

MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY SLIDE 19 new members. 160 total.

INTRODUCE SLIDE 1 PETER

Alright, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Peter chapter 5.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to 1 Peter 5,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
 - under every single chair.
 - You'll find 1 Peter 5 on page **1015**.

INTRODUCTION: LAST MONTH

Since October 1st at Fathom:

We've preached sermons on:

- Submitting to the Government...
- Wives submitting to husbands...
- Confession of our darkest sins...
- And, 2 sermons on suffering as a normal part of life.

So, those aren't JV sermons...**ADDITIONALLY** in the last month...

- We've done 5 baptisms.
- We've had 85 first time guests visit our church.
- We prayed...not for 24-hours straight...
 - but for 25 hours...thank you time change!
- And last Sunday was our highest attended Sunday
 - since before COVID.
 - Second service was 60% full.
 - First service was 90% full!

So, hey, it's been a heavy few weeks of sermons here at Fathom.

- And y'all have been eating them up...
 - It's one of my favorite things about Fathom...
 - you just invite people to these gospel beatdowns!
- And today's no different!
- So, let's get after it!

CONTEXT: THE CHURCH

Today's sermon is titled: **SLIDE SUBMIT TO ELDERS**

A wonderfully popular idea...submitting to spiritual authorities!

So, if you remember back to 1 Peter 2 we talked about:

Jesus Christ as the cornerstone of the church.

- He is the stone upon which the church is to be built on.
 - And I also gave us a bunch of other competing
 - cornerstones that you could build a church on...
 - but things get screwy when that happens.

Only Jesus is the firm foundation upon which the church is built.

Like, I can't stress this enough.

● If Jesus Christ is not the foundation of a church...

● THEN IT'S NOT A CHURCH.

- It's something else.
 - It's a club,
 - or a party,
 - or a friend group,
 - or a cause...
- but the foundation must be Christ for it to be a church.

EXPLAIN: ELDERS

But Peter now dives back into his talk about the church.

- And while he's already established Christ as the cornerstone...
 - in chapter 5, he teaches that some of those...
 - who are a part of a local church...
 - are called to be leaders of those churches.

And the Biblical word for the spiritual leaders of a church is *elders*.

- The spiritual leaders of a local church are *elders*,
 - sometimes translated *overseers*,
 - it's where we get our English word, *pastors*.

So, you could use those words interchangeably. Pastors or elders.

Now, before we get into our text...

let me read you another verse about the elders of a local church.

SLIDE HEBREWS 13:17a

[17] Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.

So, that's saying that you have spiritual leaders who are to have authority over you.

- There are *elders* over a church who keep watch.
 - AND as a part of a church,
- they have a God-given authority over you...
- which you are to submit to.

SLIDE SUBMIT TO ELDERS

ILLUSTRATION: WHICH ELDERS?

Well, which ones? Which elders are we supposed to submit to?

What about the complete dumpsters at Westboro Baptist Church...

- you know, who picket soldiers' funerals,
- you've seen those guys?
 - They've got elders.
 - Do you have to listen to them?
- I just showed you in Scripture where the Bible says...
- you have to submit to leadership.
 - Is it them?

What about the Mormon elder that knocks on your door?

- Elder Johnson...
- he's like 12...
 - bro's just exhausted from riding that bike.
 - looking for a place to nap.
- Like, do you have to listen to him?

Or what about Mark Hallock?

- Mark is the pastor at Calvary Englewood...
- just down the road from us.
 - He's one of my best pastor friends in the area.
 - Love that dude.
- But, they have elders at Calvary.
 - Good elders!
- Are you to submit to them?

TRANSITION

Today, we'll talk about WHICH elders you submit to...

- AND what it looks like to SUBMIT to them.

So, let's go.

I've only got 6 points for you today...so nothing to worry about!

1 Peter 5 starting in verse 1:

1 PETER 5:1

[1] So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:

POINT 1

Alright, let's stop here and make my first point about elders.

SLIDE CHURCHES HAVE ELDERS

Now, does that sound crazy to have to say?

- Cause it should be!
- But it needs to be said.

So, this letter, you remember, is written to churches...

- in Pontus,
- Galatia,
- Cappadocia,
- Asia,
- and Bythinia.

This is a huge and diverse area,

- and probably included dozens...
- if not hundreds of churches.

And Peter, without hesitation or qualification,

- addresses the elders in all these churches.

We learn from this:

- that elders were the normal way...
- churches were led...
- in the New Testament.

Peter just assumes that there are elders in these churches.

Hey, so there is a lot of wiggle room in how a church should be led.

- Do you have paid staff?
- Do you have a board of directors?
- Do you have trustees?
- Do you have an executive team?
- Do you have a Lead Pastor?
- Do you lead by committee?
 - I mean, gosh, there are lots of ways to organize.

