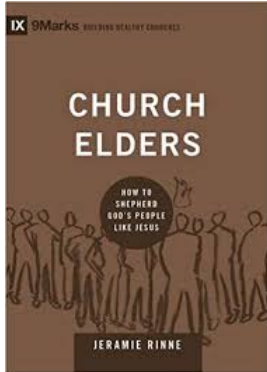
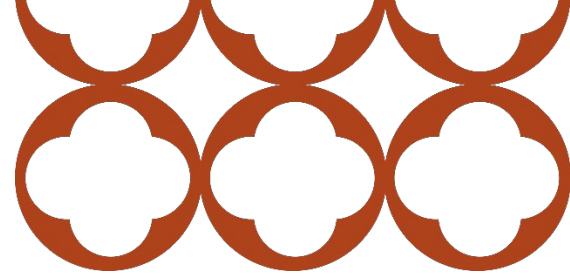


CHURCH ELDERS

First Baptist Church – Book Discussion Questions



Read: Intro – Chapter 2 of Church Elders

Questions

These questions are designed to help you think about the chapters you have read and also applying the content. You do not NEED to use these questions if you feel like the conversation is helpful and staying on topic. Feel free to come up with some of your own questions if you think of some you want to add.

INTRODUCTION

1. The author, Jeremy Rinne, says he loves lay elders. What are some of the reasons he gives for having such admiration for lay elders?
2. There is a lineage of God providing shepherds for his people. How does an understanding of God's plan to give his people shepherds change the way a church should view its own leadership?
3. Rinne says that lay elders are often “Godly, well-intentioned, and... confused.” In what way does he argue they are confused?
4. Rinne tells us his intention in the book, and what he hopes/prays will be the effect. What does he intend the book to provide and what are some of the outcomes he hope for?

CHAPTER ONE

1. On pages 17-18, Rinne mentions some of the reasons people assume they “should” be elders. What are some of those reasons and how can that sort of thinking become a hindrance to a church community?
2. Throughout Chapter One, Rinne lists six qualifications to be an elder. What are they?

3. On pg. 20, Rinne writes, “Better a godly elder with mediocre leadership gifts than a charismatic leader with glaring moral flaws.” Why is godly character so important for elders?
4. As you read through this chapter on qualifications, did any of the qualifications surprise you? If so which one, and why?
5. In your understanding, what does it look like for an elder to be “able to teach?”

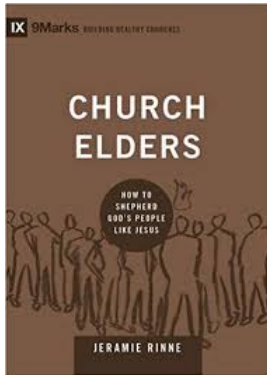
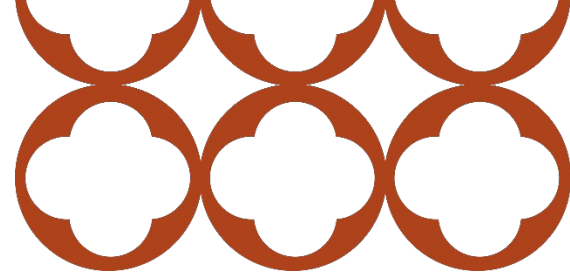
CHAPTER TWO

1. Rinne makes a distinction between the Biblical model of church and a business model of church. One key difference is the role of the elder in each. How would you describe the distinction Rinne is trying to make in the role of the elders in a Biblical vs. Business model of church?
2. Elders should “smell like the sheep.” What does this mean?
3. Rinne says that one of the goals of elders is to grow “church members in Christian maturity (p. 40).” How should this goal shape the way elders engage with the congregation?
4. The principle, the organization should serve the organism is one that Rinne mentions. How do we get this right as a church? Where do we get it wrong?

Before you go: What is one action step you believe the Lord is calling you to make as a result of your discussion?

CHURCH ELDERS

First Baptist Church – Book Discussion Questions



Read: Chapters 3-4 of Church Elders

Questions

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CHAPTER THREE

1. In the opening paragraphs of chapter three, Rinne describes a challenge he gave to his elders, in which he challenged at least two of them to preach on a Sunday.¹ What are the challenges to having lay elders preach? What might be the benefits to a church if lay elders preached on occasion?
2. The qualification “able to teach” is unique to elders, when considered against the qualifications of deacons. Why is this an important qualification and task of the elders? Why does it matter for churches to have leaders who can teach the Scriptures?
3. If the teaching elders are called to do “isn’t confined to the Sunday morning sermon,”² what other settings might an elder execute his calling to teach God’s Word?
4. What are some of the suggestions Rinne gives to help guard against false doctrine? Which ones did you find to be most helpful?

¹ Some churches require every lay elder to preach occasionally. We do not plan to do this. Although, given Rinne’s challenge to his elders, it is still worth considering what the challenges and benefits would be to have a lay elder preach at some point.

² Pg. 48

5. How can we as a church encourage our lay elders to feel ownership of the teaching ministry, rather than feeling that the “paid professionals” should be the ones doing it?

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Why does Rinne suggest the language “straying from the flock” is more helpful than “falling through the cracks”? How could a change in language influence a change in action?
2. Did this chapter make you think of anyone who has “strayed from the flock”? Is there a way that you could reach out to them in a meaningful way?
3. We have been talking as a church about increasing our “meaningful membership.” How does good eldership promote good membership?
4. On pages 62-67, Rinne describes five species of straying sheep. Name the five types and summarize them.

