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DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PASTORAL LEADERSHIP COURSE AT THE SEVEN OAKS CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MAYFIELD, KENTUCKY, FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE ELDERS

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APPROVAL SHEET

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PASTORAL LEADERSHIP COURSE AT THE SEVEN OAKS CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MAYFIELD, KENTUCKY, FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE ELDERS

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I dedicate this project to my loving and faithful Christian wife, Amanda Ketchum. Her sacrifices, wisdom, love, and an unending support guide, strengthen, and motivate me each day.

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PREFACE

Thank you to all the kind and helpful staff and professors of SBTS for their direction, guidance, and encouragement throughout this process. I am especially grateful for the guidance, support, and diligent effort given to this project by Dr. Chase Sears, who served as Supervisor. Thank you to my beloved Seven Oaks Church of Christ and its godly Shepherds for their allowance and encouragement to me during this process. Thank you to my wife and children for their encouragement, long-suffering, and support during this process. Finally, thank you to God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit for their companionship, love, mercy, and grace. To God be the glory!

Josh Ketchum

Mayfield, Kentucky
December 2021

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The mission and vision of the local church depends upon its leadership. Men need to be equipped and trained to serve as elders and shepherds. Often these faithful Christian men have had little, to no, formal training on how-to shepherd and lead the church of Christ. In this ministry project, I addressed the training needs of my local work in order to strengthen the present eldership and to provide qualified, trained men of God to lead the church into the future.

Context

The ministry project took place in the context of Seven Oaks Church of Christ (SOCOC) located in Mayfield, Kentucky. Mayfield is in western Kentucky and currently the church has over 300 individuals attending sporadically. On an average Sunday, before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was around 175-185 in Sunday School, around 250-265 in morning worship, and about 130-150 in evening worship. Two elders lead the church, which is the lowest number of elders in decades. Historically, the congregation has had strong leadership with the number of elders ranging between three and six men. This number has fluctuated through the years with several key shifts and turnovers. I started my tenure as the preacher with the congregation in November of 2003. The church had four elders, all of whom had served since 1998–one since the mid-70s. In 2006, a respected older preacher and servant joined the eldership making the total five. Due to his, and his wife's health, he was only available to serve for a few years. In 2016, a newly appointed elder returned the number to five, but tumultuous times hit in 2017-18. Due to numerous factors, three elders resigned in a period of seven months. The combined

experience of the men totaled well over 80 years of serving as shepherds. These resignations left the eldership with two men, both of whom were the two youngest of the group–both men are in their fifties. One has served as an elder, since 1998, while the other was appointed in 2016.

The existence of such a small number of elders caused concern amongst the flock. First, there was the difficulty of two men shouldering so much responsibility and accountability for a congregation the size of Seven Oaks. Second, there was the concern that with only two, if something caused one of these men to leave the office, the church would not have an eldership. The church has not gone without an eldership in almost 100 years. Third, there was the practical concern of the unity of the two men, as two men could be divided with no third party to break the impasse or negotiate a settlement. Fourth, some of the older members worried because of the age of the elders. Fifth, likely most concerning to the overall congregation, was the lack of a readily available pool of qualified men to add to the existing eldership.

Clear weaknesses emerged when assessing our congregation. Acknowledging my redundancy, the most noticeable and significant weakness involved the number of shepherds the church currently had serving. We needed more willing, qualified elder candidates to serve. The congregation had several men who were qualified but have not been willing to serve in the past. Also, the church had numerous young men who needed to be preparing themselves to serve capably in the future.

A second weakness involved the high-pressured environment and emotional stress the current eldership model puts upon men. A lack of cohesion, life circumstances, and poor teamwork has caused men to burnout, be frustrated, and serve ineffectively. The elders were burdened with staffing decisions, financial stewardship, and the church's spiritual health. Adding to these stresses was the unwritten practice of an elder being appointed and expected to serve indefinitely in this burdensome role. The church had no

system or policy in place for an elder to take a leave, sabbatical, or years of tenure expectation.

A third weakness was a lack of planning and vision. The church has experienced some decline and difficulty the last couple of years. The church needed to reclaim a clear purpose and vision for what it should be for God in this community. The elders and the preacher became so busy dealing with problems and reacting to setbacks, that little time and attention was given to vision and growth. The elders, along with the ministers, needed to give attention to the vision of the church and the plans for the next several years going forward. There needed to be an increase in enthusiasm, dedication, and time put into the work of the church.

Rationale

The above-mentioned factors indicated that Seven Oaks Church of Christ had a need for training and developing present and future elders to carry the church's mission and vision into the future. The church had a long history of godly, Bible-centered leadership and realized the importance of perpetuating this type of leadership into the future. Thus, the church needed to give formal attention to addressing these weaknesses. This formal attention came through the present elders and future elder candidates spending time together vision-casting, being trained, and gaining skills to deal with their pastoral work.

The apostles "appointed elders" in local congregations to shepherd, teach, and oversee the body of believers (Acts 14:23).[1] Paul gave qualifications to Timothy and Titus to set churches in order with elders in each congregation (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). God desires a plurality of elders/shepherds/overseers in each congregation (Titus 1:5;

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations come from the *English Standard Version*.

Acts 20:17). Thus, if SOCOC were to be what God desired in a local congregation, we needed to train and equip men to serve as a qualified shepherds and elders of the church.

God equips men to lead through teaching of His word. It behooved us as a congregation to formally establish a pastoral leadership course to specifically study God's desire for elders. The class provided an intentional method of digging into Old and New Testament Scriptures to find God's desires for His shepherds. The class equipped students to carry out the pastoral functions of elders.

We needed the class to develop bonds between elders and future elders. With the burnout and stress level being high on our church's past elders, there was a need to formally address the duties of the role, how to manage stress, team unity, and teamwork principles to aid the future. We needed to encourage our present elders. There was a need for elders to develop healthy conflict-resolution skills, appropriate rules of interaction, and bonds of love with one another (Phil 2:1-5). The elders needed to capture the vision of God for SOCOC and be inspired to lead the church forward in achieving that vision.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement an effective pastoral leadership course at Seven Oaks Church of Christ for present and future elders.

Goals

Several necessary goals were applicable for the purpose of this ministry project. These goals reflected a progression of steps to be taken to develop and implement an effective pastoral leadership course at SOCOC.

1. The first goal was to assess the knowledge and pastoral practices of the SOCOC present and future elders.
2. The second goal was to develop a six-week pastoral leadership curriculum to train SOCOC present and future elders.
3. The third goal was to equip present and future elders through teaching a pastoral leadership course at SOCOC.