BUT Peter assumes that CHURCHES HAVE ELDERS.

So, whatever the structure...there should be elders.

TRANSITION

And then, this is the exhortation to the elders of these local churches.

Verse 2:

1 PETER 5:2a

[2] shepherd the flock of God that is among you,

POINT 2

Ok, point 2.

SLIDE ELDERS ARE SHEPHERDS

- CHURCHES HAVE ELDERS
- and ELDERS ARE SHEPHERDS.

Now, this is huge,

- and is seemingly getting lost,
- in modern, consumeristic evangelical model of church.

But one of the main verbs...the action...

- associated with the work of elders...
- is the verb “to shepherd”

ELDERS ARE SHEPHERDS,

- and their core job...
- is to tend the church’s members...
 - like shepherds tend their sheep.

That means that elders are in relationships with church members.

- Your elders should be among the church.
 - No church should have elders...
 - who aren’t actively participating in the body...
 - and knowing the members.

One book on elders I read says that elders should “smell like sheep”.

- A shepherd isn’t off somewhere else.
- No! He’s walking in the midst of the animals,
 - touching them,
 - and speaking to them,
 - And getting them on him!
- He knows them...because he lives with them.

APPLICATION: SHEPHERDING GROUPS

And that's NOT JUST my job! Ok?

- As the Lead Pastor of Fathom,
- I'm not the only shepherd in this church.

It's shared amongst the 7 elders.

- These are 7 guys who are charged with...
- the shepherding of the flock...our church.

And between the 7 of us,

- we split the members of the church into shepherding groups.
- So, each elder is responsible to care for...
 - and shepherd his group.
 - I've got some of you...
 - and Jon Holm has some of you...
 - and Eric Shelly has some of you...
 - and on and on I could go.

APPLICATION: MEMBERSHIP

And then note:

- the text says that elders are to
 - shepherd the flock of God
 - THAT IS AMONG YOU.

So, this is one of the main reasons why

- we have such a high value on church membership here.

Listen, we believe that we are primarily called:

- to shepherd the members of this church.

So, if you're a member here...you submit to us.

And if you're a member here...we're held accountable for you!

Now, if you're not a member,

- gosh you're still welcome here,
 - and we will try our best to care for you...
 - and get you plugged in...
 - and disciple you.
- BUT our first responsibility as elders is to the members.

So, just like you aren't supposed to SUBMIT to all elders...

we aren't responsible to SHEPHERD those outside our flock.

TRANSITION

Ok, let's keep going.

Verse 2 again:

1 PETER 5:2a-b

[2] shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,

POINT 3

Ok. Point 3:

SLIDE ELDERS ARE OVERSEERS

Now, this is what most of us think an elder board does.

- Decision making...
- And vision casting...
- And managing the budget...
 - Like, church business stuff.

And my experience with church boards is that...

- there is A LOT of overseeing going on...
- and NOT a lot of shepherding going on.

But, elders ARE given oversight of their church,

- which means they want to see the church as a whole and go,
 - *“Is this working?”*
 - *Is this working?*
 - *Is this all working in the same direction?”*
- They want to oversee the whole thing well.

So, the elders ARE charged to exercise oversight and to lead.

They look out over the flock.

- And God holds them accountable for seeing the big picture...
- and acting for the good of the whole flock.

So, this is a balance for elders.

As shepherds...

- they are to KNOW the flock...
- and they are to FEED the flock...
 - that is, teaching & preaching...
- and they are to PROTECT the flock...
 - from wolves...
 - from those who would lead them astray.

But they are also to LEAD...to oversee.

- Elders are to direct a flock corporately...
- all the while caring for them individually.

TRANSITION

Now, Peter goes on to address HOW.

- How are these elders called to shepherd...
- and oversee the flock?

Well, verse 2 again...

1 PETER 5:2-3

[2] shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; [3] not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

EXPLAIN

So, this isn't the only place in the New Testament...

- where we see some of the qualities you want in an elder.
 - In 1 Timothy 3 and in Titus 1
 - we find more comprehensive lists...
- but for our purposes,
- let's just break down what we see in our text.

These are qualities of HOW elders should shepherd and oversee.

POINT 4

Point 4: **SLIDE** **ELDERS ARE WILLING.**

The text says: **not under compulsion, but willingly**

Hey, listen, for a man to be an elder...he's gotta want it.

- Faithful eldering demands much of you,
- and if you don't have an inner hunger for the role,
- you can burn out.

Of course,

- that doesn't mean that everyone who wants to be an elder
 - gets to be an elder...
- but it does mean a lack of desire is a problem.