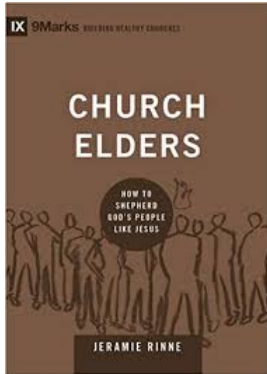
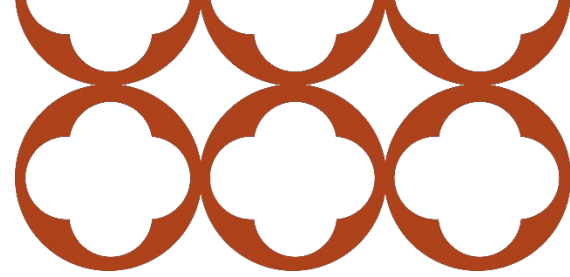
Which of the five do you believe is the most common in our church?

5. Consider the following from page 68: “Elders profoundly embody the gospel when they search out wandering members. Keeping watch and tracking down strays is a Jesus-shaped activity.” Unpack this statement. How does elders searching out wandering sheep embody the gospel?

Before you go: What is one action step you believe the Lord is calling you to make as a result of your discussion?

CHURCH ELDERS

First Baptist Church – Book Discussion Questions



Read: Chapters 5-6 of Church Elders

Questions

These questions are designed to help you think about the chapters you have read and also applying the content. You do not NEED to use these questions if you feel like the conversation is helpful and staying on topic. Feel free to come up with some of your own questions if you think of some you want to add.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. In this chapter, Rinne focuses on the leadership role of elders in the church. What is at risk in a church when elders do not lead?
2. What evidence is there from Scripture that God has given authority to elders to lead the local church?
3. As was discussed in question one, there is a risk if elders are timid, but you might fear elder timidity less than elder tyranny. What is at risk if elders are tyrannical in their authority?
4. Peter (1 Peter 5) and Jesus (Mt 20) both warn against the type of leadership which lords it over others. What is the vision of leadership the Scriptures give? And how is Jesus both our example and means of this sort of leadership?
5. On pages 78-82, Rinne suggests six ways to structure ourselves for servant-leadership. What are they, and which did you find most helpful?

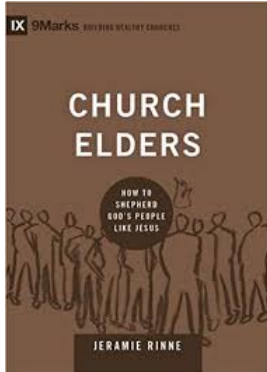
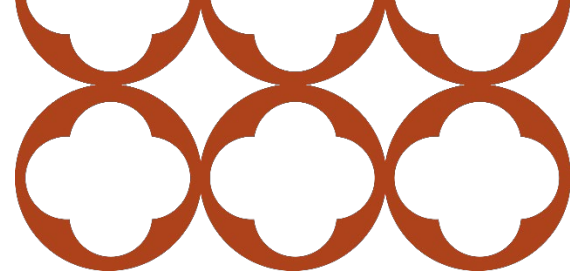
CHAPTER SIX

1. Rinne acknowledges the challenging task of eldering that the Bible presents, and in chapter six, he offers plurality of elders as one of the ways that it is possible for elders to fulfill their high calling to shepherd. In what ways do you think that plurality of elders is a benefit to both the elders and the church?
2. On page 87, Rinne lists several passages that mention elders in plural at each single church. Have you seen this in the Scriptures before? What impact does this simple observation have on your understanding of church leadership?
3. One of the benefits of plurality of eldership is that the elders get to “share the load.” How can elders practically partner with one another to share the responsibility to shepherd the flock?
4. Diversity of gifts and perspective is one of the benefits of having a plurality of elders. What are some ways we can recognize the various gifts of our elders and empower them to use those gifts?
5. Another benefit to a plurality of elders is the support that elders can offer to one another. What are some practical ways elders can sharpen and shepherd one another?

Before you go: What is one action step you believe the Lord is calling you to make as a result of your discussion?

CHURCH ELDERS

First Baptist Church – Book Discussion Questions



Read: Chapters 7-8 of Church Elders

Questions

These questions are designed to help you think about the chapters you have read and also applying the content. You do not NEED to use these questions if you feel like the conversation is helpful and staying on topic. Feel free to come up with some of your own questions if you think of some you want to add.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. What impact does it have when you are confident your pastors/elders love you?
2. How is imitating (modeling and copying) a part of discipleship? Who are some people that have been an example for you throughout your own journey of faith?
3. What does it mean that elders should be men worth imitating?
4. What might the consequences be if an elder gets lazy at “watching his life?” For him personally and for the church?
5. Elders must always be making gospel progress through regular repentance and growth in Christ. What does that look like as an elder?
6. How do both an elder’s strength of character and vulnerability in brokenness serve as an example for the church?

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. How does Jesus' ministry inform the way elders should lead the church?
2. On pages 110-111, Rinne lists many of the times Jesus prayed. What impact does Jesus' own prayer life have on your prayer life?
3. Why (and how) are humility and prayer connected?
4. Rinne lists four ways that elders pray (pg. 113-119). What are they? Why are each of them important?
5. What impact would it have on the church to know that their elders prayed for them?

Before you go: What is one action step you believe the Lord is calling you to make as a result of your discussion?