Research Methodology

The first goal was to assess the knowledge and pastoral practice of the SOCOC present and future elders. This assessment provided a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the current and future elders. This goal was measured by administering the Pastoral Leadership Knowledge and Practices Survey (PLKPS) to a select group of 5-20 men (see appendix 1). The goal was considered successfully met when this group had taken the PLKPS, showing a picture of their understanding and practices related to pastoral leadership.

The second goal was to develop a six-week, one and a half hours each session, pastoral leadership course curriculum to train SOCOC present and future elders. This curriculum was developed around key shepherding biblical texts, relevant books, and leadership principles. The goal was measured by an expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum (see appendix 2). This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The third goal was to equip present and future elders through teaching a pastoral leadership course at SOCOC. This goal was measured by administering the PLPKS again to assess the present and future elders' knowledge and practices (see appendix 1). Additionally three supplemental questions were added to the post course survey (PLPKS) in order to improve future offerings of the course (see appendix 3). The goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post survey scores.[2]

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms are used throughout this project.

[2] All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use.

Elders. The New Testament refers to this one office in three descriptive terms: overseer (*episkopos*/bishop), elder (*presbuteros*/presbyter), and shepherd (*poimein*/pastor). These terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same groups of leaders and the same office.[3] "Both New Testament descriptive and prescriptive accounts unite to indicate that the eldership of New Testament churches was plural, not singular."[4]

Two limitations apply to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre and post-series surveys was dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their knowledge and understanding of pastoral leadership. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their answers would remain nameless. Second, the number of men willing to participate in the training was a limiting factor out of my control. Due to the nature of the study some men were reluctant to participate in the class fearing they would be called to the eldership or possibly not participating because they believe they would never be Biblically qualified to serve. Third, the class took place during the midst of COVID-19 pandemic which affected participation in the class.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project was delimited to no more than twenty men. Second, the project was confined to a fifteen-week timeframe. This gave adequate time to prepare and teach the six-week training and conduct the post-series survey after sessions are completed. Finally, this project was limited to training men to enhance their pastoral leadership knowledge and practice and not provide instruction to their wives or children.

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[3] Nathan A. Finn, "The Rule of Elders: The Presbyterian Angle on Church Leadership," in *Shepherding God's Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, ed. Benjamin Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 198, 214.

[4] Bruce A. Ware, "Putting It All Together: A Theology of Church Leadership," in Merkle and Schreiner, in *Shepherding God's Flock*, 294.

Conclusion

God's expectations are clear. He desires men to lead as Shepherds over his people watching out for their souls in the local church (Eph 4:11; Heb 13:17). The SOCOC seeks to follow God's expectations and desires for a local church. Our potential in Christ is limitless, but we must intentionally plan by training leaders today. It is my sincere belief that this pastoral leadership course encouraged and equipped present and future elders in the work of leading God's flock. In chapter 2, we will explore this mission by observing the Biblical and theological foundations for pastoral leadership as described in two key passages.

CHAPTER 2

THE SCRIPTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR PASTORAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

"Pastoralism was a widely visible and significant sector of all Near Eastern societies from the very beginning of human civilizations."[1] Shepherds, though a common and lowly occupation, provide for, protect, feed, and care for their flocks. In an agrarian based society, this was an essential occupation. Yet, what is surprising is that God chose to use this metaphor as a common description of Himself in Scripture (Gen. 49:24; Ps 23:1; Isa 40:11; Ezek 34). Our Lord will famously describe himself as the "good shepherd" (John 10:11,14). "God refers to his people as sheep and to their leaders as shepherds—a metaphor that places leaders among the people, personally sustaining and safeguarding the flock (Num 27:15-18; 2 Sam 5:2; 1 Kgs 22:17; Ps 77:20)."[2] In the New Testament church the metaphor is applied to her leaders who serve as elders or overseers (John 21:15-19; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 5:1-4).[3] The church is the flock of God which is led by the Good Shepherd with elders serving as under-shepherds (1 Pet 5:1-4). God calls elders to shepherd His flock for their protection and productivity. In order to support this claim an examination of Ezekiel 34 and Ephesians 4:11-16 will be conducted in order to establish the scriptural and theological support for training elders in pastoral leadership.

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[1] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 20 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 42.

[2] Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones, *The God Who Goes before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018), 110.

[3] *The God Who Goes before You*, 111.

Ezekiel 34

Ezekiel 34 is part of a larger section of restoration or salvation oracles (chapters 34–48) which are following Ezekiel's earlier messages of judgment.[4] Chapter 34 functions as Yahweh's divine judgment against Israel's shepherd leaders and his restoration as the divine shepherd/king of Israel.[5] Chapter 34 can be divided into three sections: 1) vv. 1-16 an oracle of judgment against the shepherds of Israel and of salvation for the sheep; 2) vv. 17-24 an oracle of judgment against abusive sheep and salvation of the sheep who have suffered, and 3) vv. 25-31 a conclusion to the chapter in which Yahweh establishes a covenant of peace with the flock.[6] The focus of this study will remain on Ezekiel's message to the Shepherds.

Jeremiah 23:1-2 is "evidently the source of the shepherd metaphor, which Ezekiel characteristically embellished."[7] "The linkage in theme and structure, style, and dictation are too numerous and too specific to be accidental."[8] This linkage and the metaphor itself is not surprising given the prevalence pastoralism played in the economy and social life of Ancient Near Eastern civilization.[9] What may be surprising to modern observers is how the ancient shepherd metaphor was connected to the ruler or leader of the people.

"Pastoral images conveyed notions of rulership—both divine and human—in a wide variety of historical periods, geographical regions, and literary contexts in the

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[4] Daniel Isaac Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 270.

[5] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 272.

[6] James A. Durlesser, *The Metaphorical Narratives in the Book of Ezekiel* (Lewiston, MT: Edwin Mellen, 2006), 15.

[7] Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel, Chapters 20-48*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 29 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 161.

[8] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 275.

[9] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart*, 42-57. Laniak offers an extensive treatment of "Shepherds in the Ancient World."

