

1 PETER CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Study 10 - 1 Peter 5

How can have people suggested we improve community in Canberra?

Read 1 Peter 5

Peter has gives both an optimistic and realistic description of Christian community in a world affected by sin, curse and rebellion.

How does understanding Peter's experience of Jesus help us to understand what he says about Christian leadership?

John 21:14-19 (see also 13:36-38 ; 18:15-27)

1 Peter 5

How would you write a job description for a leader of a church?

What do you think of the two descriptors in this passage – elders and younger? How do other passages with the same words help as you think through what is said in 1 Peter 5 – Elder: 1 Tim 5:1-2, 17-20 Titus 1:5-9 James 5; 2 John 1; 3 John 1. Younger: Titus 2:4, 6.

Why is being humble a good thing? What makes it hard? (see also Gal 6:1-5)

What temptations strike when you are feeling under the pump or threatened?

What picture do you get of Christian community from 1 Peter 5? How does this help us think about Crossroads and our part in it?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats (eg. v.7-8)

How do you stay realistic and optimistic about our church?

Pray for:

What we need to work on as a community

What each of us needs to work on individually

Peter turns his thoughts to the dynamics of church (the community of believers). It is to be ordered, God honouring and forward looking - to Jesus return and the glory that will come.

Peter's experience of grace informs his humility in leadership and sets us an example to follow. This is the most self referential he gets in this letter.

It is clear that those who shepherd (elders) are under Jesus. Peter in his humility claims the same kind of pastoral status as any other elder with regard to church community (he uses the word apostle in his introduction showing his authority as an authorised eye-witness to Jesus' ministry which is certainly of a different order to being a pastor). The term elder with regard to Christian leadership can also be found in Paul's writings - 1 Tim 5:1-2, 17-20 Titus 1:5-9 James 5; 2 John 1; 3 John 1.

Likewise in verse 5 refers to Peter exhorting those who are younger. They are told to obey church leadership. This is slightly different from Titus 2 where the word for older is an age indicator. It is calling for a community that models Christian living from one generation to the next. There is no need to talk about different Greek words in your study. The way Peter describes an elder is linked to shepherding - oversight for care of those under them.

From the passage the big threats to Christian community seem to be pride and anxiety (one assumes in the face of opposition to Christians). Satan is looking to undermine Christian faith by fomenting disobedience among Christians or encouraging them to trying playing by other rules to fit in. With our future secure in Christ...with our understanding of the damage of sin and the joy of grace it is easy to get disheartened when things go bad in a Christian community. Surely Christians should know better! Peter is both optimistic about church and especially about Jesus' return. However, he asks the community to work at the expression of appropriate leadership, and response to appropriate leadership. One of the last suggested activities is to do a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of church. The ingredients are in the passage. There is the opportunity to be a bit more specific and to mine our own joys, concerns, desires and need to change. You could mix both together or else do a two stage - 'How does Peter speak of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the churches he writes to?' 'What do we see when we look at Crossroads?'

It would be good to factor in a couple of weeks break. If you have already done so, you could catch up on a past study.

The Exodus studies will start in the week starting Monday 18 July.