

**TO THE READER:** A good learning technique is to answer the following questions BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, you can refine your answers based on your reading. Then, when your group gathers, each can discuss his or her view and you can either affirm or modify what you wrote.

1. To get started: What is your understanding of the following words? (5-6)

Presbyterian -

Elder-

Deacon -

2. As we think about the topic of church government, we must start at the top. Who is the head of the church? (6-8)

3. Again, if we are going to discuss church government, what is meant by "the Church?" (8-13)

4. Is **everyone** who is a member of a local church today genuinely saved?

5. Can you think of three ways Jesus delegated His authority in and through the Church (other than the people in leadership)? (13-18)

6. How do you understand the role of the ruling elders, the teaching elder(s), and the deacons? What is the level of authority of each? (19-22)
  
7. Since we are part of a Presbyterian denomination, what do you understand to be the role of a church's session, the presbytery, and the General Assembly? (23-25)
  
8. Your local church may be in great shape today, but what about 5 to 10 years from now? Suppose your pastor (who has done a great job of shepherding your flock, along with the elders) moves on. How can you know for sure your church will always have a leadership which will stand true to our Presbyterian form of government and our biblical standards? (25-28)

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class, noting other questions you might have. [By the way, if you do have any other questions about what you read, write them down here so you remember them at class time.]

## **APPLICATION**

When an elder (ruling or teaching) takes his oath, he promises to maintain the peace and the purity of the church. To this end we read:

*Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.... Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:7,17-18)*

With this in mind, would you, individually, and you, as a group, commit to pray *regularly* for the leaders of your church and denomination? They need your prayers! The world, the flesh, and the devil are all working to make your leaders fall. When they fall, or even falter, the church (you) suffers severely. Think of how much it would mean to them to know there are those in the church who care enough to be committed to pray for them consistently.

## **For Further Study**

*On Being Presbyterian: Our Beliefs, Practices, and Stories*, Sean Michael Lucas. P&R, 2006.  
*Biblical Church Government*, Don K. Clements. Metokos Press, 2005.

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