



## **Equally Yoking the Elders Quorum & Relief Society | A How I Lead Interview with Aaron Bujnowski**

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Speaker 1 00:00:03 How do you help someone tell their spouse that they have secretly been viewing pornography? Wow. These are tough situations. Thankfully, one of my favorite and most effective therapists, Jeff Reer, put together a presentation about disclosing betrayal. Jeff explains how disclosing betrayal can make recovery and repentance so much more difficult if it isn't handled correctly. This isn't a rip the bandaid off quickly type of situation. With a better understanding of betrayal, church leaders can be a strong resource in helping couples navigate the awful effects of pornography usage. You can watch Jeff's entire presentation at no cost in the Liberating Saints Virtual Library. Simply go to [leading-saints.org/fourteen](http://leading-saints.org/fourteen), and you can sign up for 14 days of free access to Jeff's presentation and the entire library. It's one of my favorite interviews.

Speaker 1 00:00:58 So my name is Kurt Frankham, and I am the founder and executive director of Leading Saints, and obviously the host of the Leading Saints Podcast. Now, I started Leading Saints back in 2010. It was just a hobby blog, and it grew from there. By the time, uh, 2014 came around, we started the podcast, and that's really when it got some, uh, traction and took off. Uh, 2016, we became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and we've been growing ever since. And now I get the opportunity of interviewing and talking with remarkable people all over the world. Now, this is a segment we do on the Leading Saints podcast called How I Lead, and we reach out to everyday leaders. They're not experts, gurus, authors, PhDs. They're just everyday leaders who've been asked to serve in a specific leadership calling. And we simply ask them, how is it that you lead? And they go through some remarkable principles that should

be in a book that should be behind a PhD. They're usually that good. And, uh, we just talk about, uh, sharing what the other guy's doing. And I remember being a leader just simply wanting to know, okay, I know what I'm trying to do, but what's the other guy doing? What's working for him? And so that's why every Wednesday or so we publish these how I lead segments to share.

Speaker 1 00:02:39 So in this How I Lead episode, we're headed down to Texas to talk with Aaron Bujnowski, who is a four time elders quorum President <laugh>. I say that as if it's like a four time Oscar winner, or a four time Super Bowl winner, uh, winning reality. You know, these are, these are callings and, uh, not achievements, but nonetheless, some great experience that Aaron has to share. And, uh, just through the listen for the, a few concepts here, the, the idea of approaching an elders quorum, shifting an elders quorums culture through simple, thoughtful questions. Now, Aaron has a few that you can maybe sample and use and, and try out in your own Elders Quorum or Relief Society, or Deacon's Quorum, or whatever it be. But, uh, just sitting down, really thinking about some thoughtful questions, it's gonna stimulate some further ministry, some further connection. And, uh, Aaron did that has, has, has been doing that.

Speaker 1 00:03:27 Great. And then, uh, just his approach to Elders Quorum, really relying on Elders Quorum as a council rather than just, you know, hurrying on the, the conference talk. And then, uh, how his bishop enabled him, uh, to, to, to lead in this world where the Bishop Rick is focused on the youth primarily, right? And so that, that means that an Elders quorum president, a Relief Society president needs to, uh, needs to feel enabled to handle what we call the adult issues, right? And, uh, and I gotta throw this in here. The equally yolked, the elders quorum and the Relief Society equally yolked. That was a powerful principle as well. So this is a great example why we do these, how I lead interviews to learn what the other guy or gal is doing, uh, in different different part of the world. So, here's my interview with Aaron Bujnowski. Aaron Bujnowski, welcome to the Leading Saints podcast.

Speaker 2 00:04:48 Thanks for having me. Glad to be here.

Speaker 1 00:04:50 Awesome. So just, uh, some quick, uh, a fire round of questions here. Uh, where, so where do you live?

Speaker 2 00:04:56 So I live in Frisco, Texas, which is just north of Dallas. It's a suburb north of Dallas.

Speaker 1 00:05:00 Love it. So Dallas is your Temple district? It

Speaker 2 00:05:03 Is. Dallas is our Temple district, and we are actually in the Prosper Texas state. And, uh, the Prosper Texas Temple has announced, uh, last October. So we're excited for the announcement of where that's gonna be located. We're still waiting.

Speaker 1 00:05:14 That's great. And then, uh, what do you do for work?

Speaker 2 00:05:17 So, I am a healthcare consultant. So I work with large health systems and help them with their strategies.

Speaker 1 00:05:22 Nice. And uh, how long have you been listening to Leading Saints?

Speaker 2 00:05:25 Oh, for several years now. I've enjoyed your content for quite a while, uh, all through when I was a bishop and, and, and elsewhere. You guys do a great job

Speaker 1 00:05:32 And currently an Elder quorum president. How long has that, uh, how long has that calling been gone?

Speaker 2 00:05:36 That's been just, just a little over a month now. You know, it's pretty new. Oh, really? Uh, yeah. But, you know, it's, it's actually been interesting because I'm in the same ward I was bishop in four years ago. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So, uh, I'm getting to Sert in another capacity after being in the stake for a little while. And, uh, it's been fun. It's, it's been really interesting.

