

Special Service - Appointment of Shepherds

Summary: God has laid out what the nature of the relationship should be between leaders in the church and everyone else. The "flock" is to appreciate, honor, listen to, submit to, esteem, and love their shepherds. The shepherds are to be Spirit-led and prayerful men of God who spend ample time in the word and prayer so they can shepherd, lead, inspect, exhort/warn, protect, be an example to, and serve the flock of God as part of their service to the owner of the flock, which is God.

Know: Shepherds are formed by and set apart by the Spirit to shepherd the flock "among" them. This implies a close relationship of mutual support and of spiritual leadership on the part of the shepherds.

Feel: The desire to encourage the shepherds.

Do: Reflect on your attitude toward leadership in general, and how Jesus as the Chief Shepherd should affect how you conduct yourself. Consider ways to encourage, minister to, and serve others, whether it is the flock, family, or your leaders.

Text: 1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 5:17-20; Acts 6:2-4; 1 Pet 5:1-5; Acts 20:28-32; Jn 13: 1, 5, 12-16

Scripture Reading: Jn 13:1-5

Intro:

1. Would like to ask the elders and their wives to be seated on the front pew
2. This is a special day. God is calling new leaders for our congregation
3. We will spend some time looking at what God is saying to us in scripture and pray.

I. Message for the congregation:

A. Scriptures

1. (1 Thess 5:12)
 - a. How to treat those who:
 - 1) Diligently labor among the people
 - 2) Have charge over the congregation in the Lord
 - 3) Give instruction
 - 4) This will apply to us in relation to our shepherds
 - b. What we are to do:
 - 1) "Know" (KJV); "Appreciate" (NASB); "Respect" (RSV; NIV); "Be considerate to" (JB); "Acknowledge" (NEB); "Recognize" (Phillips)
 - a) Grk: "oida" - To know, take interest in, understand, recognize, or to be intimately acquainted with or stand in close relation to

- b) In this case, probably means to recognize or acknowledge them as labors, leaders, teachers
- 2) Esteem them highly in love
 - a) Esteem - synonyms. = to prize, respect, appreciate, honor, praise
 - b) They are to be esteemed IN LOVE
- 3) Live at peace with one another

2. (Heb 13:17)

- a. Obey your leaders -
 - 1) Literally it is "be persuaded by" or "listen" to them
 - 2) So, the sense of "peitho" is not to be coerced, but to give deference to elders willingly with a submissive attitude
- b. Submit to your leaders
 - 1) Similar, but stronger idea
 - 2) Means to yield or give way to
 - 3) Don't be like Israelites who were "stick necked" and would not yield to the yoke of God
 - a) ILL: Taking a dog out for a "drag"
 - b) Idea flows into what text says next
- c. Make their work a joy and not a grief
 - 1) By giving deference to them
 - 2) Causing elders grief is not no profit to you
- d. Elders will give an account for you
 - 1) They are responsible for their ministry
 - 2) They are not 100% responsible for you
 - Ezek 3:17-21 - God holds sheep accountable when they refuse to listen to the shepherd
- e. All this shows that an elders has both the responsibility AND the right to inspect his sheep and his flock for their health. We are to submit.
 - 1) If I might possibly be involved in sin
 - a) If it is sexual temptation
 - b) If it is an ungodly attitude
 - c) If it is a problem with bitterness
 - 2) If I am not fulfilling responsibility to grow and serve
 - a) They have the responsibility to ask - What are you doing to grow
 - b) They will ask, "How are you and the Lord doing?"

3. (1 Tim 5:17-20)

- a. Give double honor to elders who:
 - 1) "Rule" well - Grk: "Proistemi" - to rule, manage, lead, care for
 - 2) Work hard at preaching and teaching
 - a) Elders were involved in preaching
 - b) The wording of this passage suggests that

not all elders preached or taught publicly

b. Honor (Grk: "Time")

- 1) Root idea is "value"
- 2) Means: Honor, reverence or respect
- 3) Can also mean compensation financially
 - a) Would be an "honorarium"
 - b) Rationale (v.18) - Do not muzzle the ox
 - c) Same rationale 1 Cor 9:7-14 for paying preachers

c. Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of 2 or 3 witnesses

- 1) Leaders are exposed to vicious and unfair gossip
- 2) Don't even listen to someone stirring up trouble
- 3) This safeguards innocent leaders from troublemakers

d. Those that continue in sin are to be rebuked in the presence of all

- 1) This is for those that "continue" in sin
- 2) Refer to those that continue to stir up trouble
 - Others will take warning
 - Prevent those that stir the pot
- 3) Also refers to elders as well

B. Summary: We are to

1. Recognize and acknowledge
2. Esteem them highly in love
3. Be persuaded and give deference to them in honor so that their ministry will be a joy and not a grief
4. Give double honor
5. Do not even listen to gossip and accusations concerning the shepherds

C. Charge to the flock: Will the congregation stand please...

1. Since Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, and since these men are extensions of the shepherding ministry of Christ, when we honor them, we honor our Lord and Savior. When we dishonor them, we dishonor our Lord and Savior.
2. The Holy Spirit is setting these men apart to shepherd, lead, guide, and watch over us
3. I solemnly charge you, the flock of God, in the name of the Lord, our Chief Shepherd, to not only honor and submit to what the Spirit is doing in setting these men apart as shepherds, but to do as God has instructed us, to honor, esteem, listen to, and love these men that the Holy Spirit is setting apart as your shepherds.

