



3 Types of Elders Who Attend Quorum Meeting | A How I Lead Interview with Adam Broderick

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Kurt Francom:

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, Geoff Streuer, put together a presentation about disclosing betrayal. Geoff 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-band-aid-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 Geoff's entire presentation at no cost in the Liberating Saints virtual library. Simply go to leadingsaints.org/14 and you can sign up for 14 days of free access to Geoff's presentation and the entire library. It's one of my favorite interviews. So my name is Kurt Francom, 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 2014 came around, we started the podcast, and that's really when it got some traction and took off 2016. We became a 501c3 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 we just talk about 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. In this How I Lead interview, we're headed to Michigan to talk with Adam Broderick, and yeah, you're gonna love this, okay? Send this to every elders quorum president you know. So many nuggets here. We begin our conversation with just, Adam unpacks this really interesting framing of, of the type of man who comes to elders quorum, and the way they think, and the way they approach the lesson, and the way they consume the lesson and digest the lesson. And to me, I found it really helpful to think, wow, yeah, and how can we be mindful of these different types of men that come to elders quorum to give them a more positive experience. And then we, Adam has such a wonderful approach with all things, you know, connection, building connection within the quorum, unity within the quorum, activities outside the quorum, and really stimulating this friendship to the point that, you know, many who are in his group are just really benefiting from that experience. So I love these kind of how I lead interviews that really give practical tools and approaches and things that really anybody can do and consider in their leadership. So Yeah, send it to that elders quorum president you know, or Relief Society President, really any leader is going to benefit from this. So, here we go! All right, we're headed to Michigan to talk with Adam Broderick. How are you, Adam? I'm doing fantastic. Good. Now tell people you can even show your hand. Tell us where you are in Michigan. That's what they do there, right?

Adam Broderick:

Yeah, this little thing, like right here. So right, central Michigan, a couple hours north of Detroit, kind of out in the middle of cornfields, but it's a nice area.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And what's your closest temple? How long does it take?

Adam Broderick:

Detroit, hour and 45. If you're speeding an hour and a half. I've never done that though. Never.

Kurt Francom:

Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure. Any plans or is there any obvious location if President Nelson announced another temple or?

Adam Broderick:

Well, there's the temple going in Grand Rapids. That is also two hours away. People have talked about here in Midland. We've got the perfect spot for it. So if anyone's listening who can make these decisions, like right next to our stake center, there's definitely a place that you could put a temple. So just saying.

Kurt Francom:

We'll all be listening a little closer in the next general conference, and we'll cheer for you if it happens. So very cool. And what do you do there in Michigan?

Adam Broderick:

So I am a, I work in the building products or building manufacturing industry. I make things to weatherproof, air insulate, waterproof houses. Tyvek is a product name you may have heard. It's a white paper that goes on side of houses and keeps them dry and airtight. Styrofoam, another product you've probably heard of. The blue boards that go on the outside of homes and keep them warm. So that kind of stuff.

Kurt Francom:

Oh, great. That's awesome. One of those many products someone's got to do, but we just take for granted, right? That's awesome. Now, you've currently been serving elders quorum president for a few years. Is there any story behind being called as elders quorum president?

Adam Broderick:

Sure. So I've been serving for just over three years. And by the time this podcast comes out, I will probably be in a different calling. Meet with my stake president later this week. And so this is kind of wrapping up for me. So it's been a good experience to think back. Started. in a time when we're sort of coming out of COVID. So there'd been sort of the way that we did things in COVID, and it was a good time to transition to become Oscar president and start to think about things to say, okay, we're not COVID anymore. What do we need to do differently? How do we need to approach this and kind of not go back to the way we were before COVID, but sort of move forward in a really productive and positive way from the sort of lockdown, barely functioning, organization that existed before that.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Did you feel like it was a tough go at just getting people reintegrated into the typical schedule and coming to church and core meeting every other week?

Adam Broderick:

Sure. Just getting back, no, that wasn't hard, but there was just not a lot happening. Very little energy in the quorum, very little connectivity, no real activities happening. So just kind of, it felt very static. Dead probably isn't the right word, it's probably too strong, but yeah, just not a lot of energy. And so as we came in, and I gathered a great group of guys in the Elvis Quorum Presidency, and we're like, okay, Like, how do we restart this? How do we reinvigorate and create connection, create value, create an experience where people really want to come back and experience being part of that community?

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, that's awesome. And anything like as far as demographics or how your words laid out that would be helpful to just understand the context of where you're leading?

Adam Broderick:

Sure. It's a centralized kind of core in the city with most of the people in our quorum. And then that spreads out to upwards of, say, 45 minutes away to sort of the farthest reaches of the unit. Most people live in sort of the core within 10 minutes of church. Broad range, many people are professionals working at Dow Chemical, DuPont Chemical, or some of the subsidiaries that are based here. Um, uh, but in terms of age, uh, we range from just sent a young man on a mission or, uh, just, just leaving on right now up through, you know, 90 years old and everywhere in between.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. And, uh, do you have many typically show up in a core meeting?

