

Prayer and Equipping

Biblical Pastoring/Shepherding

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Ephesians 4:10-16 ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

From this portion of scripture we can clearly see that God has given these gifts to the church for a specific purpose. They are:

- 1.) To Equip God's people.
- 2.) Build up the body.
- 3.) To bring unity of the faith.
- 4.) To bring maturity and growth.
- 5.) Build itself up in love.

As we look at these outcomes that these gifts should have on the local church we see that Pastoring /shepherding plays a very important role in this.

The two greatest weapons that the Pastor/Shepherd have at his disposal that he can employ in his Pastoring/Shepherding is the word of God and the Holy Spirit.

The word of God has to inform our practice 2 Timothy 3:16-17" All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in

righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." The word of God has all the answers to lives questions even the most difficult ones it is the Pastors/Shepherd work to find these and minister them to those who needs the answers. But the letter on its own is not enough 2 Corinthians 3:6 "Who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

The letter announces Gods will without granting the power to keep it. The Spirit alone gives life because only the Spirit can change the heart, thereby enabling God's people to keep his commands.

So we all need a good understanding on what the bible teaches on whatever we are speaking into but as we bring the word of God across it has to be done under the anointing of the Holy Spirit because this will bring life and freedom in the life of the Christian.

Just before we begin to take a look at Pastoring/Shepherding from a practical point of view I would like us to take a look at our greatest example of all time in the bible and that is God Himself.

Pastoring/Shepherding finds its beginning and end in God.

He is the shepherd of Israel Psalm 80:1 "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock, you who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth."

He ultimately demonstrated the meaning of his covenantal love as the great Shepherd of the sheep by giving His life for them. John 10:11 "I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

David who himself was a good shepherd who killed the bear and the lion when they tried to take his sheep and who later became one of the greatest Kings to have ever lived said this about God as his shepherd and from this portion we can learn as under shepherds how we are to look after His sheep.

Psalm 23 ¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

From this Psalm we learn that:

1.) Concern for each individual sheep "The Lord is my Shepherd." The good shepherd calls them by name John 10:3 he knows them 10:27 and he goes out to seek the one that was lost Luke 15:4. As under Shepherds we must let people know they matter to God and that he is interested in all of their lives.

2.) Rest "He makes me to lie down" He knows our fragile and weak we are and he treats us accordingly. He knows how much we can handle and as under shepherds we need to be sensitive to this in people's lives as well.

3.) Provision for daily sustenance "Green pastures and still waters. Food and drink this is both spiritually and physically as under shepherds it is vital that we know where these places are so that we can lead the sheep there.

4.) Refreshment and encouragement when tired worn out or discouraged. "He restores my soul."

As under Shepherds it is very important that we can encourage ourselves in the Lord and also others in their difficult times. Be positive people.

5.) Guidance and leadership he leads (not drives) me he leads them out he goes before them. A good shepherd is someone who knows the way goes the way and shows the way.

6.) Instruction, training and discipline. "He leads me in paths of righteousness." Are we leading people in the paths of righteousness as they follow us as Shepherds.

7.) For his name sake. This has to be our motivation as under Shepherds for his name sake for his glory and honour.

8.) Security and protection "I will fear no evil your rod and your staff they comfort me." Protection from falling and from attack from wolves without and within. Acts 20:28-30 Wolves will come in among you and men from within will rise up and distort the truth. When the wolf comes the Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep John 10:11

9.) Personal fellowship and loving friendship. "You are with me John 10:14-15 "I am the good Shepherd, I know my own and my own know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep."

As under Shepherds we must bring clarity to those we lead that God is relational in his dealings with man he has always been a relational God from Adam and Eve in to eternity it will always be so.

Revelation 7:17 "For the lamb in the midst of the throne will be their Shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Price of Shepherding:

The Shepherd is prepared to lay down his life to protect the sheep

The Shepherd and His Flock:

John 10:1-18

¹ I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ² The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. ³ The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes

on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognise a stranger's voice. ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, I tell you the truth; I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. ¹¹ **I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.** ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father— and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life— only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No-one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

Firstly, Jesus is the ultimate Shepherd and it is without question that He laid down his life for His sheep, first for the Jew and then for the Gentile.

Jesus physically laid down His life for every one of us so that we could live life to the full.

