

## Sermon Based Discussion

**Sermon Title: "Ordered Leadership: God's Elders"**

**Sermon Series: Putting the Church in Order. Sermon Text: Titus 1:1-4**

### INTRODUCTION

Think of the different clubs, organizations, companies, and groups you've ever been a part of. Would you say most of those have solid, qualified leadership?

There are three ways we err in how we do leadership. Sometimes we avoid having leaders in an effort to be "equal", or because no one is willing to step up, or because we've seen the damage of poor leaders. This is **absent leadership**. Other times we see the negative effects of leaders who misuse their powers, or who lead for wrong motives. This is **abusive leadership**. Sadly, we see these errors in the church. And when people see the perils of absent or abusive leadership, at times we try to improve on how to do leadership in the church. But if God has left a pattern of church leadership, then who are we to presume to improve upon that? Any kind of leadership that departs from the biblical principles is **aberrant leadership**. These leaders' motives may be right, but their leadership just isn't working.

You may or may not be a Christian, but haven't you wondered how the church could better live out her mission to love and serve the world in the name of Christ? In this session, we see God's pattern for how a church should be led through biblically qualified elders.

### OPENING QUESTION

1. In the child's game "Simon Says", which role is more fun for you: being the leader (aka, "Simon") or being one of the followers? Why?
2. Think of the clubs, groups, companies, or churches you may have belonged to. Which is a bigger problem: absent leadership, abusive leadership, or aberrant leadership? Why do you say so?

### INTO THE BIBLE (Read Titus 1:5-9)

3. Paul tells Titus to appoint elders according to the qualifications he gave. Are there any advantages of appointing an elder instead of electing an elder?

How can appointments be abused and how does Paul protect against those?

4. What does it mean for an elder to "above reproach" or "blameless"? Does it mean that we should judge whether or not people should be elders?
5. In what ways is elder to be "above reproach"? How reasonable are these expectations?

### GOING DEEPER

6. As a group, you can probably think of lots of problems and issues in a church. What difference does it make that the elders are qualified in family life, character/conduct, and in their ability to teach sound doctrine?
7. In your experience with churches, how precious or commonplace is it for a church to be led by qualified elders?

### WHAT WILL YOU DO?

If you're not a Christian, you may have wondered how relevant this is for you. But you've probably seen the negative effects of abusive, absent, or aberrant leadership in the Christian church. Please understand that this is not how Jesus intended His church to be led. And do you see that Jesus is the ultimate servant leader by submitting himself to the abusive power of aberrant leadership in dying on the cross? Those leaders tried to make Jesus absent by killing Him. But Jesus became the absolute leader and savior of the world through their act.

If you're a Christian, will you pray for the elders of this church or your church? Will you see how crucial it is to have qualified men to shepherd the church? Will you pray for God to provide more elders, perhaps even from your group? Thank God for these servants. Pray for them. Encourage them and help keep them accountable.

## **CHANGING YOUR MIND**

*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you... Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless... He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Titus 1:5, 7, 9, NIV)*