



**Preparing for Small Group:** Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
- (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
- (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
- (4) What does God want me to know?
- (5) What does God want me to do?

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### **“Appointing Elders”**

*Titus 1:5-9*

**Main Idea:** Elders help organize and lead the church for the work of the church.

Facts about God’s design for appointing elders in the church:

**Elders are a part of God’s designed order for His church (5).**

Here, as well as in many other places in the New Testament, God gives us a clear picture in practice and in instruction of His design for pastoral leadership in the church. Optimally, God’s churches are led by a plurality of God’s men — overseers, pastors, elders — functioning by His design to organize His church. In Acts 14:23, God directed His people to appoint “elders” in every church. In Acts 20, Paul called together the “elders” of the church in Ephesus. In Philippians 1, Paul addressed the “overseers” (elders) and deacons in that church. In James 5, James encouraged believers who were sick to call on the “elders” of their church to pray for them. In these and other places in the New Testament, God provides a beautiful picture of His design for elders to help bring order to His church.

1. Take time to look up these passages: Acts 11:29-30; 14:23; 15:1-35; 16:4-5; 20:17, 28-32; 21:18; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:17-19; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 11:2; James 5:14, 15; 1 Peter 5:1-5; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1. Discuss the relevance of these passages in affirming God’s design for elders to help bring order to His church.
2. Why do you think a plurality of elders (more than one elder in a church) is seen in the majority of references in the New Testament?
3. As our faith family takes steps to follow the biblical design for order in God’s church, discuss questions that you have about the role of elders. Make a list of questions, and invite an elder to come to your small group to discuss.

**Elders lead in modeling the character of Christ (6-8).**

- *Displaying a life marked by the character of Christ.*
- *Modeling what’s desired in the life of every follower of Christ.*

Titus 1:6-8 calls for one overriding requirement, which is that an elder must be “above reproach.” The definition for “above reproach” is then fleshed out in these verses in what must be characteristic and what must not be characteristic in the life of an elder. A quick examination of the list quickly reveals that the core requirements for an elder aren’t much different than any

other follower of Jesus! The list of things that must be and must not be characteristic of an elder's life should also be included in the list of characteristics that should be in the life of any believer. In other words, an elder should model in his actions a life that's touched by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, conforming the elder to the character of Christ so that he models what God desires in the life of every believer of Christ.

1. Discuss the term "above reproach." In what ways do people tend to misdefine this term? How does God's Word define this term in these verses?
2. Discuss the things that must *not* characterize an elder's life. Why are these important?
3. Discuss the things that *must* characterize an elder's life. Why are these important?
4. Are these characteristics different from what's expected in the life of any follower of Jesus? Why, or why not?

### **Elders lead in sharing the Words of Christ (9).**

- *Holding firm to the Word.*
- *Giving instruction through the Word.*
- *Giving correction and protection through the Word.*

While the qualifications for elders that are found in Titus 1:6-8 aren't much different from the qualifications for deacons, the one requirement that sets elders apart is the responsibility and ability to teach. Titus 1:9 points to the essential characteristic for an elder when it comes to the Words of Christ, which is that an elder "must hold firm to the trustworthy word." Elders must show an understanding of and an unshakable standing in the trustworthy Word of God. The reason for this requirement is two-fold, including (1) the ability to teach the Word in a sound and healthy way as well as (2) the responsibility to protect sound doctrine and to give sound correction through the Word.

1. What does it mean to "hold firm to the trustworthy word?" Why is this important?
2. Discuss the meaning of "being able to give instruction in sound doctrine." Why isn't preaching specifically mentioned? What are the different ways that one can instruct in sound doctrine?
3. Discuss the meaning of "rebuke those who contradict it." Why is this often discouraged in the church today? What does this look like when done right? Why is this an important aspect of the ministry of the Word in the church?
4. Break into small groups of 2 to 3 people, and spend time praying for the elders at our church, praying this passage over their lives and ministries. Pray for those in our church who God is preparing and will call into elder ministry. Thank God for His gracious design in giving us elders to help organize and lead the church.