Ancient Near East."[10] Hammurabi referred to himself as a shepherd.[11] The king of Sumer and Babylon are referred to as shepherds. "Egyptian Pharaohs were perceived as shepherds of the people. . . In fact, the hieroglyph of the shepherd's crooks designates 'to rule,' 'to govern,' or 'to dominate.'"[12] The Old Testament stands in this pastoral metaphor tradition.[13] Yahweh, Moses, and David are all given this description. Both Moses and David were called into leadership while serving as literal shepherds. "The symbol conveyed the thought that the king protects, feeds, and cares for his subjects in the same way that a shepherd performs these tasks for his sheep."[14] "Alongside power, the ancient oriental ideal of kingship includes the protection the true shepherd gives to his flock, by leading the needy to pasture, providing food and drink, and establishing pasturages and places of safety."[15]

Thus, when Ezekiel addresses the shepherds of Israel in his day, there is already a "very definite picture of the true shepherd in the background."[16] Ezekiel is told to "prophesy against the shepherds of Israel" (34:2). But who are these shepherds that Yahweh is accusing of dereliction of duty? Horace Hummel believes it is "impossible to determine just which unfaithful 'shepherds' Ezekiel has in mind in these verses."[17] He argues the vision is "not primarily political" but Yahweh's "real concern is that Israel

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[10] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart*, 58.

[11] Durlesser, *Metaphorical Narratives in Ezekiel*, 10-11.

[12] Durlesser, *Metaphorical Narratives in Ezekiel*, 11.

[13] King David is described as a shepherd (1 Sam 16; Ps 78:70-72). Isaiah 44:28 describes Cyrus, king of Persia, as a shepherd. The book of Nahum describes government officials as shepherds. As already shown above, the Hebrew Bible refers to Yahweh as a shepherd (Pss 23; 77:20; 78:52-53; 80:1; 95:7). Durlesser, *Metaphorical Narratives in Ezekiel*, 12-13.

[14] Durlesser, *Metaphorical Narratives in Ezekiel*, 13.

[15] Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 469.

[16] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 470.

[17] Horace D. Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scriptures* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 2007), 997.

may be freed from 'internal captivity.'"[18] Robert Jensen argues the phrase denotes the "Israelite monarchy as a single phenomenon."[19] Support for this view is seen in the word "prince" chosen as the one who will replace them (34:24) and the metaphor's tradition of being connected with rulers. He sees "no particular king or pair of kings intended, but rather Israelite monarchy as a historical phenomenon."[20] Jeremiah had used the term for general leaders which certainly included a warning to the kings of Judah.[21] But Daniel Block argues that a more limited application to the "former kings of Judah" should be understood. He points out the entire ruling class who are guilty of abusing power will be in view later in verses 16-19. These shepherds are being replaced by the appointment of a single, good shepherd; David (v. 23-24).[22] Leslie Allen follows a similar vein of thought in arguing that Jeremiah referenced the last major kings of Judah as responsible for the deportation, which was yet future. Ezekiel will now "dramatically" repeat and expand Jeremiah's accusations now "vindicated by history."[23] John B. Taylor sees Ezekiel as being "particularly conscious of the failures of the most recent king before the exile."[24] While conclusive specificity on Ezekiel's literal meaning is elusive, a broad decisive conclusion can be made that "shepherds" refers to the leaders of Israel whom Yahweh "deemed employees of the divine shepherd and responsible to him."[25] Thus, Ezekiel 34

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[18] Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 998.

[19] Robert W. Jensen, *Ezekiel*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), 263.

[20] Jensen, *Ezekiel*, 264.

[21] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 282.

[22] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 282.

[23] Allen, *Ezekiel, Chapters 20-48*, 161.

[24] John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 22 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 214.

[25] Allen, *Ezekiel, Chapters 20-48*, 161.

serves as an important text on the responsibilities and principles of pastoral leadership of God's people.

Accusations against Israel's Shepherds

Chapter 34 begins with a standard prophetic "woe oracle" against the Shepherds of Israel.[26] The Lord is "against the shepherds of Israel" and is forced to intervene and shepherd his flock himself (34:1; 7-16). "God would dismiss his people's current shepherds and raise up a new shepherd who would be, at the same time, both Davidic and divine."[27] These shepherds have "done exactly what the Lord predicted when Israel begged Samuel to replace divine rule through charismatics with kings like those of 'all the nations'; they have exploited the people for their own indulgence and ambition (1 Sam 8:5-18)."[28] The kings of Israel and Judah had failed in fulfilling their most basic duty and responsibility—caring for their flock. They hence failed at the "most central point of their identity."[29]

Ezekiel accused the shepherds of feeding themselves rather than feeding the sheep (34:2). The prophet further detailed their malpractice and selfish actions by indicting them of crimes of commission (v. 2-3) and omission (v. 4) which brought about the effect of the sheep being scattered and falling prey to wild beasts (v. 5-6). Ezekiel says, "You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep (34:3)." The three crimes were they "eat," "clothe," and "slaughter." While these may be expected from real life shepherds within proper degree, when the image is metaphorical for humans it is clearly selfish and abusive. The term

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[26] David L. Thompson, *Ezekiel*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2010), 207.

[27] Wilder and Jones, *The God Who Goes before You*, 119.

[28] Jensen, *Ezekiel*, 264.

[29] Thompson, *Ezekiel*, 207.

"eat" suggests a "solid milk product," and is implied as on parallel with robbery.[30] Ezekiel's term for "clothe" "assumes the forceful removal of wool, making it look like the sheep are left naked before the elements."[31] The term for "slaughter" often denotes the term for a sacrificial animal in the Old Testament.[32] Though sheep are raised for meat, here this term denotes the "most blatant violation of the shepherd's role, presumably judicial murder."[33] This triad of charges substantiates the general charge of verse 2 that the leaders have fed themselves, while neglecting to care for their flock.

Ezekiel then moves to accusations related to their failures in caring for the flock. Not only have they exploited the sheep, but they have omitted the expected care a shepherd would give his sheep. The prophet arranged the sheep that needed to be cared for into six groups. The shepherds demonstrate a lack of care for the sheep's physical health described with five designations. "The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, with force and harshness you have ruled them" (34:4). They failed to strengthen and care for the weak and sick, but also to seek after the stray and lost sheep. There exists text critical issues that create a challenge in translating the last phrase of verse 4.[34] Allen translates the phrase "while you have dominated the strong in a brutal manner."[35] Walther Eichrodt translates the phrase, "the strong you have violently trampled down."[36] The significance of this variant reading, which none of the

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[30] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 283.

[31] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 283.

[32] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 283.

[33] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 283.

[34] Regarding the differences in the LXX and MT, see Allen, *Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 156; Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 986-987.

[35] Allen, *Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 155.