Adam Broderick:

It's typically 15 to 20 is our average size.

Kurt Francom:

And where do you meet in the church?

Adam Broderick:

That's a good question. And it's interesting. It has not been ideal. We've bounced back and forth between the sacrament meeting choir seats and the high council room, kind of based on who's there and whatnot. Having a more stable place to meet probably would be helpful. And I think sometimes the guys are like, OK, where are we meeting today? But it mixes things up. The different places have different pluses and minuses.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Anything as far as in the beginning of your, this experience, like being called and just, you know, you mentioned COVID and just sort of that, the awkwardness that was there, but anything else as far as that, the processes you went through, things you tried that didn't work or worked or how did you get started in the call?

Adam Broderick:

Yeah, no, and I think my experience has really been like an evolution over the three years. I've learned a ton through the process and I really appreciate that I've had this opportunity to serve in the calling and see change happen. So if nothing else, I don't think anything I'm going to say today is like otherworldly or truly revolutionary, but it has been evolutionary over time, kind of slowly going through. So, you know, just to kind of start, elders quorum when we came in was

defined as, you know, we walk into a room, say a prayer, do some announcements, do a lesson, say a prayer, and leave, right? And that was really all of elders quorum. There was ministering, but it had kind of fallen apart. Assignments were lots of dangling ends, loose, incomplete companionships, and really hadn't been updated for some time with move-ins and move-outs and whatnot. So kind of the first thing we did when we moved in is, okay, let's get a functional ministering assignment sheet list. So we, and that was actually a really cool experience. What we did is for our first ministering interview, rather than, you know, go in and just say, Hey, how are your families doing? We basically said, is ministering working for you? Do you like your companion? Is that working for you? How about your families? Do you, you know, are you connected to your families? Do you like them? Would you not care if you switched? Are there actually some, uh, interactions that aren't working? Like, yeah, let's, let's switch it. Let's try something new. And we did that with everyone and just kind of said, where are you at? How is this working? And from that, some people said, yes, I really want to stay with the families I've got. The companionship, it's great. Others were like, yeah, things aren't going great. A reset would be helpful. And taking all that together, I think we got to a really good kind of starting point for ministry. So that was like job one. to get that started. Now we're going to, I think, come around to this in the conversation. I'm not sure we've made a ton of progress with the quality of ministering. And I'll talk about as a presidency what we've done to do our best, right? So that was job one. And then job two was to start to build, and I'm going to say unity, but that's an abstract word. I think connection and just knowing each other is really what we wanted to try and accomplish. How do we get people to just know each other better? And I think that's super important, and it required us to take time away from the lesson to do so, which was a little scary because, you know, you go to the handbook, and the handbook says prayer, counsel, meaningful gospel instruction, and a prayer. That's the outline for a quorum meeting in the handbook right now. But what I realized, I think as a presidency, we realized is that meaningful gospel instruction was not really happening. I kind of emphasize that meaningful. What makes it meaningful? It's that we're having conversations that matter. And maybe a way to think about this is, The conversations up to that point were really focused on sort of ideal state, where you could pick a topic, and I'm going to use journal writing throughout, because that's like my quintessential lesson. And there's someone out there who's like, but I'm way into journal writing. I'm not meaning to offend you. Journal writing is great. But you get in a lesson, you're like, journal writing is awesome. You should be doing it every week. Here are the blessings that you get from it. Here's this like idealized state of journal writing. Go, right? Go off and do something with that. And as I talked to people in the quorum and thought about myself and my own experience with those types of lessons, I think there's sort of three different places that you can go with a lesson like that. Either one, You're self-motivated, you're growth-driven, you're like, I'm all into this, this is great. And inside your own head, you're like processing journaling and you're thinking about, you know, opportunities for you to grow and like digesting it all inside your own brain, right? There are some people who are going to be like that and they can just, you just give them a topic and in their own, they're just going to run with it. But I think that's just a few of us. And to be honest, it's probably more like an elders quorum president, a high counselor, like those people that are, you know, leadership, they're growth oriented. So yeah, they're gonna come out of those lessons. And they're like, I am so psyched to like, go write my journal today. Okay. But So that's kind of person one. Person two is sitting there thinking, there's nothing new.

