

The Gift of the Pastor / Shepherd

Ephesians 4:11

I. What is the gift of pastor / shepherd?

- A. The word "*pastors*" here in Ephesians 4:11 is translated 16 other times in the Bible as the word "*shepherd*."
- B. When we discuss the gift of pastoring, we are discussing the gift of shepherding people, NOT the position of pastor.
- C. The shepherd leads, feeds, guards, protects, and oversees his flock (a group of people). The main thing on his mind is the welfare of those in his care. Those with the gift of pastor / shepherd can be found as Sunday School teachers, bus captains, youth and children's workers, Young at Heart directors, deacons, shepherds of ladies' groups, etc.
- D. The person with the gift of shepherding works under a pastor, and is therefore an extension of the pastor, and must oversee his part of the flock.

II. Why is there a need for the gift of pastor / shepherd?

- A. Obviously, most churches are too big for one pastor to personally and adequately oversee and shepherd every person in the church and care for their individual needs.
- B. This is why God gives others in the church the gift of shepherding. They work in cooperation with the senior pastor, making sure that everyone is ministered to and cared for.
- C. They are to function in a local church in a place where they can use their God-given talent and desire to shepherd people.

III. What are the characteristics of the pastor / shepherd?

- A. When we ask the questions, "What is the shepherd's heart? What are the shepherd's characteristics?", I know of no better place to look than to the

Good Shepherd (John 10:11), the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20), and the Chief Shepherd. 1 Peter 5:4

- B. All of these names are, of course, referring to our Lord, Jesus Christ. Let's look at Jesus while He was on this earth and catch a marvelous glimpse of the shepherd's heart.
- C. First, the shepherd is very compassionate and patient with people.
Matthew 9:36, 14:12-14
1. The shepherd does not consider people a nuisance, but loves people, and cares about their burdens and needs. Some people are not "people people." The shepherd is. The shepherd will spend time praying with others, and for others, and their needs.
 2. In Matthew 14:12-14, Jesus hears of John the Baptist's death. When He hears of it, he departs by ship into a desert place. Obviously, He wanted to be alone, but all the people follow Him with their needs and desires. It would have been easy for anyone else to become impatient and irritable, but Jesus was moved with compassion. This is characteristic of the shepherd.
- D. Second, the shepherd is usually a good teacher. Mark 6:34
1. Notice in Ephesians 4:11, "*pastors and teachers*" are one gift, implying that those with the gift of shepherding also have the gift of teaching. They go hand in hand.
 2. Shepherds enjoy teaching, have a burden to see those under their care learn and grow, and have a burden to teach them the whole Word of God. They love feeding the flock.
- E. Third, the shepherd has a desire to take a personal interest in people.
John 10:3
1. Notice, Jesus said the shepherd "*calleth his own sheep by name.*"
 2. The shepherd is more relationship-oriented than task-oriented. Some of the gifts are not this way. Some people with different gifts would be more comfortable fixing someone's plumbing, or painting a house, or mowing the grass.

- The shepherd is not task-oriented, but much more relational. He would be more involved in the personal problems and concerns of others.
- F. Fourth, the shepherd is a good leader. John 10:3-5
1. People follow the shepherd because they sense that “he cares,” and he leads by example.
 2. “A *stranger*” (vs. 4) may come along that is more flamboyant, more eloquent, and a better teacher, but the flock sticks with their shepherd because “they know him.” He’s consistent and dependable.
- G. Fifth, the shepherd is sacrificial. John 10:11, 15
1. The shepherd is very protective of those under his care (vs. 12-13) and, if necessary, can become very self-sacrificial in order to protect and look after the spiritual welfare of his sheep.
 2. The shepherd doesn’t sacrifice because he feels he has to, but because he genuinely wants to. John 10:18
- H. Sixth, the shepherd desires to unify the sheep. John 10:16
1. The shepherd is very sensitive to hurt feelings or problems which cause a loss of unity.
 2. The shepherd is a peacemaker and diplomat. If two sheep are locking horns, it grieves his heart, and he wants to help. He is able to resolve problems between the sheep, keeping a cool head and not going to the extreme.

IV. How does Satan attack people with the gift of pastor / shepherd?

- A. Causes pride because the sheep look up to him
- B. Causes discouragement because the load is too heavy
- C. Causes family problems because of too little time and attention
- D. Causes selfishness and bitterness when his sheep feed in other pastures
- E. Causes him to become overly protective of his flock

V. Scriptures that the pastor / shepherd should memorize

- A. 1 Peter 5:2-3
- B. Acts 20:28-30
- C. Ezekiel 34:1-10
- D. Zechariah 10:2
- E. John 10:11, 14, 15
- F. Mark 6:34
- G. 1 Timothy 5:8 (The shepherd needs to make sure his own family is taken care of.)