[36] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 468.

major translations use is the addition of the concept of "strong" sheep. This would be a separate category of sheep the shepherd neglected. As Eichrodt states, "the shepherds of Israel have not only failed to show self-sacrifice in protecting and providing for those in need of their care, but have violently trodden down the stronger sheep, which would otherwise be the pride of the flock, i.e. they have atrociously overworked them and taken advantage of them for profit."[37] In the context of Ezekiel, the kings of Israel and Judah are indicted as failing in their royal duty by allowing the weak to suffer and the strong to be abused. "Responsibility for the deportation of 597 B.C. and for the flight of refugees from Judah to neighboring states is laid at the palace door."[38]

The effect of their actions both of commission and omission was that the sheep were scattered (v. 5-6). In fact, they were scattered because "there was no shepherd." (Ezek 34:5). The shepherds' poor leadership was in effect no leadership![39] Ezekiel modifies the term sheep with the possessive "my" twice in verse 6. This was the Lord's flock, not their own. In fact, the possessive "my" is used to describe the shepherds in verse 8. The shepherds were the Lord's appointed leaders and providers, yet they were being replaced because of their failures.[40] The sheep had been scattered and the shepherds had failed to "seek" or "search" for them, a key term throughout the oracle.[41]

The Lord's Response

Because of the scattered condition of His flock, God is compelled to intervene. The Lord says, "Behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require the sheep at their

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[37] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 470.

[38] Allen, *Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 161.

[39] Jesus would view the first-century people in a similar vein as he saw them as "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36).

[40] Taylor, *Ezekiel*, 214; Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 284.

[41] Allen, *Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 162.

hand and put a stop to their feeding the sheep" (Ezek 34:10). The shepherds will no longer be able to "feed themselves" for God will "rescue" the sheep from "their mouths" (Ezek 34:10). "For the rulers this is an announcement of judgment, but for the flock it is a message of hope."[42] Man's betrayals and failures only make Yahweh's "faithfulness shine out more brightly" highlighting the fact that his intervention was necessary.[43] This message of hope is seen in three ways through the rest of the chapter.

First, God takes on the role of provider for his sheep (Ezek 34:7-16). Yahweh himself will take charge of his flock and be the true shepherd and put an end to all misrule."[44] God will "search for my sheep and will seek them out" (Ezek 34:11). He promised to feed them with "good" and "rich" pasture (Ezek 34:14). He will cause them to "lie down" (Ezek 34:15). Then God will reverse the order of the failed shepherds. Verse sixteen is a "modified mirror image of v. 4"[45] God says, "I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice" (Ezek 34:16). "By recasting negative statements as positive affirmations, he deliberately portrays Yahweh as a good shepherd, the antithesis of the earlier evil shepherds."[46] By providing for his sheep God grants them the pastoral care they need and offers them rest and peace.

Second, God will provide one shepherd to guide them–his servant David (Ezek 34:20-24). The point was not that David would return from the tomb, but "that a ruler like David would one day reign over the nation again."[47] Block observes five characteristics of this leader prophesied by Ezekiel: 1) he is chosen by Yahweh himself, 2) he is a

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[42] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 286.

[43] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 472.

[44] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 471.

[45] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 291.

[46] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 291.

[47] Wilder and Jones, *The God Who Goes before You*, 121.

singular shepherd or leader, 3) he is identified by the title David, 4) he will be a servant of Yahweh, and 5) he will be a ruler or prince.[48] With this description Ezekiel takes up the "messianic hope of the pre-exilic prophets"[49] His announcement will give new hope to the "hearts of the exiles" and "symbolizes the presence of Yahweh in the midst of his people."[50] "For our whole passage to make straightforward sense, the Good Shepherd must be at once God and a descendant of David. And that of course is exactly what classical Christology says of Jesus the Christ."[51] The Messiah is certainly in view and the New Testament will continue this shepherd metaphor and demonstrate how Christ is the "Good Shepherd" (John 10).

Third, God will provide for a covenant of peace, which was likewise prophesied by the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34). Closely connected with David's coming as the One Shepherd is the covenant he brings. "I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods" (Ezek 34:25). This peace will involve full and complete blessings from the Lord.[52] Nature itself is poetically transformed by the eschatological good shepherd.[53] It will result in the people knowing "I am the Lord their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord God. And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God" (Ezek 34:30-31). This entire section has reached its climax "in the recognition that the covenant between God and people is once more established."[54]

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[48] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 297-300.

[49] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 475.

[50] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 300-301.

[51] Jensen, *Ezekiel*, 267.

[52] Thompson, *Ezekiel*, 209.

[53] Jensen, *Ezekiel*, 268.

[54] Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 484.

Leadership Principles for Modern Shepherds

Can modern students of leadership read Ezekiel 34 as legitimately addressing and giving guiding principles for leadership and church work today?[55] A simple answer in the affirmative to this question comes by focusing on the timeless shepherd-sheep metaphor used by Ezekiel. God used the shepherd metaphor throughout the whole canon of Scripture. This metaphor and its clear connection to Ezekiel 34 is taken up by Christ himself in John 10.[56] The New Testament apostles even used the metaphor when speaking about the church and leaders of the church. Peter exhorts fellow elders to "shepherd the flock of God" (1 Pet 5:2). Paul used the metaphor when talking to the elders of the church of Ephesus in Acts 20:28-29. The apostles used the term to describe the work of elders in the church (1 Pet 5:2-4, Acts 20:28-29). Paul used the noun form, "Pastors" or "Shepherds" to describe church leaders given by Christ to "equip the church for ministry" (Eph 4:11-12).

The fact that Jesus, Peter, Paul, and the early church used the shepherd metaphor grounded in Ezekiel 34 demonstrates its application to our modern churches. The condemned behaviors of the shepherds are still rightly condemned and must be avoided by modern shepherds; likewise, the expected duties and responsibilities of Israel's shepherds are also expected by God of shepherds today. Ezekiel emphasizes "human leaders are expected—and encouraged—in YHWH's economy."[57] Daniel Block specifically draws this conclusion writing, "Ministers serve their congregations as shepherds under God . . . ministers are first and foremost servants of God . . . In this eminently 'pastoral' text, Ezekiel has offered the OT paradigm for NT ministerial

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[55] Initial thoughts and ideas for this section were found in Jonathan Jonah Seid, "Equipping and Empowering Biblical Leaders at Bridgeway Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma" (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 37-39.

[56] Ralph Alexander, *Ezekiel*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 836; Jensen, *Ezekiel*, 265.

[57] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart*, 160.

ideals."[58] Thus, before leaving this section, I will offer some leadership principles for modern shepherds drawn from Ezekiel 34.