In Shepherding and Pastoring God's sheep, Jesus' laying down of His life is the example in how we are to act towards God's sheep in the protecting them.

If you look at the aspect of a real life shepherd who actually tends sheep, we notice the following:

Sheep:

- I. Have little or no means of self-defence; can only run away
- II. Easily killed by enemies

Good Shepherd

- I. Works tirelessly to provide protection and security
 - a. He sleeps in the field with his sheep or at the gate of the sheep pen
- II. Defends sheep against all their enemies
- III. Provides protection while they sleep
- IV. Cares for, loves and sacrifices his life for his sheep

1 Samuel 17:34-37

³⁴ But David said to Saul, Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵ **I went after it** struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.

³⁶ *Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has **defied the armies of the living God.*** ³⁷ ***The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.*** Saul said to David, Go, and the **LORD be with you.**

- As a practical shepherd David physically put his life on the line for the sheep, he was willing to be torn to shreds by the bear and the lion
 - He attacked the enemy on behalf of the sheep and if the animal turned on him attacked it and killed it
- Enemy attacks the “Lord’s sheep” as an act of defiance to our God, just as Goliath was defying God
 - This provoked David and should provoke us to defend the sheep, because the enemies attacks on God’s sheep is an act of defiance to our Lord
- It was God that allowed David to overcome the bear and the lion, not David’s ability as such
- We are only able to lay our lives down for the sheep if we are **lead by the Father**, because we will do it out of Love and trust in Him. If it was out of our own desires and strength, we would not be willing to sacrifice ourselves for the sheep

What are the aspects of laying down your life for the sheep to protect them:

1. Christ’s Example

- a. Jesus was willing, so should we
- b. If Jesus had the authority to lay down His own life and take it up again, surely He has placed that same authority over us. We are Shepherding under the Authority of Jesus

The question is, do we physically lay our lives down for the sheep?

This question is answered in the second aspect of laying down your life to protect the sheep:

2. Self Sacrifice

- a. Laying down your life for the sheep, as the pastor or shepherd is not necessarily the physical act of dying for the sheep as opposed to being **self sacrificing – Putting others before yourself**
- b. Jesus does however state in *John 15:13 Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*
- c. We’re talking more about the aspect of **self sacrifice**, giving yourself selflessly for the sheep or the people that we pastor
 1. Time
 1. You will need to make time for others, or sacrifice your time for others
 2. Talent
 1. God has put the ability in you to pastor others, you cannot keep it for yourself only, to be used in the body for the body
 3. Treasure – Money etc.
 1. It will cost you money in all this

- a. It is good to be generous as a pastor or shepherd by paying for coffees etc.
- b. Travelling for visitations etc could also cost you
- d. There is a limit of course; this is never done to the neglect of your own family. If that were the case then there is not testimony in your selflessness – willing to do anything for everyone but nothing for His own family

3. Motivation

- a. What is our Motivation for caring for the sheep and laying down our lives for the sheep?
 - 1. If it is for our selves, what are we gaining?
 - 2. If it is for Jesus, then it is a different story

John 21:15-17

¹⁵ *When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these? Yes, Lord, he said, you know that I love you. Jesus said, Feed my lambs.*

¹⁶ *Again Jesus said, Simon son of John, do you truly love me? He answered, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Jesus said, Take care of my sheep.*

¹⁷ *The third time he said to him, Simon son of John, do you love me? Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, do you love me? He said, Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you. Jesus said, Feed my sheep.*

- b. I truly believe that our motivation is centred on **Love** and is two fold:
 - 1. We lay down our lives down for the sheep because **We Love Jesus**, we are doing it for Him, because He loves us and our self-sacrifice is motivated by our love for Him
 - 2. Love for the sheep / people. We have to **Love the sheep / people**. Cannot hate what you do because there is a price to pay
 - 1. You know the sheep so well (I know my sheep and my sheep know me), that you care for them. You are sad when they are sad and happy when they are happy

1 Corinthians 13

¹ *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

⁴ *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, **it is not self-seeking**, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

⁸ *Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass*

away.⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part,¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child; I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Also look at the Cost of being a disciple of Jesus in General.
Luke 14:25-35

