

MEMBERSHIP/BAPTISM | WEEK 4

Living out membership: A joy to your leaders

Sometimes it is easy to forget that God has given us leaders, and it is our opportunity and responsibility to follow them well. God has commanded that “every person should be subject to the governing authorities” of our state (in Rom. 13:1), but He has also given us leaders within our church that we have the responsibility to follow.

The primary leaders of our church are our elders (including our staff elders/pastors and our lay elders), but we also have a staff team of leaders that also help guide ministry to men, women, and children within our church and outward from our church to our city and our world.

Think/Read | Let’s explore the way in which God has set up leadership for our good in the church.

Read Heb. 13:17:

- How does God tell us to respond to our church leaders?
- What is their role? What are they responsible to do?
- And what attitude toward leadership should we try to help promote in them?

Think/Read | After describing how elders are to lead the church as willing and exemplary shepherds (in 1 Peter 5:1-4), Peter instructs those under the elders as well.

Read 1 Peter 5:5-6:

- What kind of trait characterizes those who subject themselves to their elders?
- And what two things does God do for those who show this character trait?

If submitting to my leaders is important to God, how can I do this? Here are a few of the many ways to do this:

Submit your life to their teaching (apply the sermon, live out the lessons you’re being taught). Our Sermon Application Guides at www.yourchurch.com/sermons are helpful for doing this.

Promote harmony and unity within the church as we follow their vision (see Eph. 4:2-3; Rom. 12:16).

Serve the church well. The role of our leaders is not to do all the ministry of the church but to equip every member to do ministry (see Eph. 4:11-13)! We are on a mission together.

Pray for our church's leaders.

Do | Go to www.yourchurch.com/about/staff-elders and find the names of the elders of our church. Pick three of them to pray for this week. Consider making it a habit of praying for our elders every Sunday (or another day of the week): for their lives, families, and ministry.

Pray | Here is a way you could pray for the staff and elders of our church:

Dear Father, thank you for providing our church with godly elders and staff who lead and serve us. Would you protect them from the power of the world, the flesh, and the enemy that all that they do would be led and empowered by your Holy Spirit. Kill sin and grow righteousness in them, and give them wisdom for every decision they make. Help me to bring greater harmony and greater effectiveness to our church family by how I live and how I support the leaders you have given me. Amen.

Conclusion: As we've seen, becoming a member involves crossing a threshold of commitment, but it is much more than that. Membership in a local church involves the active embodiment of Christian living: Christian living with other believers and under God-appointed leaders. It is as we live out this role as members of Christ's body that the world will know who represents Jesus and they may come to also know him personally and might join his imperfect but beautiful family, his Church.