I've had seven lessons on journals, and you're not telling me anything new here. And it hasn't been working for me so far. And you haven't told me anything that's going to help it make it work in the future. So this is just, until you can tell me something new, I'm really not going to engage. I'm just bored, waiting for something to happen. And I think if your goal in lessons is to share information, No one's waiting for that. So use an example for a journal. No one in your quorum is sitting there thinking, man, if only there was like a mechanism that I could mindfully process current events and think about my thoughts and ideas and problems. And man, if there's even a better way that I could document that, in a way that would benefit my kids and my kids' kids. Man, if only such a thing existed. Today, we're going to talk about journal writing. Oh, that's it, right? I mean, no one's doing that. No one's waiting to learn information that's going to tell them how to solve their problems. They already know the information. So if you're just sitting in this ideal space, a lot of people are just going to be bored. Now, the third person is actually the one that kind of scares me the most. And it's someone who's sitting there and listening to people talk about how they write in their journal and how awesome it is and how excited they are to have their kids and their kids' kids read it. And they're thinking, that's not me. I have never written in a journal before. I don't even know how to start. I don't belong here. These people that are talking here, that's not me. I don't belong here. I'm out of here. And that's what scares me because We need those people. They have life experiences. They're different. They're coming from a different perspective. And we don't want to alienate them by just simply talking about this ideal space, which is good. We probably ought to start there. But From this ideal, we have to somehow connect it over to the reality, right? And let me just pull up my phone real quick. There's a cool phrase from the handbook that I like, where it's talking about the purpose of elders quorum. And it says, members of the elders quorum work together to help accomplish God's work of salvation and exaltation. Really cool phrase. But that phrase involves people. And as soon as you insert people into anything, any idea, it becomes messy, nuanced, nonlinear. You can't engineer it. It's complex. There's just no simple, clean way to talk about it. So that ideal state starts to become less helpful. when we're talking about the boots on the ground work of salvation and exaltation of people in all of their messiness. So yeah, so it's like somewhere, what we recognize is that in these lessons, as we're planning how we're interacting in the quorum, we had to move from ideal, talking about why journal writing is awesome, to some real conversation that reflects where people are at. And that requires vulnerability, right? You have to talk about kind of the elephant in the room and why aren't we writing in journals? What are the challenges of it? What's the realities of it?

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. So let me make sure I'm following, because I think this is a really fascinating approach and model to kind of see things as they really are. It sounds like you're saying, you know, using journal writing as the example, but in a quorum setting, we typically talk about the ideals of whatever topic of it is, whether it's journaling, or, you know, ministering, or service, or some gospel principle, right, where we present an ideal there, and there's a group in there, you talk about group one, that's like, that excites them, that motivates them, thinks, oh, I could definitely do more, and I love how they're, where they're going with that. And then the second group that is maybe more of like, well, you know, maybe a little more indifferent, would you say, or how would you describe that second group?

Adam Broderick:

They're waiting for it to connect to reality for them, right? I mean, they're looking for more of a, you know, what does this look like in reality? I've tried it and it hasn't worked, but no one else seems to be talking about that.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, and so they may be, obviously, group one is probably where we get those who are commenting a lot in a typical elders quorum setting. Group two, maybe they're like step back thinking, well, I don't really get it.

Adam Broderick:

Or they're just on their phones because they're like, yeah, there's nothing new here for me.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Yeah. And then group three is those are being like, man, enough with the ideals. Like I just come here and I feel like these guys don't have the problems I've got and nobody's really connecting with anything that's important to me. So I may not, you know, skip a week here and there or kind of just phase out or, you know, I'm only here because, you know, my wife has the keys to the minivan, right? Like I can't go anywhere. And so, but I really love this approach, and I agree completely, like, there are these different dynamics happening, and often we're trying to just assume or push people into that group one, like, no, no, no, this is, these ideals are important, you should like to journal, and if you don't like to journal, well, come on, get on board, and you should start liking to journal, right?

Adam Broderick:

That's right. And the comment, which is certainly, you know, well-meaning in that, you know, you get out of church what you put into church. That's like a very person one or group one mindset of like, yeah, if you go in there and you like put in the mental work, thinking this through and kind of chewing on it in your own brain, you're going to get something out of it. That's totally true. But we don't want to create a church experience that's only for those people. And we want to start to expand this out. And I think there's some very clear ways to... to expand the reach to get all three of those groups in. And let me give you an example of a lesson we had. This was maybe a year, year and a half ago. We wanted to talk about giving blessings. You know, the quintessential lesson of here's how you give blessings and the wording and stuff like that. So we started, and we actually started with sort of an ideal state. I had some guys share experiences with blessings that were really powerful for them. Okay. And then After talking about that, I kind of paused a second and said, you know, guys, sometimes I don't want to give blessings. Sometimes when I go to bless someone who's sick, I hope that they ask me to anoint instead of do the blessing. And I get really nervous about like blessing babies in church, because it's in front of the entire church. And in fact, one of my kids, I figured out a way to have them blessed at home. I can't remember the exact circumstances of why that was, but part of that was just