D. Prayer - Please be seated after the prayer

II. Message for the Shepherds:

A. Scriptures:

1. (Acts 6:2-4) - Two important things in spiritual leadership
 - a. These leaders understood the foundation of their ministry
 - b. It was not merely exercise of authority, doing various tasks, sitting in meetings, or things like that
 - 1) To be sure, they did these sorts of things
 - 2) But these were secondary
 - c. If they didn't have a good foundation, the rest would crumble, or morph into something God never intended
 - d. The very foundation of their ministry involved two inseparable things
 - 1) Prayer
 - a) They had to have a vibrant, personal, and meaningful relationship with God
 - b) Without prayer, Christian leadership becomes just leadership and God becomes an afterthought. Anything can happen
 - c) Prayer is the first and foremost task of the Christian leader
 - 2) Ministry of the Word
 - a) It is the "sword of the Spirit" - It is part of your battle gear for spiritual warfare.
 - b) It is "living and active," sharper than any two edged sword - It is the Spirit's primary tool to mold you into the image of God
 - c) It is inspired, or "God-breathed" - God "breathes" new life into you as you spend time with the word. It daily transforms you into the likeness of Christ.
 - d) Filled with the "breath of God," you are able to shepherd the flock of God, stand up to the Goliath's that threaten the flock, carry injured lambs to safety, and determine what is good grazing land for the flock.
 - e. It is not about skills, natural abilities, practical know-how
 - 1) It is about being a Spirit-led, Spirit-formed follower of Christ.
 - 2) This happens through prayer and ministry of the word
 2. (1 Pet 5:1-5) - Several instructions shepherds
 - a. Shepherd flock of God "among you," not "beneath" you
 - 1) You not suddenly super spiritual or super human
 - a) You don't become invincible
 - b) You are an example "among" the flock
 - c) Not example of perfection, but of a sheep

following Christ

2) You as a shepherd also need to be shepherded

- a) You don't suddenly stop being sheep
- b) You are not immune to the flesh
 - If anything Satan will step up attacks
 - Satan likes to go after leaders
- c) Not try to be a cowboy, the lone shepherd
 - You are "among" the flock
 - You are part of a team of leaders
 - Evangelists/Preachers,
Pastors/Shepherds, Teachers - "team"
- b. Your function in the team is "shepherd"
 - 1) Out front, leading the flock as an example
 - 2) Inspect the sheep for injury and health
 - 3) Determine suitable grazing land
 - 4) Be watchful for danger and protect the flock
- c. Exercise oversight voluntarily, not under compulsion
 - 1) This is why we didn't "nominate" you
 - 2) You are not doing this because someone twisted your arm, or because you feel like, "well, someone's got to do it"
 - 3) You are to do this voluntarily and eagerly to serve the Lord,
 - 4) It is not a "job" but a "calling" from God.
- d. We are all to be clothed with humility

3. (Acts 20:28-32) - Reminder:

- a. Being a shepherd is not always a "safe" job
- b. There are dangers outside and inside for the flock
 - 1) There is the danger of false teaching
 - 2) There is immorality, ungodly behavior, etc.
 - 3) These can seriously injure the flock
 - 4) They can spread like leaven through the body
- c. Jesus said that he "laid down his life" for the flock
- d. In following the steps of the Chief Shepherd, there will be times you "lay yourself on the line" for the flock
- e. Titus 1 - Paul said to appoint elders who could exhort/warn people in good, sound teaching because there were rebellious people and empty talkers that needed to be silenced
- f. Wolves must be dealt with, and they can turn on you, but it is your God-given task to protect God's flock.
- g. Paul's exhortation - "BE ALERT"

4. (Jn 13:1, 5, 12-16) - Great example of leadership

- a. Jesus "loved them to the end..."
- b. Only John mentions this. Why? Great impact on him
 - 1) He was one of the sons of thunder

- 2) He and his brother wanted to sit on his left and right and be big wigs in his kingdom
- 3) Yet, there is the Lord and Savior, doing a slave's job, demonstrating "servant" leadership
- d. This was a very sacred moment
 - 1) Imagine, the Lord, the Master, on hands and knees serving each of these disciples
 - 2) Why? Obviously to be an example, but also...
 - 3) He loved them to the end - LOVE
 - 4) A true shepherd LOVES his sheep
 - Jesus modeled and demonstrated it
 - He was willing to get his hands dirty serving
 - Love and service are important for shepherds

