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Lakeland Hills Leader

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The Leadership Of The Church Pt.3 {Shepherds}

By Chuck Richardson

The three descriptive titles of the leadership of the church are important in their own right. We have learned that elder is an ideal description, because the wisdom that age can bring is needed to lead the church of Christ. Likewise, we have learned that overseer is a necessary description, because of the requirement to direct the work that the Lord gave the church. The title of overseer also shows the importance of leading in correction and edification. And now the title of shepherd. I saved this description for last not because the others do not help us to understand the leadership, but the role of shepherd in some respects is one of elder and overseer.

In the ancient culture of sheep-herding, men of experience, and thus of age, oversaw the daily needs of the flock. Even in the case of young men and boy shepherds, like David, there always was a fatherly patriarch to oversee the work of sheep-herding. So, I will attempt to give some edifying reasons our leaders are shepherds, and remember we have Jesus as our Chief Shepherd {1Peter 5:4}.

I'd like to introduce the idea of shepherding as feeding. A flock needs to eat, not only to survive, but to thrive. A good shepherd will lead the flock to abundant and nourishing grass and water. Remember Jesus' strong admonishment to Peter to shepherd His (Jesus') flock {John 21:15-17}. A good shepherd must know the word of God {1Timothy 3:2} in order to feed the church what will provide maturity in word and deed. The shepherd must know what it is needing, and deliver it in a timely manner {Titus 1:9}, the flock's health and welfare depend on it {Titus 1:10-16}. Shepherds must be reminded that the church is the Chief Shepherd's flock which He purchased with His own blood {Acts 20:28}.

The charge is serious and requires men who have the knowledge and experience of age which qualifies them to tend His flock {1Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9}. Too many sheep of the flocks, I fear, are starving for lack of feeding {Hebrews 5:12-6:3; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 3:14-19}. The church must grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ {2Peter 3:18b}, and be able to do the work of service befitting their skills and knowledge {Ephesians 4:12}. How will they do this, if they are not trained? The evangelist may help with this work {2Timothy 4:1-5} but the accountability for the growth and vitality of the church (flock) is upon the shepherds {1Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-31}.

Shepherds need to see the potential dangers ahead of time and have a plan to protect the flock as they feed them. The shepherds equipped with knowledge and experience needs to have vision and execution of the spiritual maturation of the flock, business as usual will not work.

Please consider these things as we strive to be all the Lord expects of His flock.