

## Leaders as Shepherds

The Rev. Dr. Wayne Price  
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### 1. God Entrusts Us With People to Shepherd

- A. Your flock may be your family, friends, workplace, churches, and ministry teams.
- B. Being a leader as a shepherd embodies the greatest commandment: Love God with everything you've got, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:34).
  - Who is the best leader you've personally known, and why did you follow them?

#### Qualities of a Good Shepherd (from Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34; Luke 15; John 10)

Choose qualities of God as Shepherd you found meaningful and experienced in leaders:

- God seeks and finds you (Ezekiel 34:11; Luke 15:3-7)
- God provides for your needs (Psalm 23:1; Ezekiel 34:14)
- God directs and leads you to peaceful and abundant places (Ps. 23:2; Jn. 10:10)
- God restores your soul (Psalm 23:3; Ezekiel 34:16)
- God comforts, assures, and protects you (Ps. 23:4; Ezekiel 34:9; John 10:9)
- God blesses you. (Psalm 23:5)
- God reconciles you with your enemies. (Psalm 23:5)
- God gives you courage. (Psalm 23:4)
- God gives you mercy and goodness all the days of your life. (Psalm 23:6)
- Jesus knows your name and you know Jesus' voice. (John 10:3)
- Jesus saves you. (John 10:9)
- In Matthew 25, the king is like a shepherd rewarding those who feed the hungry with God's justice, welcome the stranger, visit the sick and those in prison. (Matthew 25:31-46; Ezekiel 34:16)
- Jesus laid down His life for you because He loves you. (John 10:17-18)
  - How is the Good Shepherd meaningful to you?
  - Your answers may be examples of what you value in your relationship with God.
  - Your answers may also point to the purposes that God has given to you for the shepherding of his flock.

Being a shepherd leader enables us to have **resilience, the relationship,** and **purpose** God has given us.

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### 2. Resilience: Retaining Relationships and Purpose

- A. We are facing a time of grief and disruption as churches.
- B. The disciples faced a time of grief and disruption of their relationships and purpose when Jesus died.
- C. The resurrected Jesus appeared to them and gave them peace and the Holy Spirit.

- D. Jesus appeared to Peter and asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?”. Jesus asked for “agape” (unconditional) love, and Peter responded by saying he loved Jesus with “philia” (brotherly) love.
- E. Even though Peter loved Jesus imperfectly, Jesus still gave him the charge of a shepherd, “**Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep**”.
- F. Jesus then offered Peter the invitation, “Follow Me”, which gave Peter resilience through many challenges.
- G. When we answer Jesus’ question, “Do you love me more than these?” we:
- i. Reassess Jesus’ love for us and our love for Jesus.
  - ii. Release any lesser love or things that hinder our relationship with Jesus.
  - iii. Realign our love and service with Jesus’ agape love as we shepherd Jesus’ sheep.
- H. The resurrected Jesus reminds us how much He loves us. We then shepherd His sheep in a deeper way with resilience, peace, and the Presence of the Holy Spirit.
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### 3. Deepening Our Relationship With the Shepherd

- A. When we experience resilience our relationship with the shepherd deepens.

#### **What does the Shepherd do for you?**

Choose the ways you’ve experienced God as Shepherd and ways in your church and community need God:

- God provides all of your needs. (Psalm 23:1)
  - God says you are His sheep, the people of God’s pasture. (Ezekiel 34:30; John 10:11; Psalm 79:13)
  - God nourishes, revives, and restores our souls. (Psalm 23:2-3; John 10:9; Ezekiel 34:14)
  - God rescues and heals us. (Ezekiel 34:11-12; John 10:9-10)
  - God leads us in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. (Psalm 23:4)
  - We are sheltered and protected by Jesus. (John 10:1; Psalm 23:4; Ezekiel 34:11-12)
  - We dwelt in God’s Presence all the days of our life. (Psalm 23:6)
  - We experience mercy, goodness, and abundance. (Ps. 23:6; John 10:10)
  - We find contentment with God and God’s provision. (Ezekiel 34:14)
  - We walk through the valley where the presence of death, the shadow of death, hovers over us and around us, but we are comforted by His rod and staff. (Psalm 23:4)
  - We can cast our anxiety on God, because God cares for us. (1 Peter 5:7)
- What qualities did you especially experience in the last six months?
  - How do the people of our church and community need to these qualities (or be reminded) of the Shepherd’s promises?
  - How can we offer these promises?

