



A Firm Foundation

FOLLOWING THE FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMATION

Small Group Discussion Guide: God's Blueprint for Leadership

Scripture Focus: 1 Timothy 3:1–7, 1 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 13:17

Welcome & Icebreaker

- The "Dream Leader": If you were hiring a CEO for a major company or electing a public official, what is the *single most important* trait or qualification you would look for? Why?

The Hook: From Civil to Spiritual Order

In our sermon this week, we looked at how society often values a leader's "horsepower"—their talent, charisma, or ability to win—over their internal character. But in 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul calls the local church the "**household of God... a pillar and buttress of the truth.**" Because the church holds up God's truth to a watching world, God has a strict "constitution" for the moral weight and integrity of its leaders.

Scripture & Discussion Questions

1. Desiring a Noble Task (1 Timothy 3:1)

"If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."

- **Discuss:** The sermon noted that biblical leadership is a "grueling, sacrificial, yet inherently noble work," rather than a visual status symbol. Why do you think people in our culture—and sometimes in the church—crave the *status* of leadership without wanting the *sacrifice* of it?
- **Reflection:** How can we distinguish between someone pursuing leadership for a "personal platform" versus someone driven by a genuine love for Christ and His people?

2. Character Over Competence (1 Timothy 3:2–3)

"Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money."

- **Discuss:** Review the list of character traits above. Notice that only *one* skill is listed ("able to teach"); the rest are all about character. Why is it dangerous when a church (or any organization) values a leader's talent over their integrity?
- The "Corrupted Corvette" Illustration: Think about the illustration of the sleek sports car with cracked steering and corroded brake lines. In what ways can a highly gifted but character-flawed leader become a "spiritual hazard" to a church flock?

- **Application:** To be "above reproach" means no valid accusation of disqualifying sin can stick to a person's name. How does managing our own appetites, tongues, and tempers in private prepare us to handle public influence well?

3. The Test-Market of the Home (1 Timothy 3:4–5)

"He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"

- **Discuss:** The sermon used the "Corporate Franchise" illustration: a company wouldn't hire a CEO who just bankrupted a single local store. Why does God view the home as the ultimate testing ground for spiritual leadership?
- **Reflection:** What does a "well-managed household" look like in a biblical sense? (Hint: Consider the instruction for an elder to be *gentle* and *not violent* from verse 3).

4. Protecting the Witness (1 Timothy 3:6–7)

"He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders..."

- **Discuss:** Why is rapid promotion so dangerous for a young or immature believer? How does keeping a leader's public integrity aligned with their private life protect the church from external scandal?

Moving to Action: How the Congregation Responds

1. Protecting the Standard & Praying "Backstage"

As a church, we are called to hold fast to God's blueprint and support our elders. The enemy rarely attacks a leader on the "front stage" of Sunday morning; he attacks them backstage—in their marriages, families, thoughts, and tempers.

- **Group Prayer:** Pause right now as a group and pray specifically for your church's elders and pastoral staff. Pray for their faithfulness in their *living rooms*, not just their leadership in the *boardroom*.

2. Making Service a Joy (Hebrews 13:17)

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning..."

- **Question:** What are practical ways our small group can ensure we are a flock that is "easy to lead" and brings joy to our leaders rather than groaning?

3. Activating the Body

The elders are called to oversee and direct, but a body cannot move unless its individual parts step up to serve. The sermon reminded us: *"Don't just attend the body; be an active member of it."* We have immediate, tangible needs right now in our church house. Look over this list as a group—where can you or your group members step in to serve this month?

- **Tribes Kids Ministry:**

- **2 Volunteers for Walkers (1–2 year olds)**
- **2 Teachers for Preschool (3–5 year olds)**
- **3 Teachers for K–2nd Grade**
- **1 Teacher for 4th–5th Grade**
- **2 Check-in Desk Volunteers**
- **Tech & Production Team:**
 - **1 Audio/Sound Operator**
 - **1 ProPresenter/Media Operator**
 - **Setup & Teardown Team Members**
- **Closing Challenge: Before we leave tonight, let's identify one area where we can plug in and move from being attendees to active, serving members of the body. Who is ready to take a step?**