Speaker 1 00:05:53 Yeah. That's awesome. So, uh, you wrote an article called, uh, ministering is Love, uh, for the, uh, for leading Saints. Many people may not realize that we, uh, every week we publish written articles, not just podcasts. Uh, many of them are, uh, written by, you know, people that like you that are just out there. You're not necessarily officially connected to leading Saints, but you're a leader want to contribute. And you wrote a great article about ministering, and so, uh, we'll link to that. People should check it out. But I thought, man, that would make for a great how I lead interview and exploring your experience in leadership, particularly in as an Elders quorum president. So, um, where's a good jumping off point around this, this topic? 'cause ministering is just on every, on every elders quorum president and really studied president's mind.

Speaker 2 00:06:36 It, it is. And, and, and it should be, you know, it should be fairly natural. You know, maybe a could jumping off point is this, is that, you know, so this isn't my first rodeo, so this is the fourth time I've been called as a elders quorum president. You know, the first time was in college, right? So you're, you know, you're at, I'm at BYU and, you know, most of your activities are helping people move in and out of apartments. <laugh>, I remember that was a lot of what we did. You know, uh, of course, home teaching was, was a lot of what we did. My second time was in a ward, uh, in south of Houston. So this ward is really interesting in that it was a, as kind of a ward that had been combined. There was a Spanish branch that had been combined.

Speaker 2 00:07:11 It was an area I was a, at the time, a chemical engineer. So we had some professionals, but then we had a lot of laborers that were in this kind of area of the city that, you know, was kind of a, uh, you kind of had a more Hispanic bent. And so it was kind of a really neat time, uh, to learn. It was one of those wards where you had, you know, every home teacher had like 13 people on their list because we had so many folks that we didn't even know who they were. And so, very unique time. The next time was in a very large ward here in Frisco. You know, the ward had probably 600 people. We'd had people moving in every week. It was just kind of this time of high growth here. Uh, and so, you know, as I was called this time after having served as bishop, uh, in this same ward, I been the thing, okay, so what's different?

Speaker 2 00:07:49 You know, you know, things have changed, especially in the last, you know, uh, four or five years since President Nelson was called. And I really wanted to put some thought into what would be different about, you know, ministry now, not home teaching, and how would I go about doing that? Uh, and it's interesting when you go to the church handbook, right? In the very first part on ministering, it talks about the, these two laws of, of love, right? Love God and love neighbor. And it talks about ministering being a way to live those laws. And it, it really struck me that, you know, I'm a believer that sometimes the most simple answers are the best ones. And, and as I kind of pondered and prayed about it, you know, how would you know, how should we approach this in our word? And, and by the way, the previous presidency did a great job with everything.

Speaker 2 00:08:33 Uh, but as you know, as new leaders are called, you tend to maybe take a different, you have a different take on things. I just had this really strong impression that that should be the focus, just one word, love, you know, love God and love neighbor, and, and how, you know, how should that show up? You know, functionally, how does that work? You know, how do we get, you know, ministers to do this? Um, and as I thought about how, how, you know, our, the brothers in our ward would visit their families. I thought, how can we make this really simple for them? You know, in what way could we show up, right? With this authentic way of, of loving both God and, and, and our neighbor? And I thought, well, um, we ought to keep things pretty simple, right? I, I think if we, if we go and we ask questions to the families, we should ask them a very simple question. Like, how is your family showing love for God and neighbor? And then they could share, and then the minister could ask, do you feel loved in our ward? And in what ways could we show you love? In what ways could we show love to you? Now, that's a little different than maybe the old school way of doing things. You know, I like the last three times I did it where you say, Hey, what do you need? You have the

Speaker 1 00:09:35 Responses, response, anything we can do for you? Is

Speaker 2 00:09:36 There anything we can do for you? Oh, what can you need? And the answer's pretty simple. No, I don't know. Yeah, we're good. Don't need anything. Yeah. But as I tried that out, actually, when I was in talking with my counselors when they were first called, I actually did that with them, asking them about their families. All of a sudden, these, you know, men who typically don't share feelings as you know, started talking to me about things that they were going on in their family, things about their children, things that were happening in their jobs. And I just had this realization that if we asked those questions, all of a sudden people started talking about things in a different way. Right? Um, and then, um, if you, if you recall there, there was a great talk by Elder Gong in the last conference, um, two conferences ago about ministering to the minister.

Speaker 1 00:10:15 Yes.

Speaker 2 00:10:16 Right? And I thought, well, you know, we've gotta do these ministering interviews, and we get to do those once a quarter. What if we ask those same question to those ministers, you know, in that interview, as part of us ministering to them as a presidency, ask them about their families. 'cause this is our opportunity to find out about their families. And then

we should just ask them two simple questions. One question is, what, in what ways did your families need love over the last quarter? Number two, how did you find ways to show those families love? Um, and when I did that, and they started talking about their ministering, their current ministering assignments, all of a sudden these new kind of avenues started opening up. They started talking about their families in different ways. It became less of a check the box kind of an exercise, and more of a really kind of a connect, kind of a connection type of exercise. Yeah. I was actually very surprised by it.

