

Message Discussion Guide LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY

The Church at Brook Hills, Dr. David Platt

June 14, 2009

Hebrews 13:17

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use, and there may be instances when you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience, not complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool rather than a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Lead a discussion about the various bosses your group members currently have or have had in the past. Use these questions to guide the discussion:

- Was this boss a good leader? Why or why not?
- Would you change anything about his or her leadership style? If so, what?
- How did this person earn your respect? Or do you simply respect him or her because of the position?
- Is it difficult or easy to submit to his or her authority? Why?

Today you will discuss what Scripture says about leaders in the church and how submitting to them is ultimately submitting to Christ's authority.

Option 2

In each relationship listed below, invite group members to discuss (1) why submission is important, and (2) what can happen when submission is not present (encourage humor when possible):

- Child to parents
- Employee to boss
- Dog to owner
- Patient to doctor
- Student to teacher
- Citizen to law enforcement officer

Explain that in this message, you will be looking at submission within the church: why it is important, and what its ultimate goal is.

Review the Message . . .

Leaders in the Church...

- _____ Elders _____, who are servant leaders.
 - Elders lead under the authority of Christ.
 - Elders care for the body of Christ.
 - Elders teach the Word of Christ.
 - Elders model the character of Christ.

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- Deacons, who are leading servants.
 - Deacons meet needs according to the Word.
 - Deacons support the ministry of the Word.
 - Deacons unite the body around the Word.

Submission According to the Culture...

- Absolute obedience to authoritarian leadership.
- The result of abuse in power.
- Acknowledgement of inequality.

Discussion Questions

- Read through the list of qualifications for elders and deacons listed on the guide. Then, read Hebrews 13:17. How would you describe the authority given to these men in Scripture? (*Possible answers: serving, humble, Word-driven, needs based, examples of Christ*)
- Read Hebrews 13:7. How does this verse describe a unified body of Christ? In a positive way, what pressure does this verse place on those in authority? What responsibility does it give to the body of Christ?
- In what ways have you experienced how culture has twisted the idea of submission into a negative thing?

Application . . .

- Discuss ways group members have been encouraged or blessed by an elder or deacon fulfilling the responsibilities listed above.
- If an elder or deacon were fulfilling those qualifications in his relationship to you, how would you feel about your relationship with him?

Submission According to Christ...

- Leaders serve the body.
 - Their authority is conditional.
 - They must teach the Word accurately.
 - They must live the Word faithfully.
 - Their accountability is serious.
 - They serve carefully.
 - They serve responsibly.
 - They serve joyfully.
- The body submits to leaders.
 - The body obeys the Word that leaders teach.
 - The body is under the authority of Christ.
 - The body is ultimately accountable to Christ...
 - In matters of dispute.

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- In matters of doctrine.
- In matters of discipline.
 - The body imitates the faith that leaders have.
 - The body maximizes the joy that leaders experience.
- When leaders serve the body and the body submits to leaders,...
 - The church is edified.
 - Christ is glorified.

Discussion Questions

- Read Matthew 23:10-12, Mark 9:35, and Mark 10:45. How does Jesus describe the idea of servant authority or servant leadership in these verses?
- Point out that leaders' authority is conditional on two things: Teaching the Word accurately and living the Word faithfully. Read 1 Corinthians 11:1 and discuss why the standards for how leaders live are so high.
- Explain that the first ten chapters of Hebrews deal with how Christ's sacrifice provides us with direct access to the Father—with no need of a priest or other earthly leader to go between for us. Yet Scripture still emphasized the importance of believers following earthly leaders. Why, if we have direct access to God, do we still need leaders in the church?
- Point out the phrase in Hebrews 13:17 "keep watch over you." When someone keeps watch over you, what does that mean? How does that imply that God uses church leaders for your protection?

Application . . .

- If a leader is submitted to Christ, and we submit to that leader, who are you ultimately submitting to as you submit to him? (*Christ*) How does this truth affect the way you think of submitting to church leaders?
- Emphasize that the word *joy* is used in how the leaders serve and how the body submits to leadership. Why do both the leader and the people experience joy when leaders properly lead?
- Read Hebrews 13:18. List specific ways your group can pray for the church leaders, and then spend a few minutes praying for them.