inside of me. I was afraid. I was really nervous about doing that in front of the whole congregation. I said, who else has experienced that? Who else has felt that? I really don't want to give a blessing. Not surprising, a lot of people felt that way. That's not an unusual thing. There are a few people who are just... And then maybe you're one of those, you're thinking like, man, you don't want to give a blessing? Like, why did they give you the priesthood? But I think, I think it's a relatively universal experience of feeling nervous about that. And so, we kind of talked about that, like, why is that guys? Like, what about giving blessings is hard, despite the fact that we just talked about how awesome it is, how cool of experiences you can have. And that led into an awesome discussion about the things as men that would hold us back from offering to give a blessing. And it was transformational for me as we talked about, you know, how Satan wants us to feel unworthy, how, you know, worrying about the words we say and whether it's going to sound spiritual or sound impactful. Like we just, we like process that out loud. It's like, it's like the chewing that the group one's doing inside their own head. We did it out loud as a group. We just kind of chewed on it for a while. And I came out of it, personally, the fear of giving blessings was largely gone. And since then, I've had no issues. And so it was, it was transformational for me to be in that group, to talk about the real challenge, being willing to kind of put yourself out there spiritually, to ad hoc, give a blessing, you know, by the inspiration of God, but you know, are you being inspired by God, like there's all kinds of nuances there. But it gave me a lot of hope, and encouragement. And we like I think everyone came out of that meeting, just feeling really strengthened. So it started, though, with that kind of calling out the elephant in the room, right? Sometimes we don't wanna give blessings. And it's hard to say that because that can make you feel like something about you is broken. A priesthood holder shouldn't not want to give blessings, right? A good priesthood holder would never feel that. Well, but sometimes we do, but we're not broken, but we do feel that. So let's process that together. Let's understand that.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, it's a very human experience. And when you bring that up, somebody else will lean into that. Oh, good, he said what I was thinking, right? And that stimulates that connection. So let me back up more broadly and just make sure I'm following and give maybe the listeners a place to connect. So when you walk into elders quorum, I mean, you or as you're preparing, or obviously not just you preparing every time, but maybe the instructor or others, Hopefully they're doing so with this idea of keeping these three groups in mind, saying like, I can't just go in there and speak to the ideal and assume everybody's going to jump on board and love it and walk out like motivated. But you're considering these three groups, right? And then what's the application of that look like? I mean, you've given some examples, but this principle you talk about that in core meanings, connection precedes meaningful instruction.

Adam Broderick:

Yeah, so let's talk about the connection part because it all lines up together. So, you know, the real discussions happen when people are vulnerable and talk about the real challenges they're facing, but how do we make it so they feel safe to do that? So there's a couple of things that we've done as a presidency to try and create the safety that allows someone to say, hey, I feel

like I'm a little broken in this way. And that's not what they say. They say... I have an issue with swearing or I have, you know, I struggle with this, that or the other. But what they're, in effect, they're kind of saying is, hey, in this little way, I'm a little bit broken. And that's why it requires so much vulnerability to go there. But the reality is we're all broken in a little bit of way. Maybe it's sometimes the same, maybe it's different. So what have we done to try and create safety? The first thing is we did start to have a conversation at the beginning of Quorum just about life. And that was really, really hard when we started. It's probably because we jumped in, we knew what we wanted to do, but the people weren't prepared for it. We probably didn't start doing it the right way, but we just walked in and said, okay, guys, what's up? What's happened in life? Like what's any you know, achievements at work, and we'd kind of change up the question we'd ask, like, hey, you know, did you have an accomplishment at work this week or something with your family that was off them or spring break just ended, did someone go somewhere cool for spring break? And the first time I asked that question, it was dead silence. No one, because it was so foreign to what had been done for so many years in that quorum setting. So it was just quiet. It was hard. But we kept doing it. We stuck with it. And I'll admit for a long, it never got like super smooth, or just like where people are just kind of spouting all over the place. Some weeks would be, some weeks weren't. And I actually questioned for a time whether that was really meaningful. And then after we collected some data that said, yes, it was, I'll talk about that in a second. But that was the first thing we spend time with the quorum talking about life and what's going on. The second thing is we had a conversation as a quorum that's where we specifically asked, what are the things about being guys or this this group general specifically, that would keep us from connecting? And then we came up with three ground rules to sort of address those. So our three ground rules, and we talk about these, not every lesson, but, you know, every other month. Let's remind, okay, guys, our three ground rules are, number one, we love each other. And that means that when someone expresses something and they're reaching out for someone, we will meet that, right? We're there. Like we love each other. We're here for each other. Number two, we trust each other. And that means that when I say something that's either controversial or vulnerable, no one's going to attack me. No one's going to talk about it outside of quorum. will validate you, will be there for you. You can trust us to be there for you if you go into that space. And the last one is we're honest with each other. Like we say what we're actually thinking as opposed to putting up a veneer. So we talk about those and try and make those kind of our guiding principles of our discussion. Yeah. And I think that it was helpful to talk about it out loud and everyone would be like, hey guys, our tendencies are to do things that will inhibit sharing. So let's specifically do these other things that will counteract those and encourage sharing.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, yeah, there's so much here and there's such a good valid like practice of having these ground rules and you know, nobody listening should necessarily copy and paste exactly what you said like, great, those are ours now, right? But to really process what's needed in your in your quorum. There's a book out there that I've referenced before. It's on our leadingsaints.org books page. It's called *The Art of Gathering* by Priya Parker. And she talks about this concept of creating a container of a meeting, whatever meeting it is. And obviously, it works in the context of a quorum meeting where there's certain boundaries in that meeting, right? You know where