Speaker 1 00:11:01 Yeah. Tell me, what, uh, like what do any typical answers come to mind? Um, 'cause this is a thing like, uh, this concept of love, obviously extremely important, uh, should be the core of all leadership activities and efforts and whatnot. Uh, but it's sometimes a bit, uh, abstract, right? Like, uh, that, that a lot of times the advice leaders get give to one another is, oh, you just gotta love those that you lead. But like, I mean, what does that look like? You know, so what, what are the typical answers you hear? Or like, how are people wanting to be love or wanting to show love?

Speaker 2 00:11:31 Yeah. No, that's a great question. So I'll give you one example. So when I asked one of my counselors, Hey, you know, how did you show your family's love? He said, you know, I've got this, this brother in the ward, and he's a great guy, by the way, very active, who said, I just don't want people coming by my house, <laugh>. And he said, I've struggled. I struggled. Like, I don't know how to help him. He just says, don't come by. We're good. We're, we don't need anything. And I said, well, I know this brother really well. He's actually a really avid reader. For example, he loves to read. Why don't you try to start, you know, sh you know, sharing quotes that you like, because I know you're a reader. That may be a connection point for you. And, uh, and he said, I'll try that.

Speaker 2 00:12:05 And guess what? That started working. He said saying, he, he just started getting engagement because, so it, it really was about, you know, overcoming the barriers of kind of, how do I actually connect these brothers? Now, when we did this in the Quorum, we actually rolled this out. We said, Hey, here's how we're gonna do things. It was kind of an amazing thing. So I asked the question, how did you, how did you show love for God today? Right? And so, one brother in the quorum said, he raised his hand and said, can I tell you something? That was a disaster this morning. We were trying to get to church. I've got all these little kids. Everybody was late. We're in the car. Like, everyone's kind of yelling at each other. We couldn't get there. So the way I showed heavenly father of love is I got my family to church without losing my mind this morning. <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:12:44 I've been that dad before.

Speaker 2 00:12:45 We've all been that dad, right? Yeah. And what was kind of cool about it is we all kinda had a chuckle. And we said, actually, that's a great way. 'cause today that's what you could do. That's exactly what you could do today, right? Well, there was another brother, after we had finished our discussion, he came up to me afterwards and he said, Hey, can I talk to you, uh, president Binowski my family? And I just haven't felt connected in the Lord. Uh, and for whatever reason, we don't feel like we have connections here or friends here. And I just had

a moment to chat with him. I said, well, why do you think that is? And he kinda shared some things with me. He mentioned that his daughter's in the YSA, uh, branch, and she feels the same way. And so I said, well, then what can I do for you?

Speaker 2 00:13:20 He's like, you know what would be really helpful is if you could reach out to my daughter. I know she's not in our ward, although her address is here. Would you reach out and just tell her that you're thinking about her? So I did that. I grabbed it, and, and I know her from our ward from the time when I was bishop. And I, I texted her, and, and he, that's what he needed that day. Now, since that time, what was very interesting is that brother, um, um, uh, had some employment needs, right? And, um, he said, Hey, you know, uh, of course the economy's not great right now. And, and he ended up getting, you know, let go from his job. And I immediately reached out to the quorum, I reached out to his ministering brothers and said, Hey, this good brother, um, you know, has these needs.

Speaker 2 00:13:56 Would you show him love by forming a little team around him to help him do his job search? And what was interesting about it, instead of kind of either no response, I almost got an immediate response on my text that said, we'd love to do that. We'd love to show this brother help. There was a, a second brother in the ward that also lost a job. I, I kind of sent out a text, Hey, could you two brothers help this brother out with his job search? And after having that discussion about love, they immediately engaged. So the way love was showing up is engaging with people with their needs.

Speaker 1 00:14:22 Yeah. Well, let, let me ask real quick that there's a lot of this, it sounds like a lot of this even takes place during the core meeting as well, right? That you're sort of stimulating this discussion. Is that That's

Speaker 2 00:14:32 Exactly right. That's exactly right. Um, you know, even in, in our, at last couple of lessons that we've had, um, we've, that the, the, the five in the quorum has been, uh, really tremend. Now, I'll, I'll tell you one other kind of thing. When we decided to do this and roll this out to the quorum, um, we did this on a Sunday, that evening, that next, uh, evening or that evening, we got an email from the stake. The stake said, Hey, um, there's a special meeting you're being invited to. Now, I'll, I'll warn you in, in our area, I've lived in the same house, and I've been in three wards and three stakes in my same house. Nice, nice. It's just an area of high growth. Well, there's a special meeting being called where there's some boundary changes that we're gonna be had. So we go to the meeting, and what it was, was an ward was being dissolved, and part of that ward was moving, being moved back into our ward.

