

The role of pastor

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This morning I want to take a look at the role of the pastor or shepherd within the local church and then share some of my experience being a pastor.

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I am hoping for two things to take place this morning.

- 1) That we as a church would have a correct understanding of what & who a pastor is within the local church and that it would bring comfort knowing that God has set in place people to care for us.
- 2) That God would stir up the desire in those here who Jesus has given this gift, that they would hear the call to pastor and commit themselves to nurturing and using this gift for his glory.

Not everyone has this gift - but everyone who is part of God's church will be affected by pastors in one or another. The world needs heaps more pastors to care for God's people and we need to be starting more and more churches both in Australia and around the world. To do that pastors are needed.

We don't need administrators - businesses need administrators. We need pastors because people need pastors shepherds. Godly men, who will care and devote themselves to God and his people.

Before we get further into it this morning, I just want to clarify the terms that the Bible uses in regards to pastor.

The bible speaks of Elders, Bishops and Pastors and it uses those three terms interchangeably to describe the one function.

The original Greek terms for these three words is Presbuteros, Episkopos, Poimen.

Presbuteros, when translated into English becomes elder or presbyter. The word elder is not just a reference to physical age, but also spiritual maturity. The elders have a God given responsibility to rule and lead the local church.

1 Tim 5:17

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine.

Episkopos, when translated into English becomes overseer or bishop. It has reference to one who is seen as a care giver, or guardian over the church

Poimen, when translated into English becomes either pastor or shepherd. Pastors or shepherds are those who devote themselves to the flock that God has placed under their care.

Now let's take a look at John 10.

A few weeks ago we looked at Psalm 23 - The Lord is my Shepherd and this was speaking about God the father being our shepherd.

Now we are going to look at a passage in John where we see that God the son is also considered as our shepherd.

John 10:7-14

7 So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

There are a few things to note here about Jesus being our shepherd.

1) Jesus is the door of the sheep

Jesus said of himself that I am the way the truth and the life and no one comes to the father except through me. (John 14:6)

He is the door through which we enter into eternal life. It also speaks of the ancient shepherds bringing their flocks into a resting place for the night that was guarded by a barrier so that the sheep would be safe from predators.

There was one opening for the sheep to enter and each night the shepherd would lie across this opening or door so that the place had complete protection from predators. Jesus is the door of the sheep.

2) He is also the good shepherd and not a hired hand.

That is he isn't our shepherd because he is being paid to be. He is our shepherd out of his love and devotion toward us. It's not a part time job for him where he will switch off when he's not at work. He always has his eye on us, even if we don't always recognise or sense it.

3) He knows his sheep and his sheep know him.

The relationship begins with Jesus knowing us and then because of him knowing

us we begin to know him.

From Psalm 23 and John chapter 10 we see that both God the Father and God the Son are our shepherds. Now we are going to see that Jesus also delegates this role people within the church.

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and 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.

Peter in this passage wants to encourage the elders who are among us as a fellow elder that they are to shepherd the flock of God with great care and integrity.

From this passage we can see a number of things about our earthly shepherds.

- 1) The pastors or elders are among us.
The New Testament pattern is that there is never only one pastor per church. The pattern is a team of pastors working together to care for the flock of God.
- 2) These people are to:
 - a. Shepherd, care for and protect God's people.
 - b. They are to work with Jesus to exercise oversight. To keep an eye out for his people to make sure that they don't drift away from the truth and from fellowship. The sheep stay on track following their shepherd and they stay together.
1 Peter 2:24-25 says this of Jesus.
He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
 - c. This is to be done not out of sheer duty, but there must be a willingness from their side
 - d. Not for shameful gain. Pastors will be rewarded, but if the rewards or the job come before caring for God's people and for Jesus' glory then it is considered shameful gain. Our heart attitude and motives need to be right.
 - e. Eagerly that is with zeal and an energy which shows that this is not just a job, but a life to be lived.

Now I want to finish off with some observations from my time as pastor.

- 1) I love to pastor - with the gift comes the passion and the grace
- 2) The shepherd knows his sheep and his sheep know him. Tell me your story
- 3) You don't live for me and I don't live for you. We live for Jesus and we live for each other
- 4) The role of my wife and daughter
- 5) The role of Jesus as the chief shepherd. Show with a demonstration.