Nourishing shepherds. James A. Durlesser argues that Ezekiel 34 and the shepherd metaphor is "first and foremost relational." Ezekiel wanted to explore the failed relationship between their rulers and the people while then highlighting the hope and promise a relationship with Yahweh provides.[59] The shepherds of Israel failed to provide basic nourishment and sustenance to their sheep (Ezek 34:3-6). God promises to provide abundance of food and rich pasture for grazing (Ezek 34:13-16). The most basic of pastoral duties is feeding and watering the flock. Paul brings this concept into the New Testament when he reminds the Ephesian elders their duty is to care for or feed the flock of God (Acts 20:28).[60] Just as a husband is to nourish and cherish his wife as Christ does the church, so godly leaders must nourish their flock (Eph 5:29). A shepherd's priorities should be shaped by the people's brokenness and need.[61] He, thus, responds by binding up these wounds.

Protecting shepherds. Israel's shepherds allowed the sheep to become "prey" and "food for all the wild beasts" (Ezek 34:8). Christ spoke of wolves seeking to prey on the sheep throughout the gospels (Matt 7:15, 10:16; Luke 10:3; John 10:12). He spoke of "thieves and robbers" who sought to "kill and destroy" in his John 10 narrative (John 10:8, 10). Paul warned the elders at Ephesus about "fierce wolves" who would not spare the flock after his departure (Acts 20:29). Shepherds have to protect the flock from

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[58] Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, 309.

[59] Durlesser, *Metaphorical Narratives in Ezekiel*, 24-25.

[60] Paul uses the verb form ποιμαίνω, which means "to feed, pasture, tend a flock, to shepherd." William D. Mounce with Rick D. Bennett Jr., *Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Accordance Bible Software, 2011).

[61] Wilder and Jones, *The God Who Goes before You*, 125.

dangerous outside influences seeking to destroy Christians. Christian leaders nourish and protect their flock primarily through the teaching of the Word of God. Leaders combat destructive forces and false teachings through steadfast teaching of the Word (1 Tim 4; 2 Tim 4). The Ezekiel 34 text teaches that the "severest judgment will be for church leaders who lead their flocks astray from the truth of God's Word (John 17:17)"[62]

Selfless shepherds. The primary charge against Israel's shepherds was that they were "feeding themselves" (Ezek 34:2,8, 10). Their rule is described as being with "force and harshness" (Ezek 34:4)." Later Jude, the brother of our Lord, will echo Ezekiel by referencing shepherds "feeding themselves" (Jude 12). Ezekiel's warning is that "leadership of God's people carries with it obligations of selfless service."[63] Selfless leadership is modeled after the Good Shepherd himself who laid down his life for the sheep (John 10:17-18). Peter spoke about the motive that modern shepherds should have when he wrote, "shepherd the flock of God . . . not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly" (1 Pet 5:2).

Accountable shepherds. The shepherds of Ezekiel 34 were being removed from their work because of failing to do their duty. The flock was not their own, but God's (Ezek 34:8-10). "To be a shepherd is to be both responsible for (the flock) and responsible to (the owner).[64] These shepherds made a fatal leadership mistake all too common today as well--their abuse of others was "an expression of the arrogant assumption that power is primarily a privilege rather than responsibility."[65] They were plunderers rather than stewards of their flock. Shepherds today must realize they are

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[62] Hummel, *Ezekiel 21-48*, 998.

[63] Allen, *Ezekiel, Chapters 20-48*, 165.

[64] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart*, 248.

[65] Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart*, 149.

stewards of the flock of God. Peter says shepherds are to "exercise oversight" for the Lord (1 Pet 5:2). Paul understood the Holy Spirit had made the Ephesian elders "overseers" of the church of God which Christ "obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The Hebrew writer says that leaders will "give an account" to the Lord for the souls under their charge (Heb 13:17). Shepherds will give an account for their care and feeding of the flock.

Searching shepherds. Readers of Ezekiel 34 discover God's displeasure that the shepherds did not seek the lost sheep (Ezek 34:4, 6, 8). The sheep are so scattered that God has to seek and rescue them (Ezek 34:10-12). Ezekiel's narrative pre-figures the work of Christ who came to "seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). The Good Shepherd has compassion on the multitudes who were like sheep with no shepherd (Matt 9:36). He told a parable about leaving the ninety-nine and seeking the one lost lamb (Luke 15:4-7). Shepherds are to keep watch over the souls of the church (Heb 13:17). When a sheep goes astray, or is lost, the shepherds have the responsibility of seeking the sheep on behalf of God.

Summary. According to Ezekiel 34, God expects his shepherds to be nourishing, protecting, accountable, selfless, and searching in their attributes. Ezekiel's leadership emphasis and application to both New Testament characters and church leadership today is illuminating, unmistakable, and challenging.

Ephesians 4:11-16

Paul's robust theology accompanied with the description of his personal call in the first three chapters leads to his call in 4:1 for believers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." Henceforth, Paul will dive into the practical imperatives of the gospel call that should be lived out by Christians in the church. Chapter 4 focuses on the call for unity based upon the "One God" which Christians serve

(Eph 4:6). Chapter 4 can be separated into two main sections by Paul's call to walk in a particular manner (4:1, 17). "These calls serve to organize the chapter into halves, the first dealing with the one God giving specific gifts for the one body (church), and the second looking at the new person renewed by the Spirit to be one with other members of the body."[66] Paul's major concern throughout this section is with the "unity and maturity of the Church."[67] It is not in the purview of this study to focus on the entire section, but to narrowly focus upon 4:11-16 where Paul speaks of Christ's gift to the church with the purpose of building up the body and maturing the body in unity and love. This text supports my thesis that God expects elders to teach and equip his sheep for the work of ministry and the building up of the body of Christ. As Ezekiel 34 calls shepherds to protect, this New Testament passage calls shepherds to lead them into productivity for the kingdom.

Christ's Gifts to the Church

After establishing the foundation of unity in the "one God and Father of all" (Eph 4:6) Paul then moves to discussing Christ's gifts to the church given to produce unity and maturity in the church (Eph 4:7-16). The power for achieving the goal of a unified and mature body "comes not from the believers own resources but as a gift from the victorious, ascended Christ."[68] Paul writes, "Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph 4:7). Christ has gifted all believers with the purpose of blessing his church (Eph 4:16).[69] Paul will quote from Psalm 68:18 which

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[66] Lynn H. Cohick, *Ephesians*, New Covenant Commentary (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), 100.

[67] Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 252.

[68] Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 262.