Now, if you aren't reading this text correctly, your gut response might be,

- *“Well, what kind of man ISN'T WILLING*
- *to have power and authority?”*

BUT THAT'S NOT THE CALL OF AN ELDER!

The call of an elder is not power and authority.

- The call of an elder is sacrifice,
 - it's serving,
 - and really, it's slavery.

This is how Jesus set up how we are to lead.

You see, when asked about leading and greatness, Jesus says this:

SLIDE MATTHEW 20:26b-27

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [27] and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,

SLIDE You hear that?

- The call of spiritual leadership has little to do with power...
 - it has little to do with authority.

Now, is authority granted to the elders? Yes.

But it's granted...

- because they are to be the type of men...
- who so love the local church...
- and have so experienced the grace and mercy of Jesus...
- that they'll go,
 - *“I'll sacrifice for these people.*
 - *I'll give myself to these people.*
 - *I'm willing to serve in this way.”*

So, if you have baggage around bad elders or church leaders,

- what the Bible says is,
 - *“Don’t let a man be an elder who wouldn’t be your slave!*
 - *If he’s not willing to sacrifice for you...*
 - *then he’s got no business leading.*
 - *If he’s not willing to give of himself...*
 - *so that you might grow...*
 - *then don’t trust him.”*

I mean, eldering is really, very inglorious work.

- We are in hospitals,
- and counseling rooms,
- and handling conflict...
 - Like, it’s fun when things are good!
 - But when things aren’t good...it’s a sacrifice!

And we need men who know that’s what they’re signing up for.

This is why we built a 6-month elder candidacy process here at Fathom.

- We make our elder candidates do a lot of work.
- We examine these brothers closely.
 - And that’s why I ask multiple times publically...
 - if you know anything sketchy about them...
 - because we don’t want shady elders.

ELDERS ARE WILLING.

POINT 5

Point 5:

SLIDE ELDERS ARE HUMBLE

Our text says that:

- elders aren't doing it for shameful gain.

So, some of what shameful gain means...

- is that elders aren't using their position...
- as a way to financially benefit.

Now, that doesn't mean that some elders aren't paid.

Pauls says as much in 1 Timothy 5.

So, we have both staff and non-staff elders.

- Kyle and I are staff elders...
- the other five guys are non-staff elders.
 - But we aren't paid for our eldering...
 - we're paid for the staff jobs we do.

So, it does mean this...but I think it's bigger than that.

- Elders aren't in it for the cred...you following me.

Man, I think the shameful gain that is most prevalent...

- is credibility...
- it's pride...
- it's arrogance...
- it's a haughty spirit.

Listen, it feels real good to be looked up to...

and that could be dangerous.

EXPLAIN: MATURE

And this is why an elder needs to be a mature believer.

1 Timothy says that an elder cannot be a recent convert.

- He's got to have been through some seasons in his faith.
- Right? How has he weathered the storms in life?

He's had to have been through some of the refining work...

- of the fires of suffering...
- that I talked about last week.

I can tell you that every one of our elders

- has had seasons of significant suffering...
 - where they were put to the test...
 - and they have proven faithful.
- To the man there has been loss.
- To the man there have been days of sorrow.
- To the man, even now, there are some of us...
 - who are walking through things...
 - that the Lord uses to bind us to himself.

And so, we are to watch out for spiritual pride.

- An elder needs to know he's weak...
- not that he's strong.

There's no swagger in the elder room.

- You're nervous in the elder room...
- in a good way.

Because of what I quoted from from Hebrews 13,

- the elders will give an account to God...
- for how they lead.

That should humble us!

POINT 6

And finally, **SLIDE** **ELDERS ARE EXAMPLES.**

The text says that elders **aren't domineering.**

That implies that the elder isn't driven by the love of power.

- If he gets an ego high from flaunting...
 - his authority and prestige and dominance.
- If he needs to be up front.
- If **he likes the best seats in the synagogue,**
 - as Jesus said.
- If he likes to be addressed with titles.
- If he craves the praise of men.

Peter says: the test of an elder is in their life...their whole life.

Are they EXAMPLES for the flock?

- Is their public ministry a show,
 - or does their whole life prove their authenticity?
- Is there a public shepherd...
 - and a different private shepherd?
- What about his family...
- and his finances...
- and his hospitality...
- and his discernment...
- and his reputation among spiritual people...
- and his reputation to those outside the church?

Are the elders the types of guys you want to grow up to be like?

If not...it's a NO GO.

TRANSITION

So, ELDERS ARE WILLING, HUMBLE, EXAMPLES.

Now, verse 4:

BLANK SLIDE

1 PETER 5:4

[4] And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

EXPLAIN: REWARD

So, there is a reward for the elders.

