

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, September 12, 2010

Passage: 1 Pet. 5:1-4 & Heb. 13: 7, 17

Memory Passage: Hebrews 13:17

TODAY: From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Pet. 5:1-4.** We will be installing Mike Paul as an elder on Sunday, so this week we will look at passages of Scripture that will focus us on the responsibilities of both our elders and our congregation. To whom is Peter speaking in v. 1? How does he relate himself to these hearers?

(b) Look back at the context from which these verses flow (4:12-19). What is the primary subject of these verses? How do you think 5:1-4 connect with these verses? Is there a connection between suffering believers and the work of an elder? If so, what is it?

(c) What does Peter mean when he writes that he is “a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed?” How is this statement related to Peter being “a witness of the sufferings of Christ?”

(d) *Family:* Prior to your time of worship, have your bible sitting in front of where you usually sit or stand, but don’t enter the room with everyone else. Disguise yourself (use a mask, a paper sack, a blanket, etc) and come quickly into the room, take your bible, and then leave (make sure you are observed). Quickly dispose of the mask and the bible and then return to the room and ask: “What happened to my bible?” As your family answers (“you took it!” “a monster took it” “a stranger took it” etc.), persist in asking them how they know for sure what happened. Make them recount specific details (what did the person look like, what time was it, where was my bible sitting, did the person say anything, etc). Then explain that they have just been a witness to a crime and their details were very important. Use this idea of a witness to describe how Peter was a witness to Christ’s sufferings, both an eyewitness and one who speaks of (witnesses) to them. You can read 1 Peter 5:1 or a specific passage that shows what Peter witnessed (Christ in Gethsemane, at His trials, on His cross) or what his witness was (Luke 24:45-48; Acts 1:8).

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Act 14:23 & Titus 1:5.** What important fact do we learn about elders in these verses? What effect should this fact have on a local church today?

(b) **Read 1 Peter 5:1-3.** What are the two commands given by Peter to elders? Peter describes two ways an elder can accomplish these tasks, one good and one bad, by using three contrasting pairs of descriptors (“not . . . but . . .”) in these verses. Write a sentence that describes what you learn from each of the three “not” statements and another sentence describing what you learn from the three “but” statements.

(c) How would you be able to tell if an elder was shepherding “under compulsion” rather than “willingly?” How would you be able to tell if an elder was shepherding “for shameful gain” rather than “eagerly?” What about one who shepherds in a “domineering” way rather than leading as “examples to the flock.”

(d) How might a church be in danger if they appoint elders who shepherd and oversee in ways that violate these conditions?

(e) *Family:* **Read 1 Peter 5:1-4.** After reading, ask, “What does Peter command elders to do?” (shepherd; exercise oversight). As your family answers, have someone write these actions as a heading on your white board. Then have everyone read vs. 2-3 and write on their own piece of paper two lists: one list of how an elder is supposed to act and the other list of how an elder is not supposed to act (team older kids with younger if needed). Then lead in a discussion of each item as you (or one of your family members) write it in the proper category (“good elder” or “bad elder”) on the white board.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Tim. 3:1-7 & Titus 1:5-9.** Write down every character issue with which we must be concerned as we appoint elders (some overlap and are found in both lists). Do you understand each of these characteristics? If not, use a dictionary to help you form a definition of each one. Remember, it is important that you fully understand these because you are going to affirm a man for this position on Sunday morning, a solemn responsibility!

(b) How do you reconcile the requirements found in these verses (which seem like they demand perfection) with the mortal men who God calls out to be elders? In other words, no one is perfect in these areas, so how can you tell if a man is qualified?

(c) **Read Titus 1:9 & Acts 20:28-32.** What does Paul exhort the Ephesian elders to do as they serve? Why is there such urgency in Paul’s writing? What does Titus 1:9 tell us about the elder and his ability with the word of God?

(d) *Family*: WARNING: THIS WILL TAKE MORE PREPARATION THAN USUAL! Phil Keller was a shepherd who looked at Psalm 23 through the eyes of what he knew about sheep. You can find excerpts of his book at this website: <http://joyfulministry.com/keller.htm> Go to this site, read, study and take notes that will help you explain Psalm 23 to your family. This will help you to paint a more vivid picture for your family of the imagery used in Psalm 23.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Hebrews 13:7 & 17.** Now we will move to a brief look at the responsibilities we have as a congregation with regard to elders. In 13:7, what are three things we are commanded to do with regard to our leaders?
- (b) What is the correlation between these commands and what we learned about the qualifications for and duties of an elder?
- (c) Write down some ways that you will be faithful to “remember your leaders.”
- (d) When our author tells us to “consider the outcome of their ways” (i.e. their walks), what does that mean? How do we do this? Why is this command important in light of the last command to “imitate their faith?”
- (e) *Family*: **Read Heb. 13:7.** This passage is primarily speaking of our responsibility to elders in a local church, but there are several people in our lives who speak the word of God to your family (including you and your wife!). Have everyone list these people by name, and discuss ways that your children can “remember” these people. Be creative, and help them to implement these ways in the next several weeks.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Hebrews 13:17.** What does it mean to “obey your leaders (elders)?” What does it mean to “submit” to leaders (elders)? Are these two actions different? The same? If different, how are they different?
- (b) What reason does this verse give for our submitting & obeying? According to this verse, how is the elder affected if the flock does not obey &/or submit?
- (c) In what ways might you (or have/do you) have difficulty “obeying” and “submitting” to the elders of BCC? Are there limits to this obeying and submitting? Is so, what are they? How would you know/choose to not obey or submit to the elders?
- (d) Why is it “no advantage to you” if elders lack joy or groan while they shepherd, lead and oversee you? What role do you play in causing elders to be joyful & non-groaning?
- (e) *Family*: Explain to your family what will happen on Sunday as we appoint Mike Paul to be an elder for the flock here at Bible Church of Cabot. Use what you have learned/taught this week to explain the importance of this appointment in the life of our church. Then spend some time praying for Mike as he undertakes this wonderful responsibility. It would be great to have each person in your family pray for Mike.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) Spend your time today praying for Mike Paul as he begins this season of serving Christ as an under-shepherd of the Bible Church of Cabot. Also spend time in prayer for your role and responsibility to the leadership of BCC.

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A Call to a Congregation and Her Elders