[69] William W. Klein, *Ephesians*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, *Ephesians-Philemon*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 111.

stresses "the identity of the one who ascended with the one who descended."[70] Christ is exercising his ruling and victorious sovereignty over the church gained through his atoning work. Paul emphasizes in 4:8 and 11 that Christ "gave gifts to men." It is because of his ascension that he is able to give these gifts to men.[71] Paul was not thinking about "a small group of officials and leaders who make up the hierarchy of the church" in 4:7, but the "whole community of believers which are enriched with special endowments."[72] Paul also wrote about "gifts" in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. The language and topics discussed are similar throughout and all three passages put stress on love within the context of exercising gifts.[73] The gifts spoken of in 4:7, Romans 12, and 1 Corinthians 12 involve charismatic gifts of the Spirit exercised in the first century as well as individual talents and abilities. But a significant change takes place when Paul returns to the theme of gifts supplied by the ascended Lord, the gifts named in 4:11 are no longer abilities or talents, but people.[74]

"In Ephesians 4 the gifts named are not abilities given to people; they are people given to the church."[75] "By using the intensifying pronoun (αὐτός), Paul emphasizes that Christ is the one who sovereignly works to raise up and supply gifted leaders to the church."[76] "It was important for their own encouragement" and to "enable

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[70] Clinton Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 255.

[71] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 345. Bruce points out that something similar is said in Acts 2:33 regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost because of Christ's ascension.

[72] C. Leslie Mitton, *Ephesians*, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1976), 151.

[73] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 228-29. Lincoln offers numerous language and topic similarities between the three passages. Ephesians is unique in that it does not place an emphasis on the diversity of gifts, it applies the body of Christ imagery, and it sees specific ministers as gifts of the exalted Christ to the church.

[74] Ernest Best, *Essays on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 161.

[75] Walter L. Liefeld, *Ephesians*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1997), 103.

[76] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 255.

them to hold steady when things were difficult" for them to know they had been selected and given to the church by Christ Himself.[77] Ephesians 4:11 will list five groups of people that Christ has given to the church for the equipping and edifying of others. As Thielman states, "The most plausible understanding of the text places the emphasis less on the position that certain people hold in the church and more on the activities that Christ has equipped certain people to perform."[78] Paul is focusing on the people who carry out the function of leadership in the church. How remarkable and utterly humbling that through his grace, Christ chose to place the work of unifying and maturing the church in the hands of leaders.[79] Leaders must gain the implication of this passage. "The Christ who is powerful enough to conquer the enemies of God's people in every corner of the universe is also the Christ who equips God's people to fulfill their destiny of full union with him. If he was strong enough for one task, he is strong enough for the other."[80]

Leaders Described

Paul lists five offices or categories of leaders in 4:11. Paul lists a sequence of offices that form a grammatical inclusio in the Greek text.[81] S. M. Baugh sees this as a "complete list of offices in the church whose primary responsibility revolves around proclaiming and teaching the Word of God for the church's maturity and protection from false teaching (v. 13-14)."[82] The first two offices were confined to the first century and

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[77] Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 172.

[78] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 273.

[79] See 2 Cor 4 for a parallel thought of Paul's describing the work of the apostles as holding forth a treasure in earthen vessels.

[80] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 273.

[81] S. M. Baugh, *Ephesians*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016), 334.

[82] Baugh, *Ephesians*, 334.

are no longer seen in the modern church.[83] While the last three offices carry on throughout the entire church age.[84] The two groups of ministers listed first, the apostles and prophets, also appear first in Paul's list in 1 Corinthians 12:28 and were referenced as the foundation of the church in Ephesians 2:20 and 3:5. These two groups played a foundational role in evangelizing and establishing local congregations.[85] The apostles carried the gospel throughout the world and served as the revealers of Divine truth, authors of Scripture, and teachers of Christ's doctrine (John 14-16; Acts 2:42; 2 Cor 4; Eph 2:19-22).[86] Prophets had the privilege and responsibility of sharing the inspired Word of God with the first-century world (Acts 13:1; 21:9; 1 Cor 14).[87] The need and work of prophets came to a conclusion with the revelation and completion of the written Word of God. Since these two categories of leaders are no longer present in the church, our attention will focus on the final three categories—evangelists, shepherds, and teachers.

The word evangelist appears only twice in the New Testament. It is used in reference to Philip in Acts 21:8 when he was doing located evangelistic work, but he had earlier worked as a traveling missionary (Acts 8:4-13).[88] Timothy is told to do the "work of an evangelist" in 2 Timothy 4:5. A study of 1 and 2 Timothy and the instructions given to Timothy help to illuminate the role of an evangelist. His work was local (with the church at Ephesus) and involved refuting false doctrine and establishing church leaders.

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[83] Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 347; Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 160.

[84] Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 169. That is, "their nature is permanent."

[85] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 249.

[86] For a description of the term "apostle(s)" and details of their work, see Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 158; Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 303-306.

[87] Best argues that "prophets were normally regarded as offering directions for the way in which the church should move" as well as offered inspired teachings on the end of time and future events. Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 159-60.

[88] Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 163.

He was to set an example to believers and to pay careful attention to his preaching of the Word of God. He does the work of an evangelist within the church.[89] Some commentators see the work of an evangelist as being that of a traveling missionary who served the church universal and sought the salvation of unbelievers.[90] Arnold suggests that evangelists continued the work of the apostles by pronouncing good news in the local churches and regions that the apostles had established congregations.[91] F. F. Bruce sees their role as to reach unbelievers with the message, thus serving the local church by perpetuating its growth.[92] While precision on the exactness of the term is not afforded because of its scant usage, it seems clear that the evangelist fulfills a role for the local church of evangelizing. He is to pronounce the good news of Jesus. While there is certainly overlap with the work of pastors and teachers, this unique gift aids the church in accomplishing its goal of unity and maturity.

The next two terms and their construction in 4:11 have been the subject of much debate. The issue revolves around the question is Paul addressing one category of ministry leaders or two.[93] Paul included a definite article before each term until his last term, teachers.[94] Karl Barth and others have concluded that only one ministry is being described, that of "teaching shepherds."[95] William Hendriksen believes it is best to consider them as one group. He argues that the lack of the article may be sufficient to see

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[89] Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 164.

[90] William Hendriksen, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1967), 196.; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 250. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 274.

[91] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 259.

[92] Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 347.

[93] Baugh, *Ephesians*, 334.

[94] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 250.

