**Format:** 3-week congregational class  
**Timing:** Sundays after worship, late 2025  
**Purpose:** To teach the biblical foundation of eldership and the practical, living model at McKnight as we invite and prepare new leaders.

**WEEK 1 – *“The Forest: God’s Design for His Church”***

**Focus:**

The big picture — God’s plan for the universal and local church and why leadership matters.

**Content:**

1. **What is the Church?**
   * *Universal Church* (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47)
   * *Local Church* as God’s visible expression in each community
2. **Why Leadership?**
   * Leadership is God’s design to equip and mature the body (Ephesians 4:11-16)
   * Servant leadership vs. positional authority
3. **Overview of Church Leadership Roles**
   * Elders (Shepherds, Overseers)
   * Ministers (Evangelists, Teachers)
   * Ministry Leaders / Connect-Group Leaders (“functional deacons”)
4. **Eldership at McKnight: Guiding Principles** 
   * *Shepherding Model 2025 v1 mBret*
   * Locally adapted model
   * Primary calling: *Shepherd the flock* (Ezekiel 34:4 reframed positively — strengthen, heal, bind up, bring back, search, serve in love)
   * Three focus areas: **Administration, Vision, and Pastoral Care**
5. **Discussion / Reflection**
   * How have you seen godly leadership shape a church?
   * What do you expect of an elder? What should an elder expect of you?

**WEEK 2 – *“The Trees: The Role of an Elder at McKnight”***

**Focus:**

What elders *do*, how they lead, and how our 3-part model functions.

**Content:**

1. **Core Calling: Shepherding**
   * Strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind the injured, bring back strays, seek the lost
   * Be examples, not overlords (1 Peter 5:1-4)
2. **Three Complementary Leadership Areas**
   * **Administrative Elders** – oversee finances, policies, facilities, risk management
   * **Pastoral Elders** – focus on relationships, prayer, visitation, and congregational care
   * **Vision Elders** – cast vision, oversee ministers, and guide teaching priorities
   * Each team brings recommendations to the full eldership for final decisions.
3. **How Elders Work with Ministers**
   * Elders = shepherds who lead spiritually
   * Ministers = staff who equip and communicate
   * Mutual respect: “It is the job of ministers to set up elders for fruitful shepherding, and the job of elders to support ministers.”
4. **Shepherding in Practice**
   * Monthly elder meetings focused on prayer and pastoral concerns
   * Elders available Sunday 8:45 a.m. for prayer
   * Special sessions on key issues (women’s roles, leadership, unity)
   * “Positions” documents to maintain clarity and unity (non-doctrinal guidance)
5. **Interactive Element**
   * Current elders briefly describe their area (Admin / Vision / Pastoral) and a story from their experience.

**WEEK 3 – *“The Fruit: Becoming and Supporting Elders”***

**Focus:**

How men are called, trained, and affirmed — and how the congregation participates.

**Content:**

1. **Biblical Qualifications**
   * 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9
   * Emphasize character and spiritual maturity over business skill
2. **Eldership Development at McKnight**
   * Formal mentoring: men “intern and discern” alongside current elders
   * Intentional leadership development — discipling future elders
   * Rotational model: elders may take sabbatical breaks; new elders are groomed and affirmed
3. **Congregational Partnership**
   * Pray for and encourage elders (Hebrews 13:17)
   * Provide feedback with grace
   * Support ministry leaders (male and female) serving as “functional deacons”
4. **Looking Ahead**
   * Explain process for adding younger married men to leadership
   * Outline timeline for congregational input and prayer
   * Conclude with commitment prayer for current and future elders.