

## **For Group Study and Discussion**

*for use with the document "What is a Bishop?" prepared by the Rev. Canon Dr. Scott Sharman*

1. Read the following passages of Scripture: John 10:11-18, John 21:15-19, 1 Peter 5:1-5, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9).

- What do these passages tell us about the nature of leadership and oversight/keeping watch in a Christian community?

2. Think about some of the various important leaders we know in the apostolic church from the pages of scripture (such as Mary the Mother of God, Mary Magdalene, Peter, John, Paul, Stephen, Martha, Lydia, Phoebe).

- What aspects of their stories and ministries display features relevant to the ministry of episkope as it was described above?

3. Read Acts 6:1-7. In these verses, we see an example of the apostles adapting something about the way ministry in the Church of Jerusalem was carried out in response to contextual realities.

- Can we learn any transferrable lessons about the when, why, and how of contextual adaptations in the Church that could apply in our day as well?
- What kinds of adaptations to the ministry of the bishop specifically, and the governance structures of the Church more generally, might be most beneficial towards partnership in God's mission in this time and place?

4. Read Acts 15:1-30. This narrative is sometimes understood as one of the first examples of the Church and its leaders walking together in synod.

- What do you see in the details that can tell us things about being a bishop in a synodal church and being a synodal church led by a bishop?
- Does this historical example suggest anything for the way a bishop might be called to lead in our diocese today?