Speaker 2 00:15:17 They had been part of us before, and they were moving, being moved back into our ward. And we had no clue when we had set up kind of our program to say, Hey, how could we love you? All of a sudden we had 32 new brethren who we had not seen in a decade. They, they were moved out a decade ago. Now they're moving back in. Um, and so, uh, immediately we said, well, how can we love these brothers? What in what way can we show them love? Well, the first ones is to get to know them. So the next core meeting, we just sat down and had everybody introduce themselves. And we talked about this, like, he wouldn't wanna know how to love you. You know, what, what are some things, you know, that we can

know about you and your family? And since that time, the, the next core meetings, people have felt this kind of closeness because we had set the expectation that, hey, we've got these new brothers coming in. And of course, the Lord was very inspired to have us do that, um, because we had, we didn't even know that was coming, right? But we were prepared for it, which was for, for me, a testament of kind of how the spirit works. So,

Speaker 1 00:16:07 Yeah, I love that. So, a few things come to mind, and I'll sort of bounce around here for a minute, but, uh, yeah, just the, this question, these questions you ask focused on love Mm-Hmm. And how people are receiving love and showing love, you know, for God and whatnot. Uh, again, great question. And people, you know, what a great if, if you can't come up with a question to sort of as your launching pad there. Uh, great question to, to take and, and use. But to me, I think the, the core of the principle is like having, like, really sitting with and developing a really thoughtful question that stimulates the brain in a different way, so that, you know, I think we've worn out the, is there anything we can do for you? Question to the point that I can't help but say, oh, no, <laugh> no, I'm good. You know, it's like, even if I had stuff, I, I'd have to say no to that, don't I, uh, so just having that thoughtful question, is that, uh, is that maybe a good, a good thought or starting point for an elder elders quorum president trying to duplicate this same type of culture?

Speaker 2 00:17:02 No, it, it is. And, and I think that, you know, I, I, I mentioned to you that one brother who didn't want to have his home teachers come over, and he's, and he's funny. I, I, I pulled him aside and said, Hey, so what's going on? So what, why didn't you wanna come over? And he said, he said, well, at first I didn't really feel like they were real authentic. I felt like they were checking the box. But when that shifted, right? When we said, okay, let's, like you said, let's think about very thoughtful questions and actually show real, genuine and authentic concern and care for people, his heart changed. Uh, both the minister's heart change and the es heart changed because he could feel that it was genuine. It's like, okay, this person really wants to get to know me and my family. I'll accept that. Right? It's harder to accept. It was like, okay, I'm gonna, and, and check this box. I'm supposed to talk to you. I'm supposed to bring you, you know, cookies or whatever. But it was really like, I really wanna get to know you. Like, okay, then let's chat now. I'm ready for that. Yeah,

Speaker 1 00:17:53 Yeah, yeah. That's really, that's really great. And then it sounds like it's sort of this, like this push and pull type of relationship or, or engagement with individuals that you're not, you're not, you're not happy with the superficial response, right? You're gonna maybe take a few more steps and think, Hey, wait a minute, I've asked some questions here, and it appears that you're a reader, right? So you're gonna sit with that and think, all right, how can I approach or serve or or love this individual on that level? Um, and see what, see what doors open up and what thoughts and revelations come, right? So you just, you're not satisfied with just, oh, they said they need no help, or, oh, they said they didn't want visitors, so I guess that's what we're gonna do, right?

Speaker 2 00:18:31 No, it is. And, and, um, so, you know, there's, there's, uh, there's an old saying that says what 99% of, of success is showing up, right? Just being there for people. Yeah. Yeah. Right. So one of the things that we've tried to do is just show up for people. Um, so

for example, um, uh, shortly after I was called a sister in the ward, her husband, who's 92, he's a, um, he's a Korean War veteran, really neat guy, has great stories, all kinds of stories from his life. Um, went into the hospital and his health is kind of up and down, went to the hospital, and, um, we immediately said, Hey, we grabbed a couple of guys, so let's head right over there. It was only like a mile from our house. We just went over there and spent the time with him. Now, you have to understand that spending time with him is never a 10 minute visit, because he'll just tell you stories even when he is not feeling well.

Speaker 2 00:19:13 He, he likes to tell you stories. So we just went and spent time with him and just kind of sat by him. That was what he needed that day. He was kind of hooked up to all kinds of things. Just needed us to visit him. But he was in the hospital for like five days. Well, we said, Hey, uh, has he had the sacrament? No, he hasn't. Well, we had to permiss him from the bishop to bring that by, to bring the sacrament by. And I ended up bringing the missionaries with me, uh, because I had a missionary correlation meeting that day and said, Hey, why don't you come by with me with, uh, his ministering brother-in-law? See what he needs. We'll, give him the sacrament and see if he needs a blessing. Well, when we, when we showed up there with the missionaries, again, this was just, you know, again, this is all happening in real time.

Speaker 2 00:19:47 Hey, let's just come and spend time with you. It was interesting. He was actually at that point, feeling a little better. And when he realized that the missionaries were there, he went into some of his stories, but then started bearing his testimony. He started saying, Hey, this is, I wanna share with you missionaries. You make sure when you're serving you do this. He, he bores testimony about serving others and sharing the gospel in times that he had shared the gospel. And he, and he actually got a little kind of teary-eyed as he was saying this, right? And when I left, we gave him, each, gave him a big hug, and he said, thank you so much for coming. I said, great. Well, he was, you're getting out tomorrow. I'll come by your house. We'll make sure we come by next week. And we went to the quorum and, and said, told the quorum, Hey, we wanna bring him the sacrament every week, but we don't want just one member of the quorum to do this. We actually wanna assign that to different members of the quorum so he gets to meet different people. And the response was interesting. It was almost immediate. Sure, I'll do that. There was actually, nobody said to you, no, I'm kind of busy after this kind of this, this engagement, this kind of conversation about love. Now, when we have a need, I just see people leaning in and just being willing to take up their time vol very voluntarily to go and accept assignments, to really just be there for people and sit with people.

