

Brandywine Together: Shepherds and the Flock 9/30/18

Follow-up from last week. A couple questions I got from some people.

- 1- What if I was already baptized as a believer at another church? You do not need to be baptized here.
- 2- What if I don't have any proof, the church burned down? That's OK, we take your word for it. If you lie about your baptism that's on your conscience.
- 3-What if you were baptized as a believer, but it was by a different mode, poured or sprinkled? We practice immersion but we accept other forms of baptism.
- 4-What if I was christened or baptized as an infant does that count? Come to our baptism class. Or talk to me.

Fixer Upper- Chip and Joanna Gaines... Shannan loves that show, because once Chip gets the bones of the house all fixed up, Joanna does her magic...she comes in with the perfect colors, accents, furniture...lots of shiplap everywhere. But if they showed all of it, we would see that most of the work is what Chip and his crew does getting the bones right...Getting dirty and sweaty- Getting the Plumbing fixed, dealing with black mold, asbestos, leaking roof, cracks in foundation, taking out walls....That's not nearly as exciting as Joanne's job...(although that's the part I like most). If you live in a house where you have really bad plumbing and your bathtub is about to fall through the ceiling into your living room, but you what has your attention is putting up a shiplapped accent wall, You might have your priorities wrong. Because the plumbing is far more important for the long-term health of your home. Some of this material in this series might not be as exciting to you, it's not the great artwork and the new furniture and the shiplap... This series is like getting the bones right. It's getting the plumbing and the wiring right. We want to get the bones right so that we are in a healthy church for the long haul. So we can enjoy all the other things. This is why we have been talking about the structure and purpose of the church, meaningful membership and what we will talk about today the **relationship between leaders and members of a church, the shepherds and the flock**. It is critical to get this right for the health of our church.

What we want to look at Today and Next Week is what the Bible teaches about leadership in Christ's Church. Taking you to school today, get your paper and pencils...not a test so no #2 pencils..

Who are the Leaders?

What is their Job Description?

What are their Qualifications?

How should a congregation respond to their leaders?

Who are the Leaders in the Church?

Hebrews 13:17

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

The New Testament uses three interchangeable terms for the same leaders in the church- Elder (Presbuteros), Overseer (Episkopos), Pastor (Poimen).

Elder- used most often, about 40 times to describe the office of leadership in the church.

Acts 14:23 When Paul and Barnabas circled back to the churches they had established during their first missionary journey, they “appointed elders for them in every church.” The same instruction Paul gives to Titus 1:5, to appoint elders in every town on the island of Crete.

Acts 15:22 These Elders addressed the problem of false teaching that was creeping into the young church.

At the end of the book of Acts 20:17, Paul met with the elders of the church of Ephesus for a final exhortation and called them to lead the church wisely.

Now for some of you the word Elder might have some baggage attached to it because of bad church experience in a church that had elders who led in a heavy-handed, authoritative kind of way. That’s an abuse of this term, which is clearly a biblical term. We will talk about these kinds of issues next week. But if you don’t like the term Elder, the Bible has two other you can use.

Overseer- Used interchangeably.

In Titus 1 just after Paul tells Titus to appoint elders in every town, he then refers to these same leaders in **verse 7-9** as Overseers describing their qualifications.

Paul in **1 Timothy 3:1** says, *Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.* He then describes the qualifications.

Pastor- This word literally means *Shepherd*. Only once is this word used in the noun form, **Ephesians 4:11**, most often used to describe what the Elder/Overseer does- pastors or shepherds the flock.

In his post-resurrection charge to Peter in **John 21:16**, Jesus tells Peter, “Shepherd my sheep.”

1 Peter 5:1-2 we see all three of these terms used together to describe various aspects of the same leadership responsibility.

To the elders (Presbuteros) among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds (poimaino) of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them (episkopeō).

One author says this summarizing the nuance among these three words:

“Elder- emphasizes the spiritual maturity required for the office; Overseer implies the leadership and direction given to the church; pastor suggests feeding, nurturing and protecting the flock.”

Now you may have also noticed in the examples I gave that you see that the **pattern of leadership is plural**. To the elders in the church Paul's letter often begin. The elders in the church of Ephesus met with Paul in Acts 20. Titus was to appoint elders (plural) in every town (singular).

