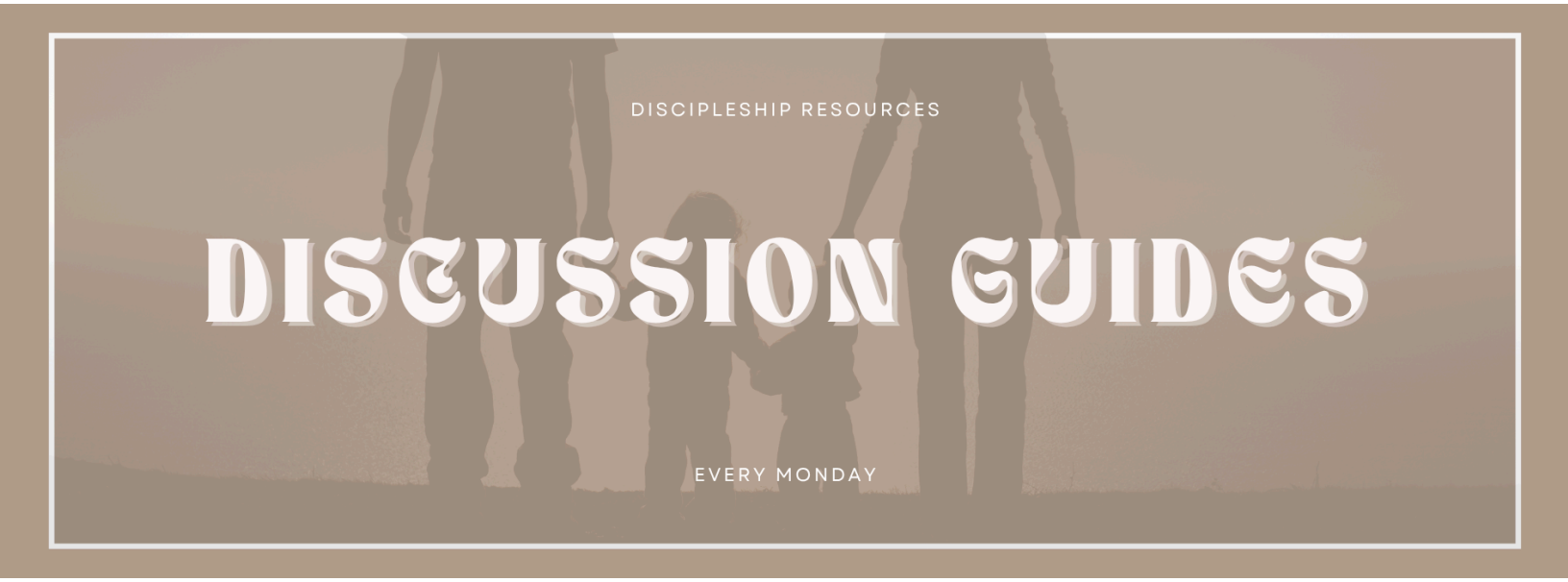

Discussion Guide

Sunday Sermon 11.22.26

Reestablishing God's Standard of Leadership in His Church

This guide is designed to help your family or group take what was taught on Sunday and move from simply hearing the information to applying it in ways that build up and encourage one another. Feel free to adjust the depth and number of questions based on your time and the size of your group.

Access the Sermon on the Website & App:

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to help your group dig deeper into the biblical principles of church leadership covered in this sermon. The pastor walked through God's design for a plurality of pastors and the absence of a hierarchy among them. Encourage honest, scripture-rooted conversation. Remind group members that the goal is not to critique any particular church experience but to align with what God's word says.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Jesus Christ is the sole head of the church. All authority flows from him. Pastors, elders, and overseers hold delegated authority — not their own — and are fully accountable to God for how they use it.

2. The three terms "pastor," "elder," and "overseer" describe one office. These are not separate roles or ranks. They are three different words pointing to the same God-designed position of leadership within the local church.

3. God's design calls for a plurality of pastors. Scripture consistently shows multiple elders being appointed in every local body. This is not incidental — it is intentional and serves the health and long-term faithfulness of the congregation.

4. God's design does not call for a hierarchy among pastors. While responsibilities may differ based on gifting and experience, the authority shared among a group of elders is equal. No one pastor stands above the others in terms of God-given authority.