Speaker 1 00:20:49 Yeah. Yeah. That's, that's really powerful. 'cause there is like this cultural shift, right? Um, that it's not necessarily you, you have a formula that works perfectly every time, but you're, uh, you have some, uh, some habits that, that you're employing over and over again. And little by little, those, those walls come down, right? And then it becomes, not, not even about the question you ask anymore, um, but though you may still employ that, but it's more about, okay, everybody's like sort of warmed up to this experience.

Speaker 2 00:21:17 That's right. That's right. And, and, and I'll tell you, I'm sure there'll be ups and downs. Uh, maybe we're, we're, we're here at the beginning of our road, and of course, there'll be other things that will happen. But, but I'll tell you that the feeling is very genuine,



which, which really makes me happy. Um, because with genuine concern and genuine care, lots of really positive things can happen. You can't anticipate, of course, the needs that are gonna show up, whether it be temporal needs or spiritual needs or whatever it may be. But when people trust, right, that you're gonna be there for them, they're more apt to share, they're more apt to, um, want to kind of talk about those things that would help them out. Um, I, I actually, the, the other thing that I think we we've done is we made sure that we are engaging the sisters of this.

Speaker 2 00:21:59 Now, the sisters, I, I think do this in spades. It's very natural for them. And when, when we were engaging with the, with the, uh, relief Society presidency, uh, who they do a great job in, in their diminishing efforts, we said, we want our award to be representative of an equally yoked elders quorum and relief society. Mm-Hmm. Um, sometimes, um, and, and it may be perception, it may be reality, but you hear this a lot. Well, the sisters know that we're not sure the brothers really know what's going on. The sisters tend to know the needs because they talk with the other sisters. And we kind of set the standard that, that this elders quorum, we're gonna know as many needs as the sisters do, and that we've agreed myself and the relief society president, we're gonna meet regularly, um, outside of our ward council and outside of our normal times, so that we can really sit and discuss the needs of the ward. And that equal yoking of both the sisters, the sister leaders, and the elders who are leaders together to take care of these families, I think is where the power really comes, comes to bear.

Speaker 1 00:22:53 Hmm. Yeah. That's a powerful concept. I mean, and just speaking it, I think most of us in, in theory, we're like, well, of course the Elders Quorum President, or the Elders Quorum, the Relief Society should be equally yoked. But, uh, there are moments where that's not true. Right. <laugh>, and, and that's right. And, and everybody can kinda think back to those, those experiences, but to sort of speak it, you know, in that, in that company, and then continue to return to it. Like, wait a minute, like this activity, this plan, this direction we're moving, it doesn't feel like we're equally yoked. And so then you can sort of step back and address that.

Speaker 2 00:23:29 That's right. That's right. And, and it's interesting. My wife is currently serving as our Stake Relief Society president, and she tells me that as she engages with the different wards in our stake, the ward that seem to have the best feeling in them are ones where there is that equal ying between the Elders Quorum and the release society that both, you know, sets of leaders are really engaging. Uh, and, and I know the Bishop who's serving now, my bishop, uh, was actually one of my counselors before, uh, we're good friends. And, and he mentioned to me, you know, as he, as I was called, he said, look, with this new change, now I'm the, essentially the young men's president. Right? Which wasn't the case when I was bishop. Um, he's, I really need to be spending time with the youth. And, and I would really appreciate you just leaning in and really taking a lot of the adult issues so that, so that I can really focus on the youth.

Speaker 2 00:24:13 And as we engage in text back and forth, he's expressed that appreciation that he loves the, me and the police president are really kind of taking the lead. We actually will tell him, we don't have to ask permission. We say, Hey, Bishop, here's this need.

Here's how we've done it. Is there anything else we should be doing? Instead of, Hey, Bishop, what should we do waiting for him to direct us? It's, Hey, Bishop, we've decided this needs to happen. Do you have any guidance for us? Or you do you approve that? And he says, yes, go right ahead, or he will give us some guidance. So taking that active lead is really taking the, some burden off of him, which he really appreciates.

Speaker 1 00:24:41 Yeah. So I wanna really underscore this, this concept and the, what, what this example really well, because this is a very common question that we receive here at Leading Saints, is just, what are other wards doing? It's usually focused on the youth, right? Like this, this, uh, the, the Fisher Bricks focused on the youth, and, but you know, a lot of words aren't getting it. Or, um, you know, people still reach out to the bishop and he's just overwhelmed, busy. Right? And it's just, to me, it's, it can be as simple as just having that conversation where the Bishop acknowledges saying, you know, Aaron, you are the Elders quorum president, I enabling you to deal with the adult issues. Right? And, and just having that simple conversation empowers the Elders quorum, Relief Society to lean in and to the point even articulating that, listen, I don't need you to come to me and say, is this okay? Just go right.

