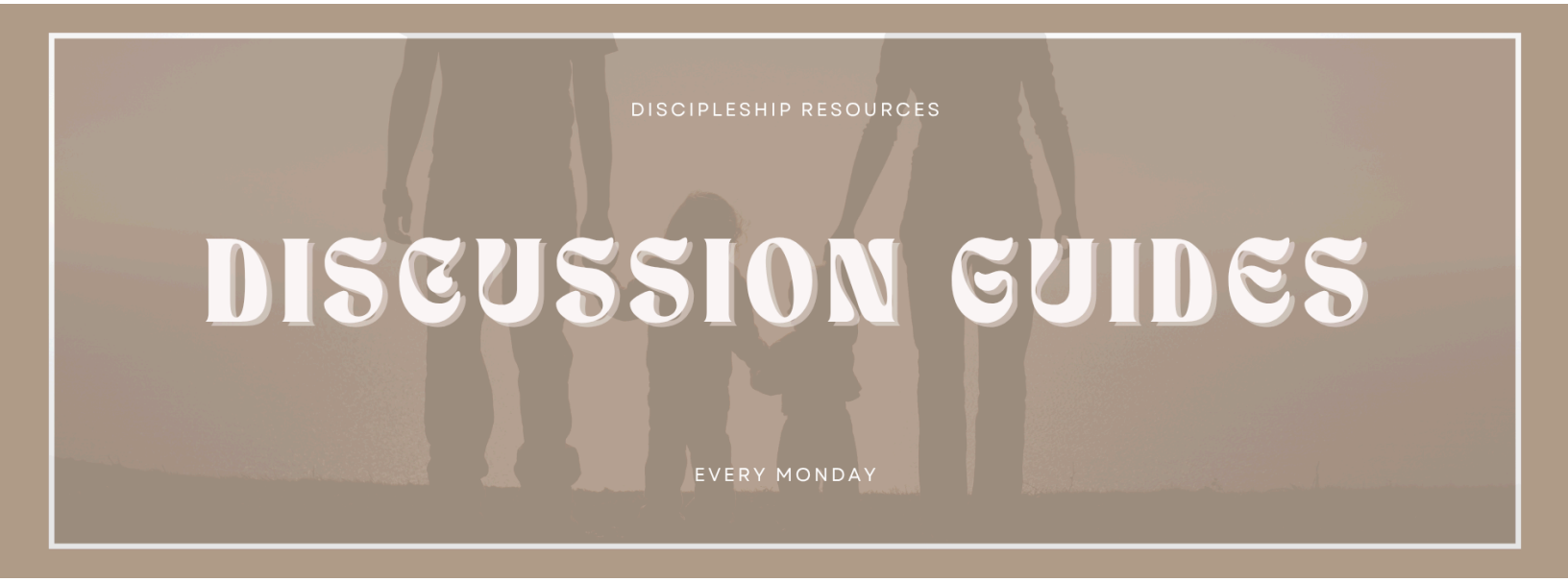


Discussion Guide

Sunday Sermon 11.8.26

Part 6: 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:

Click Here



Overview

This week's message focused on the biblical foundation of church leadership. The pastor walked through two of three key questions: What is a pastor? What has God called pastors to do? And what authority has God delegated to them? Using passages from 1 Timothy 3, Acts 20, and 1 Peter 5, the sermon established that the terms pastor, elder, and overseer all describe the same office, and that Christ -- as head of the church -- has entrusted the spiritual oversight of his people to qualified men called to shepherd faithfully under his authority and his word.

Key Takeaways

- Pastor, elder, and overseer are three different terms that describe the same office, each highlighting a different dimension of the role: spiritual maturity, responsibility for oversight, and hands-on care for the flock.
- Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). Pastors serve as under-shepherds, delegated by him, accountable to his word.
- The congregation plays an important role in holding leaders accountable to what the true head of the church has said in his word.
- A pastor's calling is not about building a personal platform. It is about elevating others to become everything God wants them to be.
- The church must be structured around what God's word says, not around tradition, familiarity, or what seems most practical.
- The urgency of the gospel is real. God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). The church has a responsibility to take that seriously.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

Imagine going to work tomorrow and no one knowing who is in charge?

