

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of March 8th - 14th

Getting Started

1. We've arrived at the halfway point of our study on elders in the context of the local church's mission. What's got your attention so far? How has the Lord been using this portion of his Word in your life these last couple of weeks?

Digging Deeper

2. One of the most memorable New Testament passages related to the role of elders is Acts 20:17-38. In this powerful account in the history of the early church, the Apostle Paul bids farewell to the Ephesian elders (a group of men he ministered alongside for three years). Read through this portion of Scripture together as a group. Using Paul's address to them as a template, see if you can piece together a 'job description' for elders in the local church.

Open Your Bible to Titus 1:8...

3. The first virtue in v.8 that elders ("overseers") are expected to exhibit is that they be "hospitable" (see also Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; 3 John 5). Why is this such a crucial character quality for an elder? What's the harm to a local church if they are led by elders who don't display this Christian virtue?

4. Secondly, Paul tells Titus that an elder must be "a lover of good" (v.8). It's a bit of a difficult virtue to pin down since it's the only example of this particular Greek word in the entire New Testament. One way to get at this concept is to use Philippians 4:8 for definition. Imagine a church led by men whose minds are steeped in thought patterns like the ones Paul lists in Philippians 4:8. What benefits are likely to accrue to such a local fellowship with such leaders?

5. Next, Paul requires that elders be "self-controlled". Notice that this quality is one which all those in the Cretan church are explicitly called to manifest (older men - 2:2; older and younger women - 2:5; and younger men - 2:6). Considering the reputation of the surrounding Cretan culture, can you appreciate why this virtue is mission-critical in their context (1:12-13a)? How about in our cultural context?

6. Verse 8 goes on to call elders to be "upright". The word here can also be translated "righteous". Though Paul is quick to remind Titus and the church in Crete that we are saved by God's mercy and not by our "righteousness" (3:5), it's also clear that Christians (particularly Christian leaders) must be upright / righteous in our conduct. To get a sense of what this means, consider how Paul uses the same word ("righteous") in Romans 6:13-19.

7. Local church elders are also called to be "holy". 19th century Scottish pastor Robert Murray McCheyene was well-known for saying that: "The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness." 1 Do you think McCheyene is on to something here? If so, what is the corresponding loss for congregations who have unholy elders? Though Peter uses a slightly different Greek word than Paul, note that all Christians without distinction are called to be "holy" as God himself is holy (1 Peter 1:13-

16). Are you? According to Titus 2:11-12, what's the role of God's grace in becoming this sort of person?

8. The final Christian virtue that elders ought to model in Titus 1:8 is that they ought to be "disciplined" men. How many different practical areas of life can you think of where this quality is critical for a church leader? At the same time, Acts 24:25; Galatians 5:23 and 2 Peter 1:6 summon all Christ-followers to live "disciplined" lives. Where do you stand in need of the Lord's pardon and power the most as it relates to personal discipline? As you turn to prayer, make sure to present these needs and requests to the Lord.

Sermon Notes for 3/8/20
Titus 1:8
"Elders on Mission, Part 3":
An Elder's Character

➤ **Our mission and vision demand biblical church leadership - and that means biblical eldership (vv.5a, 7a)**

**While an elder may not be without his critics, he absolutely must be without reproach - especially in his character (v.7a)...*

1. It's not that certain vices should be put to death, it's that by God's grace they must have already have

2. It's not that certain _____ should be cultivated on the _____, it's that by God's _____ they're a prerequisite for being _____ in the first place (v.8; 2:11-12)

"...hospitable..." (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; 3 John 5)

"...a lover of good..." (Philippians 4:8)

"...self-controlled..." (Titus 2:2, 5-6)

"...upright..." (Romans 6:13, 16, 18-19)

"...holy..." (Acts 2:27; 13:35; 1 Peter 1:13-16)

"...and disciplined." (Acts 24:25; Galatians 5:23; 2 Peter 1:6)

**And who is sufficient for these things? (Acts 20:32)*

Next Week: Titus 1:9 - "Elders on Mission, Part 4":
An Elder's Doctrine