- But it's not in some earthly status...
 - or honor...
 - or achievement...
 - or whatever.
- It's in what the chief Shepherd thinks.
 - All the elder longs for is the approval of Christ alone.
 - And that will be enough for the elder.

These are the types of elders we are looking for to lead Christ's church.

- Now, what about the rest of the church...
- what's our responsibility to the elders?

Well, look at verse 5:

1 PETER 5:5

[5] Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

EXPLAIN: YOUNGER

Ok, on this last verse,

- Peter turns the table...
- and addresses "you who are younger".

Now, there is some debate over what he means by **younger**.

- It could be those who were just younger in age.
- It could also be those who were younger in their faith.

And both of those were probably true in the context,

- because it was most likely that the elders...
 - were the older,
 - wiser,
 - more mature believers in these churches.

But many scholars think, and I agree...

- that this is really a reference...
- to anyone who isn't an elder...
- in these local churches.

It's not a slam on maturity or even age...

- *younger* is simply the counterpart to *elder*.

So, we might read,

- *Likewise, you who aren't elders...*
- *be subject to the elders.*

MAIN POINT

And it's back to my sermon title: **SLIDE SUBMIT TO ELDERS**

- Be subject to, or submit to, the elders.
- Not a wildly popular idea here! Right?

But again, here's what I'd say on this one:

Never follow church leaders...

- **who don't understand that they will give an account for you.**

Never follow a pastor, or elders,

- who are not painfully aware...
- that one day after they quit breathing...
 - and they will stand in front of Jesus...
 - and give an account for how...
 - they led, treated, and spent their life on the church.

If that piece is not there,

- those men are leading you toward a place called their ego,
 - and they will build the church...
 - based on how they look...
 - rather than what's best for the body.

BUT, where you do have elders...

- who will submit to Christ,
- who will pray,
- who will plead,
- who will not shirk the hard things,
- and who will lead by example...

The scripture says, **be subject to them**. SUBMIT to them.

APPLICATION: WHICH ELDERS?

Now, hang with me on this one.

- Because I get that it seems self- serving...
 - for me to tell you...to submit to me...

But hear me:

- if you're looking for a church home,
- You've gotta ask yourself,
 - CAN I SUBMIT TO THE LEADERSHIP?

Because, Christian, you are COMMANDED to submit to elders.

- That's the command.
 - And that's for me too!
 - I am submitted to our elders as a member of this church!

ILLUSTRATION: NO CHURCH HOME

But what do you do with this command if you don't have a church?

- This is why we press you to find a church home.
 - Because, I don't know how you obey this if you don't!
 - To whom are you to submit?
 - Who's keeping watch over your souls?

Now let me answer that,

- because there is an answer I think people like to give.
 - *"Well, I submit to the elders...
 - at whatever church I'm going to now.*
 - *So, I'm here right now,
 - and I'll submit to you right now."*

Yeah, the problem with that

- is you're using a definition of submission...
- that doesn't exist.

You're saying,

- *"I'll go to a place...
 - until I don't like it...*
- *and once I don't like it...
 - then I'm gone."*

But that's not submission.

ILLUSTRATION: MARRIAGE

A parallel argument could be made about marriage.

- *“Well, we live together,*
- *and we sleep together,*
- *and we have kids together,*
- *and we have a house together...*
- *so, for all intents and purposes, we’re married.”*

Listen to me, NO YOU’RE NOT!

That’s not marriage...marriage is marriage. That’s something else!

- Cause there is nothing officially holding you to that person...
 - when things get tough,
 - or you ‘fall out of love’ with that person...
 - whatever that means.

There’s no covenant.

- That might be a relationship,
- but a marriage is when you...
 - commit and submit to one another.

TRANSITION

And the same is true of the church.

- Belonging to a church is much more...
 - than you liking the place...
 - and hanging out for a while.
- It’s submission!
- It’s accountability!
- It’s, *“Hey, I’m in here,*
 - *and I’m not leaving...for superficial reasons.”*

CONCLUSION

So, let me end a little differently than we normally do.

I did this with the SUBMIT TO THE GOVERNMENT sermon.

But I want to put up a slide of the seven elders at Fathom Church.

SLIDE W/PADS These are your elders, Fathom Church.

- Myself,
- Eric Shelly,
- Gary Scheer,
- Jon Holm,
- Justin Wellum,
- Kyle Knight,
- and Nate Wertz.

These elders KNOW, FEED, PROTECT, and LEAD Fathom...

- AND they serve you in numerous ways.
 - They are here to shepherd us.
- I mean, I can't even tell you how much these guys...
 - do for this church.

So, I'd love for us to pray for these guys...

- and for any future elders God brings us.

I know this is a little different than how we normally end a sermon,

- but let's pray for the elders...
- that God has appointed over this church...
- who we are to submit to.

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

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