

Exiles: Week 11

Discussion Guide



Read Together

We're walking through the letter of 1 Peter as part of a series called *Exiles: Why We Must Be Different to Make a Difference*. We're reading from 1 Peter 5:1-5 where Peter talks about what makes leadership in the church different from other forms of leadership.

¹To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

⁵In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”

Discuss Together

As a discussion leader, your goal is to foster a conversation that leads people a little bit closer to everyday life like Jesus—using this week's scripture text as a basis. Always feel free to add in additional questions of your own, and don't feel like you need to get through every single question. If you have a big group, it can be helpful to let people discuss a question in groups of 2-3 so that more people get a chance to talk.

- **What is something that struck you from an initial reading of this text?**
- Many of us come from different church backgrounds with different forms of church leadership. If you grew up in church, **what do you know about the leadership of your church growing up?**
- Peter uses the word “elder” (5:1) to describe the leaders of the church. **What comes to mind when you hear the word *elder*?**

- The main analogy Peter uses to describe elders is “shepherd” (5:2). Even though most of us didn’t grow up in rural societies where shepherds were part of our day-to-day lives, **what are some parallels between the role of an elder and the role of a shepherd?**
- In 1 Peter 5:2-3, Peter lists three contrasting statements about how the elders ought to lead. **What are those three contrasts? And, what are some ways these three things might make elders look different from other kinds of leaders?**
- On Sunday, Chuck mentioned that *elder* is actually another word for *pastor*. **What difference does it make if there’s a team of pastors/elders rather than just one pastor/elder?**
- Peter tells those who are younger to submit to the elders (5:5). This doesn’t just mean those who are younger in age but also younger in the faith. **What does it look like to submit to the leadership of the elders?**
- In the end, Peter reminds his elders that Jesus is the “Chief Shepherd” (5:4). **How might that affect the way elders lead?**
- On Sunday, we heard a story from a church member who had the elders pray over him to restore his sight. **Does anyone here have a story of how they’ve been blessed and supported by one of the elders of our church?**
- **Is there anything else from this passage that you’d like to discuss more?**

Pray Together

Being an elder is a difficult burden to carry. It means late nights, time away from families, helping people work through intense conflicts, helping set direction for our church, and so much more. We encourage you to use the rest of your time together praying for the eight elders at our church and their families: Ezra Dulis, Chuck Gohn, Jim Haller, Josh Hoey, Graham Johnstone, Brad Miller, Dave Nusser, Andrew Sassaman.