- B. When we apply our experience with the Shepherd to the needs of the community, we live our purpose.
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## 4. Living Our Purpose: Shepherding a Disciple-Making Congregation

### A. **Prayer: Dwelling With the Good Shepherd**

- i. Dwell with God in prayer. How you are dwelling with God in the goodness and mercy of God, and being restored?
- ii. Offer dwelling with God. How do you offer that dwelling to others in worship and in prayer?
- iii. Seek and receive the Holy Spirit. How are you seeking and receiving the Holy Spirit Jesus told us about in Luke 11:13?
- iv. Receive Jesus' promise. How are you receiving the promise of John 14, that you will do greater works than even what Jesus did (John 14:12)?
- v. Ask God to provide. What are you asking in the character of God, in Jesus' name, that God will provide for you, as you shepherd the flock in entrusted to you?

### B. **Leadership**

- i. Exercise leadership How are you exercising leadership as Peter told us to do in 1 Peter 5?
- ii. Lead from your relationship with the Shepherd. How are you leading from your relationship with the Shepherd?
- iii. Spiritual maturity and expectations of leaders. What kind of spiritual maturity do you expect from leaders of your church? Do you state those expectations of how we treat one another in meetings and other places?
- iv. Provide a safe place. If we lead with spiritual maturity, we will provide the shelter that Jesus talks about in John 10. How are you providing a safe place where people can find protection and can rest in the care of others?
- v. Model dwelling in God's Presence. How do you model dwelling in God's Presence all the days of your life?
- vi. Live the goodness, mercy, and abundance. How do leaders live the goodness, mercy, and abundance that the Shepherd promises?
- vii. Sacrifice your preferences for God's purpose. How do you sacrifice your preference for God's purpose? It's not about what you want but what God desires for you, your church, and your community. (John 10:17-18)
- viii. Lead cohesively. Lead cohesively, uniting people into one flock like Jesus talks about in John 17.

### C. **Small Groups: Developing People to Be Disciples and Leaders**

- i. Leaders pray and care for the people in their small group/ministry team.
- ii. Leaders offer opportunities in the small group to be nourished, revived, and restored.
- iii. Within the small group:
  - a. Offer a focus Scripture. Focus on a Scripture to be nourished by God.
  - b. Share concerns and praises
  - c. Pray for each other. Praying for one another can be done silently.

- iv. Help people walk in paths of righteousness. How are you helping people to walk in paths of righteousness for God's name sake?
- v. Groups for different levels of spiritual maturity. Are your groups intentionally set up to address levels of maturity? (Creating a Path of Discipleship):
  - a. Groups for people just beginning. Groups like the Alpha Course.
  - b. Groups for people maturing. Groups like Disciple Bible Study.
  - c. Groups for mature believers. Groups like Covenant Discipleship.

**D. Outreach: We Provide a Gate to the Shepherd for Our Community (a sheepgate)**

- i. Low risk opportunities. What low risk opportunities are you providing for your community so they can experience the love of Christ where they are?
- ii. Go to people where they are. Seeking the stray and lost sheep offering Christ at their level, at their location, and where they are spiritually.
- iii. Understand the questions. Understand the people of your community and the questions they have.
- iv. Provide healing ministry. We are called to rescue, save, and heal through God's Holy Spirit. How are you providing, offering healing ministries to your community? Examples include food pantries, literacy centers, and clothes closets (free stores).

**E. Social Justice: Protecting Our Community and World**

- i. Matthew 25: Feed the hungry, give a drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison. (Acts of Mercy)
  - ii. Protect all God's sheep. In Ezekiel 34 and John 10 the Shepherd protects the sheep from the thieves, the bad shepherds, the wolves and the beasts, and the hirelings that would seek to harm the sheep and do it for their own profit. We are called to protect the people in our community from people who would harm them.
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## Sending Forth with Words from 1 Peter 5:1-4; 7

As a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory...Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.