5. When the church does not follow God's design, the congregation pays the price. The pastor was direct: uninformed, unaccountable, or unbiblical leadership structures do real damage to real people. Getting this right matters for generational faithfulness to God's mission.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR REVIEW

Read or summarize the following passages together before or during discussion:

- Acts 14:21-23 — Paul & Barnabas appointing elders in every church they planted
- Acts 20:17 — Paul calling for the elders (plural) of the church at Ephesus
- Philippians 1:1 — Paul addressing the bishops and deacons at Philippi
- 1 Timothy 4:14 — Reference to the body of elders laying hands on Timothy
- Titus 1:5 — Titus instructed to appoint elders in every city
- 1 Peter 5:1 — Peter exhorting the elders as a fellow elder
- Colossians 1:18 — Christ as the head of the church
- 1 Timothy 3:14-15 — The church as the pillar and ground of the truth

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTION

(Use this to warm up the group and get everyone talking.)

Think about an organization, workplace, or team you have been part of. What happened when the leadership structure was unclear or unhealthy? What did it feel like to be part of that?

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. The pastor identified three terms — pastor, elder, and overseer — as describing one office of leadership. Before this sermon series, how did you understand those terms? Does knowing they refer to the same role change anything for you?

2. Look at Acts 14:23 together. What does it tell us about the priority Paul placed on establishing elders in newly formed congregations? What does that suggest about how seriously God takes this structure?

3. The pastor said, "When we don't follow God's way, the people pay." Can you think of examples — either from personal experience or from what you have observed in church culture — where a lack of biblical leadership structure caused harm to a congregation?

4. The sermon drew a distinction between a plurality of pastors and a hierarchy of pastors. In your own words, what is the difference? Why does that distinction matter?

GOING DEEPER

5. The pastor made the point that a congregation has a responsibility to hold its leaders accountable — that blind submission is not what God is calling for. How do you personally balance respect for church leadership with the responsibility to be grounded in God's word yourself? What does healthy accountability look like in practice?

6. The pastor said, "There are congregations all over this nation that need to rise up in a God-ordained way and call out their leadership." What do you think a "God-ordained" way of doing that looks like? What would make it unhealthy or unbiblical?

7. The sermon pointed out that when a church is built around one person, the congregation often falls apart when that person leaves. Have you seen or experienced this? What does it reveal about where people may have been placing their trust?

8. The pastor mentioned that a plurality of leaders builds in natural accountability — that when godly men are spending consistent time together, they can recognize when something is off with one another. Why do you think accountability is so difficult in a one-man leadership model? Why is it easier in a shared leadership model?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

9. The pastor challenged the congregation to get into the word and check what is being taught against Scripture. How consistently are you doing that? What habits or practices help you stay grounded in the word outside of Sunday mornings?

10. He also said the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" and that truth comes to the world through the church. How does understanding that responsibility change the way you think about your own role in this local body — not just as someone who attends, but as someone who participates in the mission?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Work through one or more of these as a group or encourage members to take them on individually during the week.

1. Study the passages for yourself. Go back through the scripture references listed in this guide. Read each one in context. Write down what each passage says specifically about leadership structure. Come back to your group next week and share one thing that stood out to you.

2. Pray specifically for your church's leadership. The pastor asked the congregation to pray for him and for Andrew — not just generally, but with an awareness that they will stand before God and give an account for how they led. Set aside intentional time this week to pray for your pastors and elders by name.

3. Evaluate your own posture toward church leadership. Honestly ask yourself: Do you tend toward blind submission, passive disengagement, or critical opposition? None

of those reflect a healthy biblical relationship with church leadership. Ask God to show you where you need to grow and what a healthy, word-grounded engagement with your leaders looks like for you personally.

4. Have a conversation instead of a complaint. If you have concerns, questions, or confusion about how your church is structured or led, take the pastor up on his open invitation. Rather than discussing concerns with others in ways that could stir up division, bring your questions directly to your leaders. Practice that this week if there is something you have been holding back.

5. Commit to knowing the structure of your church. The pastor pointed out that many long-time members had no clear understanding of the authority structure of the church. Take time to learn how your church is structured — who the elders are, what the deacons do, and how decisions are made. Understanding this is part of being a responsible and engaged member of the body.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPTS

Close your time together in prayer. Consider praying through the following:

- Thank God that Jesus is the head of the church and that his authority is perfect and trustworthy.
- Ask for wisdom and humility for your church's leaders as they shepherd the congregation.
- Pray for your congregation to be grounded in God's word so that it can recognize and uphold biblical leadership.
- Ask God to give each group member a growing love for the local church and a deeper commitment to its long-term health and mission.
- Pray for anyone in the group — or in the broader congregation — who does not yet have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week the sermon series moves into 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and the specific qualifications God has established for those who serve in the office of pastor, elder, and overseer. To prepare, read through that passage on your own and write down any questions or observations you want to bring to your group.