



ENGAGE

Break the Ice:

(A key part of healthy group life is to make sure your group gets to know each other and builds good relationships. The purpose of these first questions is to help your group open up. Please don't feel like you have to ask each question. Once you feel like the group is ready, move onto the "Inspire" section.)

- **What did God teach you during the message this weekend? Did anything in particular stand out?**

Prayer:

Take some time to pray for God to speak to your group through this week's study.

INSPIRE

Questions:

(Each question has a lot to unpack. Since the group may need time to process each question, don't let silence scare you. Try to avoid filling the space with unnecessary explanation or moving on from the question too quickly.)

- **What is your understanding of the purpose and role of the elders within the church?**

Aaron said, "God has organized his bride (the church) so that she would flourish for the gospel, to be a safe place, and to be a place where spiritual maturity is the norm. In order for these three things to happen, she has to be led well. She has to be prayed for adequately. She has to be defended from false teaching. She has to be cared for as a shepherd would his flock. These men, according to God's Word, are called elders."

1. Aaron talked about how the qualifications for elders should be what every member is striving to attain in their own lives.
 - **What are you currently striving to attain in your own life right now? No matter what those things are, share them with the group.**

Read 1 Timothy 3:1. Aaron said, "An elder must have an aspiration or desire to serve the church in this way. An elder is someone who is already a member. They have covenanted to love and serve this church body and it's already been proven through time and experience. ... Elders are shepherds who oversee the direction and health of the church by ministry of the Word of God and prayer. The call of an elder is to lay down his life, his pride, and his personal interests for the good of the gospel and the health of the church."

- **Do you desire to serve the church body? Why or why not? If you already serve, share examples of how you are serving or have served within the church.**
- **Are you currently a member of TPCC? If yes, discuss why you chose to be a member and talk openly about the membership process. If you're not a member, share why you have chosen to not pursue membership at this time.**

2. **Read 1 Timothy 3:2.** Aaron said, "That doesn't mean sinless or perfect, but blameless in his outward, observable conduct."
 - **Are you committed to live your life above reproach (faithful to God and His Word)? Or is there a habitual recognized sin in your life?**

Aaron said, "The husband of one wife means 'a one-woman man', who is devoted to his wife and is sexually pure. His life isn't built around fantasies of other women. He's not known as a flirt."

- **(This question should only be asked in the presence of the same gender. If you have a mixed group, forego this question or split your group into genders to discuss this question.) How are you doing when it comes to sexual purity? Are you remaining sexually (and emotionally) pure? If yes, what steps have you put in place to create boundaries and accountability for yourself? If no, what action steps do you need to take?**

Aaron said, "This also means that elders should be men. Our position as a church would be best described as the complementarian position, meaning that men and women have both been created in the image of God and therefore are equal in worth, value, and ability, but are distinct in role and responsibility. Not lesser than, but distinct. The complementarian position best describes the design of the Trinity (God the Father, Jesus the Son, and Holy Spirit) – all equal in worth, value, and ability, but distinct in role. God has reserved the role of elder alone to men, but that doesn't mean that women cannot serve in leadership roles, teach, instruct, and counsel within the church."

- **What are your thoughts on this? Try to use Scripture to support your thoughts and make sure to speak in grace and truth.**

Aaron said, "They are discerning, reasonable, and able to control their emotions. He has good judgment. His appetites and desires don't rule him. His temper doesn't get the best of him. He is self-aware. He's living his life in such a way that it naturally draws respect from others in every arena. He has a genuine concern for you."

- **How are you doing in these areas? Who is someone you think of that shows a genuine concern for others? How does he or she make you feel? Do you think this is a necessary trait?**



INSPIRE

Questions (Cont.):

Aaron said, "They are able to teach. This doesn't mean that all elders have the ability to teach a class, preach a sermon, or hold the attention of a crowd, but that they can rightly explain Scripture. They can discern and defend against false teaching. He must know how to apply God's Word for the benefit of others."

- **Do you know God's Word? Can you rightly explain Scripture? Can you discern and defend against false teaching? Can you apply God's Word for the benefit of others? Why or why not?**
- **If you're not able to, what would it take so that you are able to?**

3. Read 1 Timothy 3:3. Aaron said, "Their words and actions should lead to peace."

- **When conflict arises, do you become angry or do you look for a way to bring peace (in truth and grace)?**

Aaron said, "They handle money well. He sees money for what it is – a tool rather than an idol. It means that elders should be setting the example by tithing and giving generously to the needs of others.

- **How do you personally view money? What are your thoughts and convictions on tithing?**

4. Read 1 Timothy 3:4-5. Aaron said, "The home is the proving ground for ministry. The most important ministry they have is at home. He treats his family like people made in the image of God, and encourages his children to be obedient with respect and reverence, not through control and manipulation. This means being fair, consistent, sympathetic, and merciful. A man who treats his children respectfully will earn their respect. A man who cares for his own children well is ready to care for God's children."

- **How are things going in your house? How is your parenting? Do you treat your spouse with love and respect? Men: are you pastoring your household well? What are you strong/weak in? Discuss.**

5. Read 1 Timothy 3:6. Aaron said, "They are mature believers who are continuing to grow. If they are immature in faith, the temptation of pride—or the crushing weight of responsibility—could cloud their judgment."

- **Where are you personally in your maturity in Christ? How are you continuing to grow?**

Read 1 Timothy 3:7. Aaron said, "They have a good reputation outside of the church. People's impressions of Christ are partly based on those who represent Him."

- **How are you doing with representing Christ with your family, at work, in your neighborhood, and community?**

EQUIP

Application:

(These questions will challenge your group members to apply the study to their daily lives. How can they live out what they take in? It is highly important that you go over this section with your group each week for the group study to be a success.)

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. Aaron said, "Elders oversee our church prayerfully and doctrinally with a servant's heart. Elders serve eagerly, humbly, and patiently. What I want you to see is that in the entire list in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, there is only one skill – able to teach. Everything else refers to the type of man he is. It's character more than ability. It's his devotion to the Lord more than his aspiration to serve. The qualifications of an elder are to be the ambition of every Christ follower who has covenanted with this church to make Jesus known."

- **What action steps do you need to take to continue your growth in your maturity in Christ?**

Prayer:

Take some time to pray over each group member's identified action steps and life issues.

Equip Your Mind:

"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (**Acts 6:4, ESV**)