B. Summary

- 1. Most important - prayer and ministry of the word
- 2. Holy Spirit is setting you apart to
 - a. Be spirit-filled, spirit-led, and growing, humble, Christ like
 - b. Shepherd the flock, lead, inspect,
 - c. To exhort/warn in sound teaching
 - d. To protect the flock from dangers
 - e. To be an example to the flock
 - f. To be a servant to the flock and to God
- 3. IN ADDITION, 1 Tim 3 instructions for leader's wives as well
 - a. Your wife is your partner, your other half
 - Not good for man to be alone, so he made woman and the two became one
 - Instructed that shepherds be married men
 - b. She has been your partner in marriage, in raising kids,
 - c. Now is your partner in this ministry as well

C. Charge to the shepherd appointees: Will you please stand...

- 1. Question: Do you willingly accept the call of God to shepherd his flock which he purchased with his blood?
- 2. Since Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, and since you are extensions of the shepherding ministry of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is setting you apart as shepherds to watch over the flock,
- 3. I call Heaven and earth as witness today, that you agree to honor and submit to what the Spirit is doing in setting you apart as shepherds of the flock of God.
- 4. I solemnly charge you in the name of the Lord, the Chief Shepherd, to fulfill your calling by being men of prayer and the word, to follow in the steps of the Chief Shepherd, to lead, guide, counsel, watch over, guard, be an example to, serve the flock of God in fulfilling her mission.

D. Laying on of Hands and Prayer

- 1. As minister of God, I commend you to the ministry of shepherd
 - a. Today the Spirit is setting you apart to Shepherd the flock

- b. May you always be formed by his Spirit through prayer and ministry of the word
- c. May you be a example of godliness, spirituality, character
- d. May you lead, guide, guard, & serve the flock of God with all wisdom, humility, and love.
- 2. Pray for each man and his wife

Father, what a great blessing it is to be here today. I ask your blessing on _____ and _____. May they be filled with your Spirit, may they be an example of righteousness, godliness, grace, and love. Father, bless them together as one in their ministry among the flock of God. In the name of Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, Amen.
- 3. Can be seated afterward

III. Shepherds address and prays with the congregation

- A. Each shepherd addresses the congregation

(The purpose is to encourage the congregation and set the initial tone for the relationship to the congregation and the ministry)

 1. First Shepherd -
 2. Second Shepherd
 3. Third Shepherd
 4. Fourth Shepherd
- B. Suggestions on what to say... (make it from you heart)
 1. What I am looking forward to
 2. What is close to my heart in this ministry God has called me to
 3. How I would like to see the nature of our relationship as elders to each other and the congregation
 4. How God might be leading me in this ministry
 5. This is what I believe is most important...
 6. etc.
- C. Elders lead the congregation in prayer (chain prayer?)

CLOSING:

- 1. Announcements
- 2. Welcoming of Guests
- 3. Closing -
 - a. Prayer:

Lord, it is our desire to honor, please, and serve you
 We ask your blessing on this congregation
 We ask your blessing on these shepherds
 We ask your blessing on the mission here in Leavenworth
 In the name of Christ, our Savior, Lord, and Shepherd, Amen.
 - b. Blessing

"May the Lord Bless you and watch over you
 May the Lord always be present in your life
 May He be gracious to you"
 - c. We are dismissed - Go and serve...

Small Group Questions:

God has laid out what the nature of the relationship should be between leaders in the church and everyone else. The "flock" is to appreciate, honor, listen to, submit to, esteem, and love their shepherds. The shepherds are to be Spirit-led and prayerful men of God who spend ample time in the word and prayer so they can shepherd, lead, inspect, exhort/warn, protect, be an example to, and serve the flock of God as part of their service to the owner of the flock, which is God.

Open

- What do sheep make you think of?

Explore:

1. 1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 5:17-20 - Briefly summarize what these scriptures say concerning the relationship of the congregation to its leaders.
2. Acts 6:2-4; 1 Pet 5:1-5; Acts 20:28-32 - Briefly summarize what these scriptures say concerning the ministry of spiritual leadership.
3. John 1:1-17
 - a. What seemed to have motivated Jesus to do what he did here?
 - b. Why did Peter react in the way that he did?
 - c. In the last hours of his life, what impact did this sacred moment have?
 - d. Why is the lesson here so important for every Christian regardless of their position, ministry, or function in the Kingdom?

Apply:

4. What do you find most challenging in these passages? As a sheep? As a leader?
5. How does knowing that Jesus is the Chief Shepherd affect the way you see yourself, your life, your ministry, etc.?
6. What can you do to be a better sheep in the flock? A better shepherd? How can you encourage each other in this?

Prayer