

GOALS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

Help the group members to understand:

1. that leadership among Christians is different than leadership in the world
2. that the members of a congregation are responsible to see that the leaders in the congregation fulfil the biblical requirements for leaders

I. WORSHIP (14 min.)

1. Prayer

Pray that God will guide us through his Spirit; that we will be aware of his presence and that we will listen to what he says.

2. Meditation

Worship is to submit to God's leadership.

Theme: Following God's guidance

Read the Bible verses mentioned below and the explanation. Or explain the verses in your own words.

- God's promises with regard to guidance

Ephesians 1:9-12

⁹And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

¹¹In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹²in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

- God in Christ works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

Psalm 32:8-9

⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

- God leads us in the way he wants us to go

Isaiah 30:21

²¹ Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

God really guides you when you have to make decisions or choices. Listen to God's guidance, believe it and follow it.

- *God's guidance in your life*

Let a few members share an example of God's guidance in their life (in the past or with respect to the future).

The group leader begins.

3. Worship

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to thank God (in one or two sentences) for his guidance in their life and dedicate themselves to his guidance.

II. INTRODUCTION THEME (1 min.)

The theme for this meeting is: Leaders

Read or explain in your own words.

Biblical leadership is servant leadership, shared leadership and limited leadership.

1. Biblical leadership is servant leadership

Jesus says that worldly leadership is characterised by authoritarian behaviour, by lording it over people entrusted to them. In general, leaders in the world demand obedience. But Jesus Christ teaches that leadership in God's kingdom is characterised by serving people.

2. Biblical leadership is shared leadership

Leadership was already shared in the Old Testament (Exodus 18:14-23). The leadership instituted in the New Testament is shared leadership. Every congregation has a number of elders (plural) to lead (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-3). Every elder has pastoral, supervising, managerial, teaching and serving responsibilities. No one may lord it over the others.

3. Biblical leadership is limited leadership

God has clear requirements for who may be appointed as leaders in the congregation.

God also gives a clear job description with limits to Christian leaders.

The leaders in the congregation have authority over the members only in the areas of their biblical job description and not in all the other areas of the members' lives. All

authority comes from God and God delegates authority together with responsibility and accountability (Romans 13:1-2) to different people:

- man over creation (Genesis 1:28)
- husband over wife (Ephesians 5:22-24)
- parents over children (Ephesians 6:1-4)
- employers over employees (Ephesians 6:5-9)
- government over citizens (Romans 13:3-7)
- and elders over the members of the congregation

All authority on earth is limited (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29; cf. 3 John 9-10). The elders in the congregation have authority only in the areas of their four biblical tasks.

The members of the congregation ought to obey the elders in these four areas (1 Thessalonians 5:11-12; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

The elders have limited authority, because the authority to save people, to transform people, to use people and to bless people belongs only to the Head of the Body, Jesus Christ! Likewise, the authority to guide people through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, to grant spiritual gifts, to assign specific tasks in the Body of Christ and the local congregation and to call people to a specific task belongs only to Jesus Christ and not to the elders of the congregation (1 Corinthians 3:5; 12:11; Acts 13:2-4; 26:16-18).

4. Biblical leadership is to exercise influence

1 Peter 5:5 says: “Young men, in the same way, be submissive to those who are older (or: who are elders). All of you (young as well as old) clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’.”

The word ‘in the same way’ (Greek: *homoiós*) teaches the following about the relationship between leaders and followers in the Christian congregation.

The first priority of the older members of the congregation is to have good influence on the younger members. And the second priority of the older members of the congregation is to submit to the good influence of the younger members. The first priority of the younger members of the congregation is to submit to the good influence of the older members. And the second priority of the younger members of the congregation is to have good influence on the older members.

Likewise, the first priority of the elders (leaders) of the congregation is to have good influence on the members of the congregation. And the second priority of the elders (leaders) of the congregation is to submit to the good influence of the members of the congregation. The first priority of the members of the congregation is to submit

to the good influence of the elders (leaders) of the congregation. And the second priority of the members of the congregation is to have good influence on the elders (leaders) of the congregation.

Young men in the office of elder in the congregation have been given the same responsibility, authority and accountability as the older men in the office of elder. Thus, these younger elders have the responsibility and authority to teach (instruct) the truth in the Bible to older elders, and, if necessary, to rebuke and correct them (1 Timothy 1:3-5; 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 2:22-26; 3:16 – 4:4).