Speaker 2 00:25:31 That's right. That's exactly right. Now I, I'll admit, because I was the previous bishop, um, you know, I, I think it's been easier for me to do that because, you know, in that capacity I was used to doing that. And people in the ward still, at least the people who've been around for a while, kind of knew me as that. And so they're comfortable with that, but I don't think that should stop someone who hadn't had that experience or that kind of relationship with their ward members. This should be the case, whether or not you ever served in that capacity. Yeah, I think the Lord is entrusting elders quorum presidents, now that, and of course, the, the sisters in the Release society to kind of really take over and, and, and help with those adult, you know, issues. You know, anything that doesn't involve worthiness, um, or, or, or fair game for us to kind of lead in and help with employment or illnesses or anything else of that sort.

Speaker 1 00:26:14 Yeah, no, that's, uh, that's so powerful. And, and again, you just sort of, depending on case by case, maybe you have a less experienced Elders quorum president may need a little bit more of some mentoring and training, you know, as far as, okay, this issue came up, I don't want to land on my desk as the Bishop, so let's talk about ways that you can handle it and whatnot. But is, are there any other examples as far as, you know, adult issues that's probably <laugh>, I dunno, that's the perfect, but we'll go with it for now. But like, what does that, any, any examples of what that looks like, like in practice, uh, when things come up and how you maybe, how, how they can avoid landing on the Bishop's plate?

Speaker 2 00:26:50 Yeah. And so a couple of things come to mind and I'll, I'll use one example I've already used and then, we'll, I'll give you a couple of others. You know, one is this example of, you know, employment needs, right? Um, if you think about relief society and elders quorum presidents being at the, at the kind of the rock face of what if that happens? So someone loses their job, who's the first person that individual should call? If we have the right relationships with those families, they should call me as Elder's Quorum president, or the Relief Society President, or, uh, their ministering brother, not necessarily the bishop. Of course, we

can assess the situation and determine what's happening, whether there are needs, you know, welfare type needs that the Bishop would need to engage in. But of course, he'll engage in those and then of course, return the assignment to us.

Speaker 2 00:27:29 So that one's a very, that one's a very natural one. Another very natural one, um, would be, you know, items of, of illness, like I mentioned before, someone's ill, again, the typical thing would be, Hey, Bishop, I'm in the hospital. Instead of, Hey, you know, president Binowski, I'm in the hospital. What, you know, could we get some help here? Or, Hey, brother, so and so, my ministering brother, I'm in the hospital. Can I get some help? I think with time we can actually build those relationships and take that burden off the Bishop. 'cause that should be the first line, right? That should be the first call. Now you can get into things that maybe are a little, um, you know, a, a little different scope. So you think about someone who says, Hey, I'm, I'm starting to have issues with my, in my family, rather relationship issues or issues with my kids.

Speaker 2 00:28:08 Where do you go first on that? Again, typically you would call the bishop, Hey, Bishop, we're having some marital issues, or, Hey Bishop, we're having some issues with our kids. And, and, uh, and that may still may be a good place to start, but I think very quickly the bishop will say, Hey, would you mind if my elders quorum president meets with you and kind of helps you out, you know, depending on the, of course, the nature and the, and the of the issue. Um, and so I think as those issues kind of become, you know, pushing those kind of realms, I still think that we should assess those and ask, is the Bishop really the person that should be definitely quarterbacking, perhaps, but really leading could be the elders quorum in the relief society really leading and trying to kind of manage, you know, kind of, uh, those kinds of issues, uh, you know, with families. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:28:50 That's really helpful. I'm, I'm glad, uh, we, we stumbled upon that. I don't know if you were planning on talking about that dynamic, but it's, uh, it's definitely helpful. Um, anything else? Going back to, oh, I wanna ask you about the, just like your general approach to, uh, elders quorum, like meeting every other week in, in terms of this ministering, you know, ministering is love. Uh, any, like, how you start the meeting, how you, you know, it sounds like there were times where you, you totally sort of put the conference talk aside 'cause hey, we just, you know, combined with a different ward, we've gotta know each other type thing. Okay. I assume that that dramatic shift doesn't happen every week, but anything you do just within the context of the elders quorum meeting that you haven't mentioned yet?

Speaker 2 00:29:33 Yeah. So, um, a couple of thoughts that, that, that we're doing, um, um, number one, on any given week, for example, if, when we had the issue with the brother who needed the sacrament, um, as you know, in the, in the manual, it actually says that sisters can do this as well. You can hold a council, right? Um, before you start your class, you can have a hold a brief kind of council type situation where you say, Hey, we've got a need. And so that's where we for example, brought up that need with the brother in the hospital. We said, Hey, before we start our lesson, let's talk about a need that we have. We've got this assignment to take. There's, uh, the sacrament in. Uh, we'd like to do that across everyone so it gets to know people. 'cause we have this new change in our ward.