the experience begins and ends, and you also know the rules of what's happening in there. And sometimes we make too many assumptions as far as assuming it. Well, everybody knows, like, you know, what's going on in elders quorum and how we should act, but to have these ground rules and even invite the quorum, say, are we missing anything here? Is there another ground rule we need to put in place? And in my elders quorum experience, even stating like, You guys, just so we know, and I literally go and close the doors of the, you know, we're in the culture hall, and I'll say, everything we talk about, we invite you to let it remain in this room, right? And that naturally creates some safety that guys will lean in, they'll speak up more, and they'll get more real that way. And again, it's a ground rule. Just having ground rules and articulating them can really stimulate a positive quorum experience.

Adam Broderick:

Yeah, so those are two things that we've done. The third one, we didn't start until probably a year afterwards. And it was a part of a discussion we're having about setting a conference talk about prayer and the power of prayer and stuff like that. And I kind of got vulnerable to group and said, hey, I'm sitting here listening to this. I'm processing it. I do that as elders quorum, right? I'm one of those, you know, growth processing people. I'm processing and I'm realizing I'm your elders quorum president, but I am not regularly praying for you guys by name. And they kind of ribbed me for a little bit, and they should have, right? That's something that I was born present should be doing, right? But it was kind of admission like, yeah, I'm not. And it morphed into a conversation in the group about why don't we pray for each other? What would it look like if we did? Why don't we? How powerful would that group be if we prayed for each other? And so we decided at that core meeting to start asking, kind of collectively decided, let's ask each other, what can we pray for? Guys will be guys, but I said something like, the first person that is willing to put themselves out there and ask for something to pray for, I'll give them a candy bar. And 10 seconds later, I get a thing on our group chat, and it's like, pray that I get a candy bar from one of the kids, one of the guys in my quorum. I'm like- That's great. I knew someone was going to say that. But I mean, it's fun. We have a lot of fun. But then some people started to talk about like, hey, I could actually use a prayer about this. And what's cool about that, when you have a guy saying, would you pray for me? That sort of implicitly, again, says, I'm broken in a small way, and I could use your guys' strength and support to help help me deal with that and help me move past that and gain strength. And it's actually turned into a really, really sweet experience to have that conversation and just to say, hey, which of you guys here can we pray for today? And one experience that really stands out to me, we'd asked that question in a CORE meeting and a couple of people had shared something. And then I could tell someone in the back was like, thinking about saying something. So I say, hey, what's up? And he was like, hey, my wife's in the hospital right now. None of us knew. Like, my wife's in the hospital. We don't know what's going on. Like, it's kind of scary. Would you pray for her? And like, in that moment, I was like, you know, lesson aside, right? I mean, like, set everything aside. Like, dude, like, let's talk about like, how can we support you? Like, what, what's going on? Like, what can we do? And what I think about and when I'm most scared of the knowledge quorum president. So we would go through an entire lesson, we're talking about journals and how awesome journals are, and someone's in the back corner the whole lesson thinking, my wife is in the hospital. I can't even think about the stuff they're talking about because there's something really challenging going on

in my life and none of these guys know about it. They're just kind of doing their thing, talking about journal writing, and my wife's in the hospital. So creating that space for someone to share, these are some challenging things that are going on, creates connection, creates unity, encourages vulnerability, and makes sure that we're not leaving someone else out in the cold as we're having our cute little discussion about something when they're really struggling with something big.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Yeah. That's powerful. I love that story. And again, it just, like you said, if you almost feel the shift, you know, in the, in the core meeting when someone really leans in that way and that brotherhood really stimulates. So, um, talk to me about as far as like connection outside the Sunday quorum meeting every other, every other week. Have you done that?

