

The Shepherd's Call

1 Peter 5:1-4

Introduction

Faithful shepherd is perhaps the best descriptive term for what the Bible refers to as “pastor/elder.”

“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you” (vv1-2a).

“exhort” Gk *parakaleo*; ‘urge, beseech, implore, intreat, plead.’

“elder,” “pastor,” and “overseer” are all synonyms.

The Bible calls for a plurality of elders in the churches.

“And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed” (Acts 14:23).

“Diotrephes” who liked “to put himself first,” ignoring any other “authority” (3 John 9).

The Scripture calls for *variety* in leadership

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

Pastors and elders are responsible for the condition of the souls God has entrusted to their care:

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Hebrews 13:17).

A Shepherd's Four-Fold Duty: *Feeding, Leading, Correcting, Protecting.*

The primary task of the shepherd is *Feeding.*

John 21:1-17

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep’” (John 21:15-17).

“Feed” (vv15, 17) Gk *boske*; ‘feed’ used twice.

“Tend” (v16) Gk *poimaino*; ‘to rule’; from *poimen*, ‘shepherd.’ Lead, correct, protect.

The crucial motivation that should drive every pastor or elder in the Lord's churches: "do you love me?"

The Nature of Sheep (drawn from *The Inspirational Writings* of Phillip Keller, former shepherd, and pastor)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1).

- Some sheep wander off.**
- Sheep are only truly content when the shepherd is near.**

He makes me lie down in green pastures... (v2a).

- Sheep are extremely fearful creatures.** They refuse to lie down unless all fears are relieved.
- Sheep are social animals.**
- Sheep are often tormented by flies or other parasites.**
- Sheep are constantly hungry.**

Only the shepherd can resolve all these impediments to the sheep finding rest.

It's not just the sheep that tend to scatter, at times, shepherds do too, losing sight of their primary call.

Feed the sheep

"Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words but they do not practice them" (Ezekiel 33:30-33; NASU).

The churches' paramount responsibility is to *feed* the Word of God to its members, but who are they?

"And [Jesus] answered them, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother'" (Mark 3:33-35).

The number of churches with shepherds who faithfully feed the flock of God is dwindling. And one day, God will bring a famine to a people who prefer to have their *ears tickled* with pleasing words

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12).

But to that faithful remnant who hunger for the Word, God Himself will provide a way to find it:

Ezekiel 34:15-16, 22-24

"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).