Speaker 2 00:30:08 Are you all willing to accept that assignment? Yes. And we talked a little bit about that brother. We introduced him 'cause he, people haven't met him because he's been ill for so long. So we spent some time letting them know and getting to know them. So I think there's that, that council aspect. And I understand that our sisters are doing the same thing. They'll take a little bit of time before the, the, um, release society meeting starts, before the lesson starts, and do that. The second thing that we've done is we have, um, so as you know, when you do the, the lesson, it's typically from a, a conference talk, but we're sensing with the way the economy's going, and now we have, you know, a couple of brothers that have faced some employment issues that we would like to take one, um, lesson each, uh, quarter and actually focus on preparedness and say, okay, there's an aspect of preparedness that we should all be paying attention to, whether it be temporal preparedness or spiritual preparedness.

Speaker 2 00:30:52 But, um, and that's something that maybe has gotten lost in terms of how, you know, we went to two hour church, you know, and there's certain callings we don't have anymore that we used to have. You say, Hey, look, we don't wanna lose that focus on, you know, having food storage and savings and budgeting and all those really great things that we've always learned, you know, as the church, there just wasn't a slot for it. So as a presence, we said, Hey, why don't we actually make that one of the, you know, the six lessons you have in a quarter, we'll focus on, um, preparedness. What what's really cool about it is my newly called secretary, who's only been a member for six months, he's a great guy. He's, he, in fact, he has a countdown on, on his phone, the countdown, when he gets to go to the temple, he's super engaged.

Speaker 2 00:31:28 Um, uh, he, he, we gave him that assignment, said, why don't you lead this discussion on preparedness? Well, it turns out, lo and behold, this is something he's really, it's, it's a, it's a priority for him. It's something he's, he's thought about for many years before he joined the church. So, which just happened to be something, of course, we know there's no, um, coincidences in the church, right? Yeah. He was called for a reason. Now he's gonna lead that. So, so, so making the elders quorum meeting not only spiritually uplifting and edifying, but also very practical to address issues that are kind of real issues that people deal with, I think will, will continue to engage people in the right way of saying, oh wow, this wo presidency's engaged in my life. Like, they're talking about things that are important to me, you know, and, and, and again, when the need arises, hopefully that would reciprocate with them opening up and letting us know what those needs are.

Speaker 1 00:32:11 Yeah. Yeah. I think that's, uh, you know, just sometimes there's that pressure of, um, you know, what, you've, we've asked this good brother to lead a discussion or teach about such and such conference talk, and I'm sure there's a lot of doctrine that we gotta unpack. And so there's sort of this feeling of this rush to, to get into the, the lesson, you know, and I think to just sort of shift that maybe set certain expectations so everybody knows, and we're just gonna sort of breathe at the beginning of this elders quorum and, and just really sit with like, what are some issues you're seeing? Or, you know, so-and-so lost his job. Like, how can, how can we take a minute and just say, you know, he's got some engineer background and, you know, you know, again, just sort of letting it be part of the meeting rather than, oh, some quick announcements and, uh, yeah, this and that service assignment. All right, let's get

to the lesson and then it, and then we kind of, you know, get into that, which is important, but sort of just creating space and being okay with that, that council part of an elders quorum.

Speaker 2 00:33:11 Well, if you think about it, so if the listeners can listen to, maybe they go back and they listen to what you just said, right? That was a very transactional kind of a dialogue that you just went through. Now, the dialogue that we went through before that was a much more relational dialogue. Hey, what, what's going on in your life? How, how are things going? We've got this need, you know, how are we prepared for these things? Then you can kind of get into the lesson, and I would suggest that the, the spirit of that lesson will, will shift based on whatever was happening. 'cause the spirit guide the teacher. Then the other thing that we've decided to do as a presidency is there, there's this great talk by, uh, elder Packer many years ago where he mentioned that he was in a stake conference and, uh, a brother had walked in.

Speaker 2 00:33:48 He said, oh, who's that brother? And he said, oh, we're so happy to see him. He's an inactive brother. He has been in a while. And then he mentions that, and then the meeting started and this brother was sitting back there and the people giving the prayers and doing the talks were all of these, you know, very active members of the church. And he said, I wondered why they didn't ask that brother to give a prayer. He said, here was the smorgasbord of spirituality. And the brother was sitting on the side and wasn't invited to the table to partake. And so we decided that, we said, look, something as simple as a prayer in elder's quorum, which as you know, a lot of times is random, Hey brother, so and so can you give the opening prayer? We've decided to look at our list of people that maybe don't come that often, who if you ask them ahead of time, would you come and give a prayer that day? That might be the reason they would actually come to church that day. And or if they only come for second meeting, they might actually stay for Corp because you've planned it out ahead. You've invited them to the table, right? To partake of this kind of great environment that we're having. Um, and so, um, so just, you know, these don't have to be very complex things. They can be very simple little things you do just to ask yourself, how is it that we can invite the brothers to engage in kind of very meaningful ways?

Speaker 1 00:34:51 That's powerful, that invitation, right? That's a, that's a model that we've been taught for, for centuries, so that we need to employ more and more. So, um, alright, Aaron, any other concept point, principle, uh, that you wanna make sure we cover before we wrap up?