Adam Broderick:

Sure. Um, For a while, I wasn't sure if guys really wanted to meet up because we were doing no quorum activities. There hadn't been a quorum activity for probably five or six years when I got called. You know, this is even pre-COVID, really didn't do anything. So we sent out a survey and we actually sent it out again since then. I've got some results from that survey. 23 out of 25 people that filled out our kind of activity interest survey said, we want to meet outside of quorum. And that kind of surprised me. I thought it'd be like five or six or eight, almost 100% of members of my quorum that's filled out the survey said, yeah, I want to meet with guys outside of quorum. So that kind of makes a shift and say, okay, we want to meet How do we want to do that? So we've organized what we do as a quorum in kind of two buckets. The first bucket is activities that are planned and sponsored by the elders quorum presidency. And we wanted to do those in ways that really strengthened the men in some certain key ways. So when we came in, we saw there are four relationships that we wanted to support our elders in. Number one, the relationship with God. Number two, the relationship with their wife. Number three, the relationship with their kids. And number four, the relationship with other men. And so we said, like, that's how we want to do this. And Sunday, Generally, that's helped them strengthen their relationship with God. So what we did is we planned activities and we tried to do them every other month or so. We'd rotate between those three categories. So first, Guys with other guys. So plan a shooting activity. Everyone shows up, someone brings guns, and we shoot for a while. Or, hey, we want to help dads who have kids. Not all of the elders have kids. That's fine. Not every activity is going to apply to every person. So we planned sledding activities. We planned a camping activity, an evening hangout. play activity. And some of them were just like, yeah, leave the wives at home, guys, this is just you and your kids come and have a cool experience. And then others were focused on guys and their spouse. So planned a date night with like painting and stuff. Have planned game nights, adult only game nights, focused on inviting people to come as couples and hang out together. So those activities Some have been wildly well attended. Some there's only been four or five people. And that's how we kind of post them and say, if this is a need for you, come. That's cool. Not everyone needs to come. You don't need to be here, but we want to create this opportunity. If this is a need that you have, jump on in. So that's kind of the core organized activities. We've also worked on starting interest-based micro

groups, I'm sure it's the right word for it. But it's really just people who had shared interests and create a space for them and kind of help jumpstart that to happen. So one of the groups that started was a weekly soccer in the gym group. And from our perspective, what that involved was finding the people who are interested, connecting them together. We helped them find the equipment that they need to start meeting and playing soccer. And then it has taken off and it's happening all on its own, right? We don't supervise. We don't do anything. It just keeps happening. There's a discussion book group that happens. And based on a recent survey we did, there's a couple of others that we're going to kind of do that same thing. Started be an incubator to help it stay alive in the first couple of months when it's hard for those to get going, and then have them go off and run by themselves. That's awesome. Yeah, so those kind of two different groups, I think maximizes our impact and our time spent, but then creates opportunities for people to gather in a variety of different contexts and in support of different interests.

Kurt Francom:

And so those are typically happening like on a weekly basis, like the one that you do with those focuses? Is that a weekly thing or?

Adam Broderick:

It's what the group wants to do, right? Oh, okay. And there's been a few that have started and then kind of stopped and we're going to try and kind of start them again. And that's natural. It's sort of an ebb and flow.

Kurt Francom:

And I'm just curious with all those activity outside the quorum, like you, obviously the ones, the interest based ones, they kind of get their life of their own and they manage that and just keep it going or, you know, or come back to it. But is there, do you feel like there's like, do you have to, one of your counselors that focus on making sure the activities are happening or how do you like with the administration and management of all that?

Adam Broderick:

They're usually pretty simple. It's not a lot of energy and time. Guys typically aren't very needy. We don't have to create this elaborate experience for them. It's really just gathered together. There's some donuts, some guns or some sleds or hot chocolate or, you know, the one that we did that was a painting, we did bring in someone from the Relief Society to kind of help lead that. And some of the activities do end up co-coordinated or co-planned with Relief Society. We've had a great relationship with them to say, hey, we're doing an activity to support men and their wives that obviously, you know, impacts you and your group. Let's work on this together. And that's worked out pretty well too.

Kurt Francom:

Awesome. Anything else to mention as far as building connection outside of the Sunday core meeting?

Adam Broderick:

Yeah, there is. One of the key elements to connection has been using WhatsApp as a informal communication mechanism from in between people within the quorum. And I'm going to talk a lot about WhatsApp. That's because of what we know. There's probably other platforms out there. We actually considered switching to Discord at one point, and there's probably others. But what the WhatsApp looks like, we try and get as many of the guys on there. They're not all on there, but most of them are. And if I just pull it up, the last two weeks, Hey, does anyone have a tile saw? I'm looking at doing some stuff in my kitchen. Hey, there's activity this, you know, game night this Friday. Hey, someone got taken to the hospital. Can you guys pray for them? have a battery charger, anyone know how to, or, you know, a good place to get a garage door fixed. I can keep going on, right? It's just very informal connection, but it's, it's an opportunity for someone to reach out and say, Hey guys, I have a need and to have people in your quorum meet that need. And we use that for, hey, someone in the hospital needs a blessing. Is there anyone available? This Saturday, we've got to move. We need six people. Who's available? And the fact that it's not just one-way communication, it's not an email newsletter that goes out from the presidency to everyone and just kind of out, and they just receive it. There's a lot of back and forth and people connecting with each other. So I think that's been a really powerful platform to connect people in non-spiritual matters as well as spiritual things.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, yeah, and in modern days, like with these so many apps and places to connect, it should almost be mandated that every quorum should have a group chat of some type, right? Because I see that a lot in our quorum chat as well, just the very informal requests or thoughts or someone shares a funny meme or whatever it is. And it is such a simple way to stimulate further connection outside the quorum meeting, right?

