

What is Biblical Church Government? Lesson 2 – Shepherding the Flock

Introduction:

- As the Head of the church, Christ rules the church through leaders who _____ to the Word of God.
- Since the church belongs to Christ, and since church leaders are His servants, then the purpose of church government is _____ not dominion.

1. God describes His own leadership of His people as a _____ leading His sheep.

A. Jacob said that God was a faithful, patient Shepherd who _____ for him.

***Gen 48.15** And he blessed Joseph and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, **the God who has been my shepherd** all my life long to this day...*

B. King David said that God gave personal _____ and divine _____ to him as his Shepherd.

Ps 23.1-3** **The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

C. King David then describes the _____ of God as our great Shepherd.

Ps 23.4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, **for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

D. God’s relationship to us as our shepherd is not just with Individual people, but with His entire covenant _____.

- David describes God’s people as His _____.

***Ps 77.20** You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

Ps 95.6-7a** Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! 7 For he is our God, **and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

***Ezek 34.31** And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God.*

E. We can see clearly in these passages how deeply the Lord _____ for His people.

F. We can see how the Lord sovereignly watches over and _____ His people.

2. God's appointed leaders are described as those who are called to _____ the people of God.

2 Sam 7.7 *In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of **the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel**, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"*

A. _____ was identified by Isaiah as the shepherd of Israel.

Isa 63.11 *Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea **with the shepherds of his flock?***

B. _____ is described as a shepherd leader.

2 Sam 5.2 *In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, '**You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.**'"*

Psa 78.70–72 *He chose David his servant
and took him from the sheepfolds;
71 from following the nursing ewes he brought him
to shepherd Jacob his people,
Israel his inheritance.
72 **With upright heart he shepherded them**
and guided them with his skillful hand.*

C. The Old Testament prophets spoke of a _____ shepherd who was to come and lead God's people as their Savior.

- The prophets provided great hope of a _____ shepherd who would lead them like David.

Ezek 34.23 *And I will set up over them **one shepherd**, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.*

Micah 5.2 *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

Micah 5.4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

3. _____ is the Great Shepherd who was prophesied to come.

A. Jesus is the perfect shepherd, far _____ than all who came before Him.

- Jesus _____ Himself to be the Shepherd foretold by the Old Testament prophets.

John 10.11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

John 10.14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.

- The Apostle Peter recognized Jesus as our _____ shepherd.

1 Pet 5.4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

- The writer of Hebrews also recognized Jesus as our _____ shepherd:

Heb 13.20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,

B. Jesus' sacrificial love and care for us as His sheep was demonstrated by laying down His _____ for us.

John 10.11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

C. Jesus' true sheep are those that _____ on Him and _____ Him.

John 10.3b-4 The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

- When a person hears the Word of God proclaimed in the _____ and believes it, they become God's true sheep.

John 10.27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

- When a person follows Jesus in obedience, they _____ that they have truly become God's sheep.

Luke 9.23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and **follow me**."

- True sheep will _____ follow Jesus, and will not follow false shepherds.

John 10.5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

4. Jesus saw the clear need for _____ shepherds to lead the people of God.

- A. Jesus looked upon the crowds with compassion, knowing their _____ for godly shepherds who would lead them.

Matt 9.36-38 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, **like sheep without a shepherd**. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest **to send out laborers** into his harvest."

- B. Jesus' strategy was to appoint other shepherds to _____ His sheep.

Matt 10.5-6 These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 **but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**."

- C. Jesus' strategy is to appoint godly men to oversee and _____ for His sheep.

Jer 10.4 I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.

John 21.16 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Feed my lambs**."

John 21.17 He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Tend my sheep**."

John 21.18 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "**Feed my sheep**."

- D. Shepherding God's people is of great _____ to our Lord.

- E. Church leaders are to look to Jesus and follow His _____ of shepherding.

1 Pet 5.1–2 *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;*

1 Pet 5:3-4 *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.*

- The command to the Elders to shepherd the flock of God means that this is their _____ responsibility.
- Elders are to _____ the lives of their sheep with eagerness.
- Elders should never be _____.
- Elders are to be _____ to the flock.
- Elders will be held _____ to the Chief Shepherd for how they lead His sheep.

F. Church leaders must beware of _____ the sheep for our own benefit, and should instead give themselves to the Lord to be used by Him for the sheep's benefit.

Ezek 34:2-3 *"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? 3 You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep.*

G. Church leaders must be very attentive to _____ for the needs and spiritual safety of the flock, since it has been purchased by Christ at a great price.

Acts 20.8 *Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.*

- The _____ of the sheep under their care is very high, as it was purchased with the blood of Christ.

5. The role of shepherding shows us how to _____ the church.

A. It is evident in the Bible that churches were led by _____ Elders.

Acts 14.23 *And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.*

Titus 1.5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you.

B. It is evident in the Bible that there should be _____ authority and accountability among the Elders.

- There is no evidence in the Bible of a _____ of Elders.
- Elders are to govern the church of God by being _____ in mind and spirit.

1 Cor 1.10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that **you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.**

- Elders should do what is always in the best interest of the church and the _____ of God.

Eph 3.21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Eph 4.11–12 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, **for building up the body of Christ,**

- Having unity in purpose does not mean that all Elders will have exactly the same _____.

1 Tim 5.17-18 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, **especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.** 18 For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

Conclusion:

- Shepherding the church of God is a _____ responsibility and privilege given to leaders by the Lord.
- Church leaders must lead God’s people _____ the leadership of Jesus Christ Himself by following His holy example.
- Church leaders are called to shepherd the _____ of God’s people, even at great cost to themselves, since the church was purchased at a great price by Christ for Himself.

- Church leaders must remember that one day they will give an _____ to the Lord for their leadership.

James 3.1 *Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*