



CONTEXT AND CLARIFICATION

Ice Breaker: We have gone through 5 weeks of the basics. If they find it difficult to answer read through each week's title and open it up to the group.

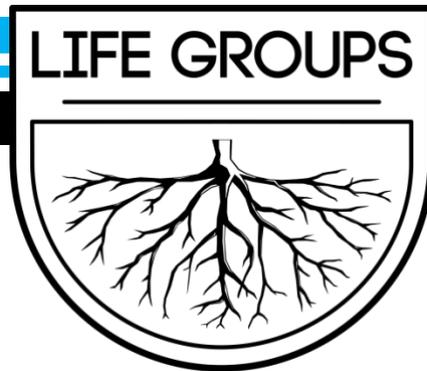
Week 1: *The Bible*

Week 2: *The Holiness of God*

Week 3: *The Gospel*

Week 4: *Conversion*

Week 5: *The Church*



Question #3: The number of pastors or church leaders who have quit or fall morally seems to be increasing. They still are responsible for their own actions, yet churches are still confused as to why so many pastors “burn out.” Elders need to hold the lead pastor accountable. What happens when a pastor is beginning to preach things contrary to God's Word? Who will hold him accountable theologically and doctrinally? Don't all people have blind spots, including pastors? What happens if there is only one shepherd that the church depends on?

Question #4: This is more than a phrase “many hands make light work.” A church that practices the plurality of elders is biblical. Your Life Group may come up with different numbers, but be sure to have them explain *why*.

Question #5: For this question, have your Life Group write out their answers on a large piece of butcher paper. Make an exhaustive list together. These could be a list of *physical* expectations like hospital visits, *spiritual* expectations like praying for the church, and *emotional* expectations like counseling those who are struggling.

Question #6: GROUPALOUGE**

****Divide your group into groups of three and have them answer the FIRST question.**

Once everyone has shared in their small groups, have every group share their experiences with the Good Shepherd. For the SECOND part of the question have them form into groups of three again to share their experiences with pastors/elders. (If your Life Group is made up of all the same gender, feel free to divide them into pairs and then again into different pairs)

Questions #7-#9: As your group is answering these questions help them to understand their need to be led, fed, corrected, admonished, disciplined, protected and known, even if they don't express that need.



LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

Ice Breaker: Which topic in the Healthy Church Series has been the most memorable so far and why?

- 1) What was one of your biggest takeaways from the sermon?
- 2) Read 1 Peter 5:1-5. What are some examples of how a pastor/elder can shepherd?
- 3) What are some potential dangers in having only one pastor /elder in a congregation?
- 4) What are the benefits of having a plurality of elders in a congregation? How many elders do you think South Peoria would need to be healthy? Why?
- 5) What do church members expect their pastors to do? (List as many things as you can)
- 6) Read John 10:1-29. How have you experienced Jesus as the Good Shepherd? How have you been shepherded by pastors/elders before?
- 7) If Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the followers of Jesus are sheep. When in your life have you needed to be led and fed by a shepherd?
- 8) When in your life have you needed to be corrected, admonished (reprimanded) and disciplined by a shepherd?
- 9) When in your life have you needed to be protected and known by a shepherd?



FURTHER STUDY

Mark 6:34 (NIV)

³⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

Psalm 100:3 (NIV)

³Know that the LORD is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

John 10:7 (NIV)

⁷Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

Isaiah 40:11 (NIV)

¹¹He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young.

Psalm 95:6-7 (NIV)

⁶Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; ⁷for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care. Today, if only you would hear His voice,

Jeremiah 18:6 (NIV)

⁶He said, “Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel.

Matthew 9:36 (NIV)

³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.



“Elders do not replace the need for a pastor who labors in the Word and gives overall leadership to the church. Instead, they come alongside him as fellow servants, filling the gaps in the pastor’s weaknesses, holding up his arms as he preaches, figuratively speaking, and sharing the burden for meeting pastoral needs in the church.”

–Phil Newton & Matt Schmucker

“The shepherd is among the sheep. He’s not off somewhere else. He is walking in the midst of the animals, touching them and speaking to them. He knows them because he lives with them. As a result, he even smells like sheep.” –Jeramie Rinne

“The shepherding metaphor is not only comprehensive with respect to the nature of the care received but also with respect to the extent. This is one important distinction between the metaphor of father and that of shepherd. Children grow up and become less dependent on their earthly fathers, though the relationship continues. Sheep on the other hand, are *always* completely dependent on their shepherd. They never outgrow their need for the shepherd to care for them, feed them, lead them, and protect them. The Shepherd cares for the newborn lambs and is still there when the sheep grow old and weak. Therefore, the imagery of the shepherd-sheep captures the comprehensive sovereignty of the shepherd over the sheep and the need of the sheep to yield completely to his care.” –Timothy Z. Witmer

“Biblically Speaking, elders are pastors, who are overseers. The person in a church we typically call ‘pastor’ is a paid elder, and the person in a church we typically call an ‘elder’ or ‘overseer’ is an unpaid, lay pastor. Elder or shepherd, overseer or pastor, paid or volunteer. It’s all the same job.” –Jeramie Rinne