[95] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 250.

them as one group.[96] However, Lincoln takes what seems to be the majority opinion when he states, "It is doubtful whether this is enough to demonstrate that the two ministries were always exercised by the same people. It is more likely that they were overlapping functions, but that while almost all pastors were also teachers, not all teachers were pastors."[97] Baugh argues the "adjunctive meaning of *και* communicating 'along with' or 'as well as,'" which is used before teachers here as it is similarly used in other New Testament lists. Thus, he sees teachers as a separate office or category given by Christ.[98] Congruently, Paul used only one article to modify "apostles" and "prophets" in 2:20 but seems to consider them two separate groups.[99] So rather than seeing this as describing one category or office, it is best to see them as closely associated and related in their function, but not one in the same.[100] If Paul did intend to join these terms together, it may be out of a concern for false teaching which is a major function of pastors and teachers (Eph 4:14-15).[101] It may also be the case, that Paul used a different format to demonstrate their connection as the only two offices directly connected to a local church.[102]

The term "shepherds" is the noun form ποιμήν which is used of Christ himself (John 10:11, 14; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25). The noun form when used to describe church leaders is only found in 4:11. The verb form is used to describe the work of shepherds in Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Jesus instructs Peter by using this term in John 21:16 after his denials. The term obviously draws upon the shepherd metaphor from the Old

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[96] Hendriksen, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*, 197.

[97] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 250.

[98] Baugh, *Ephesians*, 335.

[99] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 275.

[100] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 250.

[101] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 276.

[102] Baugh, *Ephesians*, 335.

Testament and has close association to the Jewish shepherd.[103] "It suggests the exercise of leadership through nurture, care, and guidance."[104] The work of a pastor or shepherd is the same office as an elder, overseer, or bishop (Acts 20; 1 Pet 5:1-4).[105] The church is described as a flock of sheep (John 10:16; 21:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2). This office is differentiated from the work of an evangelist and teacher by their role in administration and general oversight.[106] The term "shepherds" refers to church elders or overseers who meet the qualifications given by the Holy Spirit in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3. They hold positions of authority, are charged with the church's well-being, and are to feed the flock through sound teaching.[107]

The last group is described by Paul as, "teachers." While the first four groups have all been teachers, indeed, there is a sense in which all Christians are to teach each other (Col 3:16; Heb 5:12). Yet, Paul is calling attention to a special group of Christians who are called to specialize for the unity and maturity of the church in teaching.[108] Teachers may be distinguished from shepherds in that they are not gifted or called to administrative service and oversight of the church. They are to instruct the church and unbelievers in "the teaching" (1 Tim 6:1) or "doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9).[109] Teachers had a special role in the first century as indicated in 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 and Romans 12:7. They are mentioned throughout the New Testament.[110] Teaching was an important

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[103] See the earlier section on Ezekiel 34 in this work.

[104] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 251.

[105] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 251; Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 348.

[106] Best, *Essays in Ephesians*, 168.

[107] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 276.

[108] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 276.

[109] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 276.

[110] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 251.

part of the work of Timothy and Titus.[111] "Their function appears to have been preserving, transmitting, expounding, interpreting, and applying the apostolic gospel and tradition along with the Jewish Scripture."[112] As this passage indicates, teachers played a vital role in preserving truth and unity within the church. To distinguish shepherds and teachers, again it should be noted that not all teachers are shepherds, but all shepherds must be teachers.[113]

The Purpose of Church Leaders

Paul spends no extra words describing these leaders but quickly moves to their purpose when he writes in 4:12, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." He is clear on what he envisions as their function for the church. Paul uses three prepositional phrases in successive order in verse 12 indicating purpose. The first one is πρὸς and the following two are εἰς . Controversy has swirled around the proper translation and understanding of these prepositions as seen in translation differences. Are the prepositions to be taken as coordinate or not? Who is to do the "work of ministry"? Is it the leader or are they to equip the saints for doing the work of ministry? To further complicate the passage, the key noun καταρτισμός is only found here in the New Testament. Its exact rendering and nuances in this passage are debated. The import of the interpretation is significant because it determines who has the responsibility to do the work of ministry in the church.

The coordinate position, which holds that all three prepositions are modifying the verb "gave" and refer back to the church leaders, is an ancient one.[114] In this view, the

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[111] Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 166.

[112] Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 251.

[113] Klein, *Ephesians*, 115.

[114] Chrysostom, John of Damascus, John Calvin, Desiderius Erasmus all supported this position. See Thielman, *Ephesians*, 277; Klein, *Ephesians*, 116.

leaders "not only bring the saints to full maturity, but they also do the work of ministry."[115] The three phrases describe three purposes of the ministers. This interpretation is used by the KJV and RSV translations and includes noteworthy commentators such as Andrew Lincoln and S.M. Baugh.[116] Primarily they point to the stylistic character of Ephesians "since in this letter strings of coordinate prepositional phrases often modify a verb without coordinating conjunctions."[117] They also point to the word καταρτισμός with a meaning of "preparation," "training," "discipline," or "restore."[118] Baugh paraphrases the passage as "to fulfill the task of ministry (to the church), to provide for the saints, (and) to build up the body of Christ."[119] Lincoln believes "All believers are to be brought to state of completion, and it is the ministers Christ has given who are the means to this end as they exercise their ministries of proclamation, teaching, and leadership."[120] While this position has some merit, it is not without its problems nor opponents.

Modern translations including the NKJV and NRSV all translate the passage favoring the non-coordinate position. A host of commentators offer support to this view.[121] Numerous arguments are made to support this position and the evidence seems to strongly favor this interpretation. First, the shift in preposition usage from πρὸς in the first one to εἰς in the second and third phrases is significant. Likely, Paul signaled to the

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[115] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 277.

[116] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 253-55; Baugh, *Ephesians*, 336-40.

[117] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 277.

[118] Baugh, *Ephesians*, 339; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 254.

[119] Baugh, *Ephesians*, 339.

[120] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 254.

[121] Klein, *Ephesians*, 116-17; Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 349; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 262-64; Cohick, *Ephesians*, 110-11; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 276-79; Mitton, *Ephesians*, 150-51.

reader the shift and their non-coordinating nature by changing.[122] The "first preposition expresses the immediate purpose, while the second and third prepositions signify goal."[123] Christ gave leaders for the immediate purpose of equipping all believers with the goal of preparing them for the work of ministry, which in turn has the final goal of building up the body of Christ.[124] Second, the object of the first preposition has the article while the objects of the second two do not. "This stresses the distinctiveness of the first phrase."[125] Third, it seems the "sense of the sentence" leans toward this perspective.[126] If the leaders were to do all the ministry it would seem that phrase would come first. Also, the sentence reads well when seeing the first phrase as dependent upon the ministers and the second and third phrases dependent upon and expanding the concept of the first. "The three prepositional phrases build on each other, and the [ministers] of 4:11 equip all believers to do the work of ministry for the edification of Christ's body."[127]

Fourth, contextually 4:7-16 "is concerned with the role of all believers in the unity of the church."[128] 4:7 and 4:16 involve each and all believers assisting in the unity, growth, and maturity of the church. Thus, the context supports the view that leaders equip the saints to do the work of ministry since Christ has given each of them gifts (4:7). Fifth, the coordinating view is dependent upon an "unlikely meaning" for the noun καταρτισμός, which carries more naturally the meaning of "equipping" or "to

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[122] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 262.