Adam Broderick:

Yeah, and I will note WhatsApp has expanded the flexibility of the system, you can now have a kind of an umbrella community group, and then underneath it, a bunch of subgroups. And so we're actually in the process of transitioning that right now, where each of the focus or interest groups will have their own sub group or sub string within the group. And so everyone can see what's happening, but they don't necessarily have to be part of the conversation or get all the notifications. So there's some issues in trying to make sure that people don't leave because there's just too much unwanted chatter. Yeah, so something you kind of have to manage is as a presidency. But we're working on it. And that's been a great resource. There's some groups that aren't doing that. So strongly encourage them to if they if they aren't.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, that's great. That's awesome. All right, what about the last principle here is minister to the ministers?

Adam Broderick:

Yeah. So I mentioned at the beginning that we got the program administratively in position. And I won't say that it has been spectacularly successful at the ministering to the families level. And we've tried lots of different things. you know, more handholding. I mean, everything I would tell you, you'd be like, yeah, Adam, I can tell you that that wasn't going to work. But you know, but what we've kind of settled on at this point is to say, if we can't make ministering happen, because you can't really force it, what we can do is we can minister to the men through the ministering interviews. And the hope is that over time, by modeling what it looks like to look after someone, and to kind of show this like, yeah, I'm not here to drive accountability, I'm here to drive relationship. And that's the purpose of a ministry interview. And that's also the purpose of ministering. It's not administrative. It's not teaching. It's really ministering and looking at them. So I think the keys there are, most of our ministry interviews happen over the phone, which I think some people prefer in person, we found doing over the phone is just fine. And three quarters of the conversation is, hey, how are you doing? How's work? How's your family? How's life? What's going well? What are you struggling with? And really spending time being with the minister, the person. And then there's a chunk of it that asks, how is ministering working for you? What are the obstacles? Are you finding fulfillment in it? Are you not finding fulfillment? How is it working for you? you know, is there anything we can support you to help you level up in a way that you want to with ministering? And so it's kind of a bit of ministering, a bit of administrative and mostly just, hey, I'm here to minister to you. Will that work? Has it worked? Yeah.

Kurt Francom:

Not amazing. I don't know, we kind of like frame the ministering interview in maybe awkward ways. And we wonder, it almost becomes less fun when we do that, because it's sort of like, you know, maybe too often we just quickly default to like, well, how's your families? Like, are you ministering? Do you know your companion? Like we get right into it. And That's just like, I don't know, like, there's so much more that can happen there where it's more of an interview of connection. And, you know, if you're, you're stimulating this connection in Quorum, you know, hopefully it gets easier, but by just, by just making it a real conversation of how you doing and like, oh yeah, and you know where to find your ministering assignment, right? Like, you know, and, and I don't know, it'll be a lot, a lot more engaging and people, it'd be less like, you know, pulling teeth that way, but.

Adam Broderick:

Yeah. And, and they've been great conversations and I've, I've really enjoyed. There have been times when, uh, my counselors have done some of them and I've done some of them. There's been some quarters where I just did, I said, Hey guys, I'm doing all this quarter. Um, I want to, I want to connect in with people and just kind of find out what's going on. And that both, both are

good. Um, I like as president to, to know what's going on and how those connections. Um, but I haven't always done all of them myself.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah. Really cool. Well, Adam, any point principle concept we didn't hit on that we might need to make sure we cover? How did we do?

Adam Broderick:

No, pretty good. Let me kind of round this out with an experience we had. This was a lesson back in December. I was leading a discussion or I was supposed to lead a discussion and I couldn't narrow down like a specific topic to talk about. And I realized, okay, I just want to hear from them. Like, how is this working for you guys? Like, what are you experiencing? And I wanted to do it. in a way that allowed for maximum honesty. So I actually tried something new. I don't know if you're familiar with the Slido platform, where people can anonymously submit answers to a question.

Kurt Francom:

Oh, cool.