Nevertheless, all the elders watch over one another (Acts 20:28a) and must fulfil their tasks with respect to everyone (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:1-2; Titus 1:7).

III. SHARING OF QUIET TIMES (30 min.)

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to share (or read) what he has learned from one of the assigned quiet times.

Theme: Leaders (elders)

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| Day 1 | John 10:11-16
Christ is the Shepherd of his flock (the Church) |
| Day 2 | Ephesians 1:17-23
Christ is the Head of his Body (the Church) |
| Day 3 | Exodus 18:17-23
The Old Testament prerequisites for a leader |
| Day 4 ^{BS} | 1 Timothy 3:1-7
The New Testament prerequisites for a leader (cf. also verse 14-15) |
| Day 5 | Titus 1:5-9
The New Testament prerequisites for a leader |
| Day 6 | 1 Peter 5:1-7
The tasks and attitudes of a leader |
| Day 7 | Matthew 20:20-28
A leader is not a ruler with a position, but a servant (cf. Also Matthew 23:8-14) |
| Day 8 | Titus 2:1-8
A leader teaches what is in accord with sound doctrine |
| Day 9 | Acts 20:17-31
The example of Paul as a servant leader |
| Day 10 | 3 John 1:5-11
An example of good and bad leaders in the congregation |

IV. ADDITIONAL SHARING (15 min.)

Part IV is optional.
If after sharing quiet times there is still time left over, the following may serve as subjects for conversation.

1. Discussing the study

Discuss the study with reference to the questions mentioned below:

Theme: Leaders (elders)

- How does Jesus Christ lead the congregation?
- What makes the apostles of Jesus Christ unique?
- What is the meaning of the words: 'elders', 'shepherds' and 'overseers'? What is the relationship of these words to one another?
- What are the biblical requirements for the appointment of elders?
- What are the biblical tasks (responsibilities) of elders?
- What is the authority of elders?
- To whom are the elders accountable?

2. Commitment

Let the group members examine themselves and consider the following question and record their answer:

- "If you are an elder (or leader of a Christian organisation) what kind of a leader would you like to be?
Commit yourself to biblical (servant) leadership!"

3. Personal sharing

Discuss personal growth and commitment. Who would like to share a difficulty or blessing in his/her personal life? What are your thoughts or feelings?

V. MEMORISATION (5 min.)

1. Review of previous Bible verses

Let pairs of group members review each other's previously memorised Bible verses (the last memorised Bible verse or the last 5 memorised Bible verses).

2. Memorisation of the new Bible verse

Explain the meaning of the new Bible verse.

LEADERS 1 Peter 5:2

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care,
serving as overseers
– not because you must, but because you are willing,
as God wants you to be;
not greedy for money, but eager to serve.

1 Peter 5:2 (NIV)

3. Review of the Bible books

All 39 books of the Old Testament

The 5 books of the Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

The 12 historical books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

The 5 poetical books: Job, Psalms, proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

The 5 major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

The 12 minor prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

All 27 books of the New Testament

The 4 Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

The 1 historical book: Acts

The 13 Letters of Paul: Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

The 8 General Letters: Hebrews, James, 1&2 Peter, 1&2&3 John, Jude,

The 1 Apocalypse: Revelation

VI. BIBLE STUDY (45 min.)

Theme: The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep

1. Bible Study

Make use of the 5 step Bible Study method and study:

1 Timothy 3:1-7,14-15

¹Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer (Greek: bishop), he desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. ¹⁴Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

2. Emphasis

Acts 20:17,28, Titus 1:5-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-2 prove that the words 'elder' (Greek: presbuteros), 'shepherd' (Greek: poimén) and 'overseer' (Greek: episkopos) are used interchangeably.

The requirements for leaders in the Christian congregation (elders) are also the requirements for leaders of Christian organisations (directors) and the requirements of leaders in Christian families (fathers)!

3. Explanation for the group leader

See the study.

VII. PRAYER (8 min.)

Pray with one another in response to what God said to you during this gathering. Let every group member take a turn to pray one or two sentences about what God taught him during this meeting.

Pray with one another for one another (Romans 15:30) and for other people (Colossians 4:12).

VIII. THE NEXT MEETING (2 min.)

Hand out the preparation for the next gathering.