what were some of your thoughts, feelings, and/or reactions to hearing we were going to discuss moving to a plurality of elders structure in leadership? Why do you believe you reacted this way?

PASTORAL EPISTLES

BOOK DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 3 - IT PRODUCES A HEALTHY CHURCH

ELDERS & HISTORY
ELDERS & QUALIFICATIONS
ELDERS & AFFORDABILITY
CONCLUSION

READING TOTAL - 25 PAGES

As a group, utilize the following set of questions to discuss your reading and understanding of Chapter 3 of "Why Elders?". In this chapter, we will discuss in further detail how a plurality of staff and non-staff elders help to produce a more spiritually healthy church.

- How many leaders are too many for a church? Is there such a thing as too many leaders? How should leaders be identified and disciplined?

- On **page 62** Merkle makes the statement that *"having a plurality of elders is a foreign concept in most evangelical churches."* Do you agree or disagree with his statement? If you agree, why do you believe it is a foreign concept? What has led to it being alien in so many churches? If you disagree with Merkle, why do you disagree? What is your assessment of churches and their view of eldership?

- Merkle explains that he believes there are three major reasons why so few churches have elders. What are the three reasons?

Lack of Qualified Men

Lack of Biblical Knowledge

Fear of Change

- Of those three reasons, what do you find to be the biggest issue in the Church today? Why is that an issue? Do you believe Legacy has one of these reasons? If so, which one and why? What, if anything, stands out to you from the paragraphs detailing those three reasons on **pages 62 through 65**?

- In his sermon on October 3, Pastor Kevin detailed the qualifications for elders as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Our groups also read and considered those qualifications in our first discussion. If you need a quick refresher, consult the chart on **page 66**. What, if anything, has become clearer to you in the last two weeks regarding the qualifications of elders? Is there still anything that concerns you regarding how elders should live? Why is that?

- Merkle breaks down the qualifications into three types of qualifications. On **pages 67 through 70**, the first type is listed as *Situational Qualifications*. Where have you gained clarity by reading the descriptions of these qualifications?

- On **pages 70 through 72**, we see the *Family Qualifications* for elders. Where have you gained clarity by reading the descriptions of these familial qualifications?

- The third set of qualifications, known as *Moral Qualifications*, are found on **pages 72 through 79**. What stood out to you when reading the descriptions of these moral qualifications? Why is that?

- The term elder, on the surface, might be confusing for many people, both inside and outside of the Church. This might be due in part to the fact that we assume an elder has to be an old(er) person. Merkle discusses this idea and distinction on **pages 79 through 81**. What does Merkle explain regarding a minimum age? Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

1 TIMOTHY | 2 TIMOTHY | TITUS

PASTORAL EPISTLES

BOOK DISCUSSION

- On **page 81**, Merkle asserts that the "*qualifications for an elder are the basic characteristics that are expected of all believers. Elders are not super-spiritual people but are those who are mature in their faith and live consistent, humble lives.*" Do you agree with Merkle's statement that elder qualifications are expected of every believer? Why or why not? Consider your own life, how are you living in accordance to these qualifications? Where do you need to grow? How can your Life Group, Bible study, or other Christians at Legacy help you grow in this area(s)? Consider spending time encouraging one another in the areas where people are living mature lives.

- **Pages 81 through 84** consists of a discussion regarding elders and financial compensation. Merkle says there are both those who should and those who should not be paid. What did you learn from this section of the book? How were you challenged by it? What do you agree with? And what do you disagree with?

- Are there any final thoughts, concerns, or questions that you have regarding this chapter?

CLOSING

As the group closes, continue praying for

- Understanding
- Clarity
- Humility
- Wisdom

This will benefit you, your Life Group, and Legacy as a whole. Pastor Kevin, the Leadership Team, and the staff is praying for you and your group as we continue this study of "*Why Elders?*".