4. Ownership – Stewardship

*John 10:12-13*¹² the hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

- a. We are not hired hands – Pastoring and shepherding involves caring for the sheep as if they are yours
- b. We are stewarding God’s people as such and will held accountable for them, we will be held responsible for leading them astray
 1. Ezekiel 34 talks about bad shepherds
- c. Because David understood that he was a steward, looking after what was not His as if it was his – He Loved the sheep and cared for them

5. Protecting with the use of Weapons

- a. Weapons include the Word of God and the Spirit of God
 1. Word
 1. 2 Tim 3:16-17 – All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in Righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work
 2. We protect the sheep by speaking truthfully from the word of God. Even if is not nice to hear because there is security in boundaries, especially those set by God
 - a. Those boundaries are like the sheep pen with a gate that Christ stands before
 - b. Leading with the word of God is like building the secure walls of the sheep pen. The walls have a gate which is Jesus
 2. Spirit
 1. Have to be lead by the Holy Spirit otherwise we could lead the people of God astray
 2. Ephesians 6 – Our battle is not against flesh and blood but against the forces in the spiritual realm
 3. Pray for the sheep, intercede for them

Shepherding beyond our four walls.

Making house calls

Acts 20:20 "You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house."

The entrance

Arrive at the house prayed up. Remember you are representing the King of Kings and He is not angry so be cheerful and happy.

Find something to begin to talk about maybe an honest compliment to start the conversation off.

Wait for the host to tell you where and when to sit as this could cause embarrassment.

Ask some questions about the family kid's husband and so on. You can also ask if there is something specific that they would like to discuss with you or are there any specific things that they would like for you to include in your prayer for them.

If some serious issues arise try to schedule a specific counselling time at a later stage with them and chat to an Elder about that.

Try to always keep the discussion on Jesus as it is Him that we are representing on our visit. Tell of what he has done for you.

Do not overstay your welcome. Do not forget who you are representing.

The response will determine the length of the visit and what gets discussed. Do not give too much information and overload the people.

There are many ways of bringing the visit to a close.

You can say something like before I go is there anything specific you would like me to pray for? Then after that has been done then go do not now start another half an hour conversation.

It is good to go with a portion of scripture that God has laid on your heart for that specific visit but if during the visit you see that another portion is more appropriate then use what is needed for that visit. Make it very practical and applicable to them.

If a question should arise and you do not know the answer just say politely that you are not sure but you will get back to them and then do that as soon as possible.

Prayer

Keep the prayer specific towards the needs that have come up and make it God focused and end positively. It needs to be mixed with supplication and thanksgiving.

These are the three main purposes of the house visit.

- 1.) To uncover sin and needs.
- 2.) To show God's concern and interest for His sheep.
- 3.) To deal with simple problems.

Characteristics of Jesus as the good shepherd

There are certain characteristics that were evident in the life of Jesus as a shepherd of His people. Let's take a look at some of those and ask ourselves do we see these operating in our own lives?

1.) Love - Jesus acted out of love for all people.

Rich young man in Mark 10:21²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Lazarus in John 11:5-6⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days,

John 11: 35-36³⁵ Jesus wept.³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

Ephesians 5:1-2 "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

2.) Humility - Phil 2:3-8³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

"There are many of us that are willing to do great things for The Lord, but few of us are willing to do little things."

"Being humble is not thinking less of yourself it is think of yourself less."

3.) Service- Jesus was concerned for those around him.

Mark 10:42-45⁴² Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be

your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

4.) Full of joy - In what he did and how he did it.

Hebrews 12:2 " Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfected of our faith who for the joy set before him endured the cross scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

5.) Obedience- Heb 5:7-9⁷ During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.⁸ Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

"Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late and how little revival has resulted. I believe the problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying, and it simply will not work. To pray for revival while ignoring the plain precept laid down in scripture is to waste a lot of words and get nothing for our trouble. Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience."

6.) Forgiveness - Jesus is the ultimate example in this for us as under shepherds. Matthew 26:27-28²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Ephesians 1:7-8⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,

7.) Long-suffering - Phil 1:6⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 13:4⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

8.) Dependent - On the Father for everything, before making big decisions.

John 5:19¹⁹ Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

As under shepherds we need to be hearing from the Father what to do and how to minister to His people.

9.) Compassionate - Mark 1:40-42 ⁴⁰ A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

⁴¹ Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Mark 8:1-3 ¹ During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, ² "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. ³ If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

Matthew 14:14 ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Colossians 3:12 ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

References

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