Adam Broderick:

Okay. So I threw up a QR code, everyone logs on to the Slido app. And then, you know, started with a question just to kind of get things started. And the first question I asked them, that was kind of a real question, was, you know, what have been impactful discussions for you in the past year in elders quorum? Like, what's really been meaningful to you? And this I mentioned earlier, how much of a struggle it's been for me to feel like, That first 10, 15 minutes of quorum was productive. The guys really enjoyed it. It wasn't just super awkward. What was fascinating is most of the answers I got to that question were, I love the time that we spend at the beginning of quorum talking. And that blew me away. I did not expect that. I expected, you know, this great lesson or that great lesson. But, you know, some of the comments were, you know, the open discussions at the beginnings, very real, supportive, strengthening. The most impactful discussions are usually right at the beginning where we address the needs of those in the quorum before a scheduled planned lesson. praying for members of the quorum, speaking with one another concerning the welfare of our souls. And so that was really satisfying to see that, to think, you know, all of those times where I asked it and no one said anything, when there was, you know, silence or just, it just didn't seem, it was working. And that was what's cool about it. Like, people, guys want that connection. So even if they don't look like they want it, even if they don't act like they want it, they really do. And so even if done awkwardly, poorly, whatever, taking the time to do that. So if someone's hesitant to start that or they did it once and no one said anything, keep up with it. Keep doing it. It's really impactful and meaningful to people.

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, that's awesome.

Adam Broderick:

Yeah. So and then we went on to ask a couple of other questions. And the last question we asked was, you know, what remains as my most significant obstacle to personal spiritual growth? So it's really a question that's asking for vulnerability, right?

Kurt Francom:

Yeah, that's a great question.

Adam Broderick:

And there was no, uh, We didn't get some answers that we suspect probably are true. No one said, I'm struggling with pornography, despite the fact that someone probably is. So we didn't get like 100% vulnerability, but some of the answers that people were giving were just really, they were personal. dysfunctional tendencies during my own childhood trauma. Honestly, my phone, internet distractions. Distractions have replaced meaningful, mindful time with God. So it was a cool experience, first of all, just to be able to ask questions. and allow people to answer anonymously, which we don't do every time. I mean, obviously, most discussions are very much in person. They're very much, you know, we know who's talking. But I think occasionally allowing people to be more vulnerable than they would be in person, I think is valuable. I think we got some great feedback. And in between each of these questions, we stopped and talked about it. And there was a lot of like, oh, wow, I didn't realize people were feeling that or thought that. And it kind of changed people's perspective as they saw what people were really thinking inside. So I think it's a cool tool. Again, I'm not, I don't work for Slido. There's probably plenty of apps or versions of ways to do that. But creating some system, we're actually in the process of Kind of on a weekly basis, having a Slido that's just out there that someone, if during quorum meeting they wanted to say something, but they didn't feel comfortable saying it out loud, there's a format that they can kind of, on the side discreetly, throw something up there and the teacher would be the only one that would see it as a way to facilitate that. Because I think it's hard to have people be vulnerable in front of 15, 20 other guys at the same time. Um, so providing a format for them to be a little more vulnerable, but not be so open, I think is helpful.

Kurt Francom:

I love it. Love it. I love a good tool like that, that people can check out as well. But, um, and we've done that in our core meeting with a simple, just. you know, anonymous Google form. And you just look at it in the spreadsheet that are in the results response portion. And it's amazing how real people get when, when they know their name isn't attached to it, it gives us still gives us chance to discuss it and share perspectives on it, you know, so it's really powerful. Cool, Adam. Well, this has been fantastic. So many fun ideas. I'm inspired and lots that I can try and consider. As you consider your time as a leader, how has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ?

Adam Broderick:

Yeah, you know, fantastic question. And, you know, as I've seen my quorum grow over the past three years, I've definitely seen a lot of growth in myself. And that's been a hugely rewarding experience for me. What I see is... When I am trying to do God's work in my elders quorum, and I see Him guide me, and not just me, my presidency, when we're counseling, we're gathering, and ideas come, and they flow, and they make sense, and then they work, and then we see growth, I know that God is guiding us. And as a disciple of Jesus Christ, best thing we can do is know what He wants us to do. And as we do, as we receive revelation and get guidance and then follow through with that and do, we can know in a given moment, I am doing exactly the right thing.

Kurt Francom:

And that concludes this How I Lead interview. I hope you enjoyed it. And 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 experience. And this is how we develop as leaders, just hearing what the other guy's doing, trying some things out, testing, adjusting for your area. And that's where great leadership is discovered. So we would love to have you share this with somebody in this calling or a related calling, and that would be great. And also, if you know somebody, any type of leader, who would be a fantastic guest on the How I Lead segment, reach out to us. Go to leadingsaints.org contact. Maybe send this individual an email letting them know that you're going to be suggesting their name for this interview. We'll reach out to them. and see if we can line them up. So again, go to leadingsaints.org slash contact and there you can submit all the information and let us know. And maybe they will be on a future How I Lead segment on the Leading Saints podcast. Remember, learn more about disclosing betrayal from Geoff Struer by visiting leadingsaints.org slash 14.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley:

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 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.