Precisely here do we find the wisdom of the New Testament pattern of plural eldership. No one man possesses all the gifts necessary for leading the congregation. Some men are endowed with strong pulpit gifts, but lack effective pastoral skills. Others excel in pastoral work of visiting and counseling, but are not strong when it comes to pulpit exposition. Some have unusual abilities in organizing and administrating the ministries of the church, but falter in pulpit and counseling skills. Some, to be sure, are multi-gifted and capable of doing different things. But the strain of tending to the entire ministry needs of the church can quickly deplete even the most gifted man.

In addition, this safeguards a church from becoming a culture of personality or too overly reliant on one man. No one man can know the flock well enough to care for them. Especially a church of a thousand like ours. Studies have shown that humans can maintain a maximum of 150 relationships. There are a handful of people that can maintain an even thicker relational wallet, but most will maintain far less. As much as we may desire to know you all and care for you all equally we cannot do it well. This is why, along with Pastor Matthew, Pastor Todd and myself we are looking to raise up lay shepherds to join us in the caring of the flock. A good friend, mentor and fellow pastor at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Dr. Mark Dever, once told me that the single most helpful thing to his pastoral ministry was raising up men to bear the shepherding responsibility alongside of him. This is one of the most important things I can do as a Lead Pastor.

What about Deacons? The biblical role of deacon is quite simple...they are called to Deek. That my little pastor's joke. **The word simply means Servant**. Remember last week, Acts 6- they choose deacons to what? Serve the physical needs of the church. That's really the role of deacons in the Bible. They are to serve, primarily the physical needs of the church- finances and benevolence, building and facilities upkeep, food distribution to those in need, visitation, and any other range of ministries that the Overseer/Elder/Pastors and congregation see as a need in the church.

What is the Job Description of Elders? 6 Things

Teach and preach God's word

2 Timothy 4:1-2

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ² Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

Earlier in chapter 2 Paul tells Timothy to train up others who will be able to share in the teaching also.

Protect the church from false doctrine

1 Timothy 1:3-4

³ As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer ⁴ or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith.

Have you ever wondered how churches that at one point were bastions of the gospel and the Word of God, somehow abandoned both and are basically clubs with a handful of members? Often times, it's because they failed to do this. The allowed false doctrine, and things that distract from the truth to reign unchecked, and the work of God was no longer advanced. This is part of the job description. We do that both by continually preaching the Word, guarding our doctrinal statement and refuting those who teach against it in the church.

Care for and keep watch over the flock

Acts 20:28

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Hebrews 13:17

because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account.

Moms- ever wake up in middle of night with thinking about your kids? Do you ever wake up and pray for them? Maybe they have been sick, or having nightmares...or maybe they have been struggling with their faith or addiction issue. This should characterize elders care. These words "keep watch" is like a diligent shepherd through the night.

Model Godly lifestyle

1 Peter 5:2-3

² Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

The way of the shepherding during this time was not prodding from the back of the flock but rather leading from the front. We should be setting the example by our lives.

Equip Saints

Ephesians 4:12

Given the church shepherds to *"equip the saints for the work of the ministry"*

Pray for the sick (anoint)

James 5:14

Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

What are their Qualifications?

1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9

Character Integrity

Relational Integrity

Doctrinal Integrity

When you consider the job description this makes sense doesn't it? If they are going to set an example, they should have character integrity. Not a lover of money or pursuing dishonest gain. You can see why that would be important? And I wonder if there are any "Pastors" out there that are spiritually manipulating people to line their pockets? But it can be subtle too- allowing people with deep pockets to control the direction of the church? If they are going to care for the flock of God, they should be able to first care well for their own household and relationships. If they are going to teach the Word, correct false teaching they ought to have doctrinal integrity.

Notice what isn't on this list- They need to be a Visionary, or Mover and a Shaker, CEO. We borrow that more from business but that's not the Qualifications nor the Job Description of elders. It is helpful to have one or two gifted that way, but not a requirement for leadership.

(Last Slide) This is the design of the church. And I believe a church that has leader shepherds of integrity, who know and embrace the Gospel of Jesus and the Word of God, and who are called to shepherd the flock will set the church in a trajectory that will far outlive me or any other lead pastor that may come after me one day. This is getting the bones right according to God's Word.

How should a congregation respond to their leaders? What does the Bible say about authority and the role of the members? What if leaders fail or are abusive in their leadership? Great questions- Next week!