

Discussion Questions

Lesson 1: Recovering a Lost Doctrine

1. Discuss with your mentor why you decided to do this introductory course on biblical eldership.
2. List the differences between what the speaker calls “board elders” and “pastor elders.”
3. Which one of the quotations on the need for continual reformation and recovery of biblical doctrine most alerted you to the continual need for restoration of biblical doctrines? Explain your answer.
4. List as many causes as you can for why churches so easily drift from the truths and practices of Scripture into unscriptural practices and doctrinal error.
5. What is one key idea from this lesson that stands out most in your mind? Explain.

Lesson 2: Biblical Evidence for Eldership

1. Explain the concept of “first among equals” and how it appeared in practice among the twelve apostles. Be specific.
2. Explain the concept of “servant leadership.” Why is this biblical teaching essential to the practical workings of a plurality of shepherd elders?
3. Of the different evidences presented for the plurality of elders, which most convinced you that this is a thoroughly biblical teaching, and not some new, radical idea? Explain why.
4. The speaker states: “A properly constituted local church has qualified functioning pastor elders who are to shepherd the church of God.” Why would churches and their leaders reject the above statement as an unwarranted and exaggerated statement?
5. Is there one key idea from this lesson that stands out most in your mind? Explain.

Lesson 3: Eldership and the Church

1. The speaker said: “Any form of leadership structure needs to harmonize with and promote the nature of the organization.” What does he mean by this? Give an example from the secular world.
2. In your own words explain how biblical eldership harmonizes with and promotes the nature of the New Testament local church.

3. What specific facts (both negative and positive) convince you that you desperately need genuine peer accountability? List as many reasons as you can.
4. Why do you think people almost always naturally avoid genuine peer accountability?
5. In what very practical ways can Christ's headship over the local church be displayed in the leadership structure of the church? In the style of leadership by the elders?

Lesson 4: Eldership as Pastoral Oversight

1. Of the two central passages on eldership ([Acts 20:28](#); [1 Peter 5:1-2](#)), which one best helps you to understand the general biblical concept of eldership? Explain your answer.
2. In your own words how would you define a biblical eldership using the terminology of the New Testament writers?
3. List as many ways as you can in which there is diversity among the elders. Give an example of diversity among elders from your own observations of a team of elders.
4. List as many ways as you can in which there is equality among the elders.
5. What are the two extremes regarding eldership that the speaker warns against in interpreting [1 Timothy 5:17-18](#)? How do you avoid either of these extreme views?

Lesson 5: Qualifications for Elders

1. Why do you think that the New Testament so strongly emphasizes objective qualifications for a pastor elder? List a number of reasons.
2. Explain why a Holy Spirit-given desire for pastoral oversight of the church is essential to the work of an elder. List a number of reasons.
3. Why does an elder candidate's public reputation with those outside the local church matter?
4. Explain what it means to be a man who manages his own household and children well. Explain the simple logic of [1 Timothy 3:5](#).
5. From the qualifications we have briefly reviewed thus far, what do they tell you about the kind of person God wants to lead, teach, and protect his people?

Lesson 6: Qualifications for Elders (continued)

1. Why do you think so many people around the world are attracted to leaders like Dio trephes, rather than to humble, servant leaders? List your reasons.
2. Elders are in the people business. They shepherd people. Thus they must be able to relate well to people. According to Scripture, what are the *positive* character qualities an elder needs in order to relate well to people as a leader?

3. According to Scripture, what are the *negative* character qualities that an elder must avoid in order to relate well to people as a leader? Discuss your answers.
4. What do you think the speaker means by “character leadership”? And why do you think this concept is all-important to Christian leadership?
5. How would you describe a Christian elder known for his integrity? List as many qualities as you can that help you see his integrity.
6. To have “skillful hands” in dealing with people as a Christian leader, what aspects of your character need improvement, and how would you seek improvement?

Lesson 7: Abilities of Elders and Examination

1. Why do you think the speaker so strongly emphasized the importance of correctly understanding [Titus 1:9](#)?
2. Some people say leadership by the plurality of elders (eldership) does not work. According to the speaker, why is this sometimes true?
3. According to the speaker, what would need to be done to enhance plural leadership by elders? What would you add to the speaker’s answer?
4. Why do you think the example of one’s personal life enhances one’s leadership so significantly? List some specific reasons.
5. What are the reasons the speaker gives for the absolute necessity for an examination of an elder candidate’s qualifications ([1 Tim. 3:10](#))?
6. Explain as best you can what the phrase “leadership is influence” means. Give an example from your own life.

Lesson 8: Work of Elders – Teaching and Protecting

1. To qualify as a shepherd elder, one must *know* God’s Word and *be able to communicate* God’s Word to others. Explain why these are necessary qualifications.
2. Specifically, how do the Great Commission ([Matt. 28:19-20](#)) and [Acts 20:27](#) guide elders in their ministry of teaching God’s people?
3. Why do you think the New Testament stresses the watching, guarding, and protecting aspect of the elders’ work ([Acts 20:27-31](#))?
4. What are some of the results a congregation and its leaders will face if they will not confront sinful behavior within the congregation?

5. Why do you think dealing with sin and conflict within the church is so emotionally stressful to the elders themselves? List as many reasons as you can think of.

Lesson 9: Work of Elders – Leading and Healing

1. Why do you think good communication between the elders and the congregation is so essential to good leadership and congregational peace?
2. List ways that the elders, as the leaders of the local church, can communicate more effectively with the congregation.
3. Why did the speaker emphasize so strongly the importance of the elders' meetings? List both your positive and negative reasons.
4. Why do the elders need to equip the saints for the work of ministry/service?
5. What will happen to a local church if the elders do not actively and intentionally equip/prepare the believers for Christian service?
6. Why are passivity and minimalism so terribly destructive to the work of shepherding God's flock? List as many reasons as you can, not just one.
7. In specific terms, how does the Word of his grace build up church leaders to be stronger, to be more effective for God, and to persevere in the work ([Act 20:32](#))?