Speaker 2 00:35:06 No. Um, just, just one last thought here. If, if we think about this going, going back to that article I wrote, you know, ministering is love. Um, I, I really believe that if we talk about, for example, missionary work, so we, we, you know, we, we talk, in fact, we've got a lesson I'm gonna teach next week that's called the Three msms, you know, ministering Missionary Work and Mighty Change of Heart, right? Um, um, they're all interconnected, you know, as, as we begin to show love for each other, it's much, much more simple to actually show love for people who are in our communities. We want to engage in as we as we know, you know, um, uh, love share and invite that whole model of love share. You notice that that first thing is love, right? It's the beginning of what we say this missionary mantra is.

Speaker 2 00:35:49 Well, I would suggest that that is not necessarily only a missionary mantra, but it's also a ministering mantra and it's a discipleship mantra. Um, we do this with our children, right? We love our children, we share things with them, right? And we invite them to do things. This should be a very natural thing. I thought, I've always thought that was a very inspired way to, to think about this. So, so I actually see this as a beginning point, not an end point for lots of other things that will happen. I think as the Lord guides our award forward, as he guides us in ways that we can engage in the missionary efforts as he guides us in ways that we have this new temple coming, as we have opportunities to invite people to engage in that in our community and in our ward members to engage in that tremendous opportunity when it arrives.

Speaker 2 00:36:30 I really, in my view, the Lord prepares us in stages. It's line upon line and pre upon precept. So I see this as just the beginning of many other wonderful things that he wants to have happen. And, and I feel blessed as I saw the previous presidency serve. I don't think this would've worked if I hadn't have been able to build upon what the last presidency had already done. And so, and then when I'm released, the next president will have some other inspiration that will take them in a direction that will build upon what we've done. And so I think we're in this kind of great chain of efforts as one leader comes in and the next leader finds some inspiration and we each build upon each other. And I just see, and, and happy to be just a kind of a small part of, of that kind of chain of action the Lord's doing in our ward.

Speaker 1 00:37:10 Yeah. Now it is a modern day miracle. I mean, when you sit back and, and look at it all that it's just remarkable how this lay ministry works. Everybody sort of takes their turn in different stations and, but nonetheless, we're all progressing, you know, together the organization is, is developing as a whole, even though we're, we're maybe shifting around in those parts. So, powerful stuff. That's right. Well, Aaron, this has been, uh, awesome. We will link to the article if people want to dig in, uh, even further there. Uh, and you've also, uh, was it you and your wife wrote a book for Desert book?

Speaker 2 00:37:41 Yeah, we did. We did. We wrote a, a book called the Discovering Your Temple Insights. Uh, you know, we were <laugh> we were trapped in the house during Covid and, and, uh, we had a lot of time on our hands, <laugh>, and we, we, we were missing the temple. And, uh, we just started writing down some of the thoughts and things that we learned and, and what we realized is that many of the books on the temple were kind of about the temple, and there wasn't really one that said, how do I learn from it? And so we decided to kind of take this view of, okay, how, how do I actually get more out of our temple worship? And so it's, it's been a blessing for us and, and we've gotten some great feedback. So we're, we feel blessed to have contributed to that.

Speaker 1 00:38:12 Nice. Love it. Well, um, we'll definitely link to that and we appreciate, uh, hearing more and more from Texas and, you know, just such a, a strong stake in Zion down there. And, uh, last question I have for you, Aaron, is as you reflect on your time as a leader, how has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ?

Speaker 2 00:38:31 Great question. I, so the, the, the, the scripture that comes to my mind from the Savior, um, he said, I do nothing but the will of my father, um, as a leader. Um, I, my,

my most powerful experiences have, have been when I've submitted my will to what my heavenly Father wants for the people, uh, over whom I have stewardship. And when you have that kind of a, a humble, um, and submissive, um, kind of way of being a leader, that actually helps you as a follower 'cause, 'cause each of us are disciples of Jesus Christ and in our own personal lives, um, we have to submit to his will. And so that has actually been just a powerful concept that has helped me both as a leader and then most certainly as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Speaker 1 00:39:20 And that concludes this how I lead interview. I hope you enjoyed it. And, uh, I would ask you, could you take a minute and drop this link in an email, on social media, in a text, wherever it makes the most sense, and share it with somebody who could relate to this, this experience. And this is how we, how we develop as leaders, just hearing what the other guy's doing, trying some things out, testing, adjusting for your area. And, uh, that's, that's where great leadership's discovered, right? So we would love to have you, uh, share this with, uh, somebody in this calling or a related calling and that would be great. And also, if you know somebody, uh, any type of leader who would be a fantastic guest on the How I Lead segment, uh, reach out to us. Go to [leading-saints.org/contact](https://leading-saints.org/contact). Maybe send this in individual an email letting them know that you're going to be suggesting their name for this interview. We will reach out to them and, uh, see if we can line 'em up. So again, go to [leading-saints.org/contact](https://leading-saints.org/contact) and there you can submit all the information and let us know, and maybe they will be on a feature How I lead Segment on the Leading Saints podcast. Remember, learn more about disclosing betrayal from Jeff Streger by visiting [leading-saints.org/fourteen](https://leading-saints.org/fourteen).

Speaker 3 00:40:37 It came as a result of the position of leadership, which was imposed upon us by the God of Heaven, who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when the Declaration was made concerning, the only and only true and living church upon the face of the earth, we were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.