Section 1 -- What Is a Pastor?

1. Before this message, how would you have answered the question "Who leads the church?" How has your thinking shifted, if at all?

2. The sermon explained that pastor, elder, and overseer are three terms describing the same office. Why do you think God chose three different terms to describe one role? What does each term contribute to our understanding of what this person is supposed to be and do?

3. In Acts 20:28, Paul tells the elders that the Holy Spirit made them overseers. What does it mean to you that the Holy Spirit is behind the calling and placement of church leaders? How should that shape the way a congregation relates to its pastors?

4. In 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter tells the elders to shepherd the flock willingly, not by compulsion, and to be examples rather than lords. In practical terms, what does that kind of leadership look like? What does it not look like?

Section 2 -- What Has God Called Pastors to Do?

5. The sermon identified four primary responsibilities of a pastor: feeding the flock through God's word, protecting the flock from false doctrine, leading and caring for the flock, and equipping the congregation for ministry. Which of these do you feel you have seen modeled well in your experience with the church? Which do you feel is most often overlooked or misunderstood?

6. Acts 20:28-31 contains a serious warning about false teachers and wolves entering the church. How does a congregation help guard against false teaching alongside its pastors? What is the individual member's responsibility in this?

7. Ephesians 4:11-16 speaks to equipping the congregation for ministry. What does it look like for a church member to be actively equipped and deployed for ministry, rather than simply attending services?

Section 3 -- The Gospel and Urgency

8. The pastor paused during the message to pray for the lost and to challenge the room on the urgency of salvation. He said, "All you got is today and this moment." How does that urgency shape the way you live your daily life? Is it something you feel regularly, or does it fade into the background?

9. 1 Timothy 2:4 expresses that God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Who are the specific people in your life -- family, coworkers, neighbors -- that you feel a burden for? How are you actively praying for and pursuing them?

Section 4 -- The Church and Its Head

10. The pastor stated that in many churches, Christ is not truly functioning as the head -- people are. What are some ways a congregation, even unintentionally, can replace Christ's authority with human preferences, traditions, or personalities?

11. He also said that the congregation has a responsibility to hold its leaders accountable to what the head of the church has said in his word. What does healthy, biblical accountability between a congregation and its pastors look like? How is it different from criticism or control?

Practical Applications

- Take time this week to read Acts 20:17-38 and 1 Peter 5:1-4 in full. As you read, write down what you observe about what God expects from church leaders and what he expects from the people they serve.

- Spend time in prayer this week specifically for the people God brings to mind who do not yet know Christ. Use 1 Timothy 2:1-4 as a guide for how to pray.

- Reflect honestly on this question: Do you know whether you are saved? If there is any uncertainty, do not wait. Reach out to one of your pastors or a trusted believer in your group this week.

- Consider how you personally are contributing to the mission and ministry of the church beyond attendance. Ask God to show you where he is calling you to serve, give, or go.

- If you have held unexamined assumptions about church leadership -- how it should work, who should be in charge, or what pastors are supposed to do -- commit to letting scripture shape those convictions rather than tradition or past experience.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together in three directions:

First, pray for your pastors by name -- that the Holy Spirit would sustain them, protect them from the enemy, and keep them faithful to the word and to the flock.

Second, pray for your church as a body -- that Christ would truly be recognized and honored as the head, and that the congregation would be unified around his word and his mission.

Third, pray for the lost -- specific names, specific faces. Ask God to open doors and give your group the courage and the words to share the gospel with those who have not yet heard or responded.

Looking Ahead

Next week the message will continue in 1 Timothy 3, picking up with the third question: What authority has God delegated to pastors, elders, and overseers within the church? Come prepared by reading 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and reflecting on how the qualifications Paul lists connect to the responsibilities discussed this week.