

Family Studies on Elders - Shepherds and Overseers

- Recommended Hymn: We Bow Down
- **Matthew 28:18 - “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’”**
 - Where did Jesus get this authority? To whom did He give authority after receiving it? What were they commanded to do?
 - How does this verse relate to the topic of congregational elders? What authority do the elders have in a congregation? How are they expected to use that authority according to the New Testament?
 - **Today we will pray together for...** thankfulness for the authority and mission of Christ, and the people in our lives who exercise both.
- Recommended Hymn: I Know Not Why God’s Wondrous Grace
- **Acts 14:23 - “And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”**
 - Who was appointing elderships in this case? Why were these people able to appoint elderships?
 - What is the role of prayer and fasting when it comes to appointing elderships? What is the role of the congregation’s belief in Christ?
 - Why should a congregation be led by elders? What are the benefits of this structure? Why did God choose to design the church this way?
 - **Today we will pray together for...** thankfulness for God’s plan for His church and those who help guide His church according to His plan.
- Recommended Hymn: The Church’s One Foundation
- **Ephesians 2:19-20 - “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone[.]”**
 - What does it mean that Jesus is the cornerstone of the church? Why are the apostles and prophets also part of the church’s foundation?
 - What does this verse have to do with the eldership? How does the eldership help support the structure of the church according to this pattern? What role do we have within this pattern?
 - **Today we will pray together for...** the strength of the church and its members to continue with the help of God and its leaders today.

- Recommended Hymn: Living For Jesus
- **1 Timothy 3:1 - “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.”**
 - What is an overseer? Why is this word used to describe this office?
 - Read the rest of this paragraph (1 Timothy 3:1-7). What do each of these qualifications mean? Why are these the qualifications of this office?
 - Do the elders of our congregation meet these qualifications? What impact should our answer to this question have on our faith and our service in God’s kingdom?
 - **Today we will pray together for...** the overseers of our congregation to be strong, and for future leaders who meet these qualifications as well.
- Recommended Hymn: Sing On (Ye Joyful Pilgrims)
- **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, for that would be of no advantage to you.”**
 - What leaders is the author of Hebrews talking about here? How do we know that he is referring to this group?
 - Why would it be of no advantage to us if those who are leading us are unhappy in doing so? Why is it an advantage to us if they have joy in their leadership?
 - How can we apply this passage? What can we do as a family to make sure those who lead us are joyful in their leadership?
 - **Today we will pray together for...** those who lead us to have the joy of the Lord in their lives, and for opportunities to share it with them.
- Recommended Hymn: Psalm 34 (O Taste And See)
- **James 5:14 - “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”**
 - Why does James talk about anointing people with oil here? Are we expected to do this today?
 - Why are the elders the ones you should call when sick? How do they fulfill their role as elders when they respond to this call?
 - Is there any reason why we as a family should call the elders right now?
 - **Today we will pray together for...** spiritual healing from Christ, and the motivation to have an open and connected relationship with our elders.