[123] Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), 82.

[124] Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 82.

[125] Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 263.

[126] Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 349.

[127] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 279.

[128] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 276.

prepare."[129] Sixth, Best feels no necessity to make the burden of proof rest on the change in prepositions. But points to the context, especially verse 13 referring to the whole community. He views it "sufficient to note that the role of the leaders relates to the saints." Thus, the focus should be upon what the first phrase tells us about the role of the leaders. καταρτισμός should be translated as "equipping" or "preparing" which thus means their function is to "enable the saints to carry out their ministry. The ministry of the officials does not find its fulfillment in their own existence but only in the activity of preparing others to minister."[130] Even proponents of the coordinating view recognize that this first phrase is expressing ministers' primary duty of bringing the saints into maturity or equipping them.[131] The overwhelming evidence and a contextual reading of the passage demonstrate that "Christ has given gifted leaders to the church not merely to do the ministry, but to invest their time heavily in developing and preparing fellow believers to engage in ministry to the body."[132]

After concluding that the prepositions should be understood in a non-coordinating manner, it is vital we understand the meaning of this verse for our study. Church leaders are to equip or prepare church members for doing the ministry of the church. The phrase "work of ministry" involves the concept of members doing good works which members ought to do (Gal 6:10; Eph 2:10). The term ministry (διακονίας) is the often-used term for a servant. It refers to "an agent, intermediary, or assistant, as a table attendant or an aide."[133] It is the term used to refer to the title or leadership role in the church deacon. Christ himself came to serve (Mark 10:45). Thus, church members are

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[129] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 263.

[130] Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 173.

[131] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 254.

[132] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 262.

[133] Klein, *Ephesians*, 89.

to be equipped to use their diversity of gifts to minister or serve one another and the community by doing good works.[134] The result or goal of doing this ministry is "the building up of the body of Christ" (4:12). This final phrase is coordinate with the second prepositional phrase and provides a further explanation of the goal of ministry.[135] The term "building up" οἰκοδομὴν provides a bridge to the next section and the building metaphor used by Paul.[136] This term is reminiscent of 2:20-22 where the church is described as a building under construction as the "household of God," "holy temple in the Lord," and "a dwelling place for God."[137] The term also frames this section as it is used at the end of 4:16 "forming an inclusio that bracket this entire section of vv. 13-16."[138]

Leaders cannot, nor should they, do all the ministry in the church. Christ has given gifts to all (4:7). This position is supported by Paul's teachings in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12-14. "Leaders then were not people who had special tasks within the whole but people who exercised the roles which were open to all but in a special way."[139] They were not to lord over the church, nor required to carry out all the functions of the church. Their duty was to equip others so they could use their gifts in the work of ministry so the church can be built up in Christ. Paul is clear that this is the goal which leaders are striving for when he states, "from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (4:16). Sadly, many churches have failed to follow this teaching. "Essentially the vast majority of churches admit they have

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[134] Best provides a discussion of the types of service expected of Christians within the book of Ephesians and likely in view by Paul in using the phrase "work of ministry." Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 173-75.

[135] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 263.

[136] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 263.

[137] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 280.

[138] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 264.

[139] Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 177.

absolutely no strategy for developing the people in their churches for ministry."[140] In most churches the church leaders, possibly just the hired staff, are expected to minister to the people. This harms the spiritual growth of the members, limits the amount and quality of ministry done, and prevents the body from growing.[141] Ephesians 4:12 is calling church leaders to make equipping for ministry a core conviction rather than simply doing ministry.

The Goal of Church Leaders

Paul now states his anticipated outcome or goal in 4:13 of Christ's imparting gifts and leaders equipping saints for ministry. Paul uses the term "until" (μέχρι) here indicating "both a temporal end as well as a goal toward which believers strive."[142] The verb used "attain" (καταντάω) carries the meaning of "arriving at a destination after a long trip as well as the pursuit of a goal."[143] Paul will then use three more prepositional phrases all with the same preposition εἰς. "The three phrases should be interpreted as three different aspects of one goal and thus coordinate with one another and not as each building on the other."[144] This goal is for all believers, not solely for leaders. This goal should be the aim of the equipping.

The first goal is found in the prepositional phrase, "to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (4:13a). This unity of faith is a knowledge of a particular body of doctrine and teaching.[145] It is an understanding of the "one faith"

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[140] Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck**,** *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B&H, 2016), 34-35.

[141] Geiger and Peck**,** *Designed to Lead*, 39-43.

[142] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 264.

[143] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 264. For how this verb is used in the New Testament, see Acts 16:1; 18:19, 24; 21:7; 25:13; 26:7; 28:13; Phil 3:11.

[144] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 264.

[145] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 281.

spoken of in 4:5. The foundational aspect which should unite Christians is the "knowledge of the Son of God." There is a proper understanding of who Christ was and the doctrines that are to be believed about Christ. But this is more than just knowing facts about Christ, Paul surely has in mind "personal knowledge which comes through experience" which Paul "most earnestly sought for himself (Phil 3:10)."[146]

The second goal is found in the prepositional phrase, "to mature manhood" (4:13b). The mature man here is a reference not to an individual believer, but to the corporate body of the church.[147] This will soon be contrasted with "infants" or "children" in 4:14. Paul uses the term "mature" (τέλειος) which means "perfect," "complete," or "mature." Christ instructed us to "Be perfect (τέλειος) as your heavenly father is perfect" in Matthew 5:48 when speaking of our individual maturity. Paul here uses the term to describe the desired end or goal for a mature believer and congregation. Each believer and congregation as a whole is to be on the path of spiritual formation and maturity. He spells out what maturity entails in 4:16 and delineates its results in the rest of the chapter.[148]

This passion for maturity leads naturally to the third phrase, "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Paul is probably referencing the concept of height and reaching a level of stature. This concept goes well with the term "fullness" and the image of growth in 4:15. Christ is the standard for maturity. This metaphor continues into 4:15-16. "Paul intends for his readers to think of the church, which is the body of Christ,

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[146] Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 350.

[147] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 281; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 265.

[148] Klein, *Ephesians*, 120.

as eventually attaining Christ's full height."[149] Thus, "leaders in their equipping and the church in its growing must strive for nothing less than full Christlikeness."[150]

After addressing the goal from a positive view in 4:13, Paul considers the goal from a negative perspective in verse 14. The goal is to "move believers out of childhood, with its susceptibility to various false teachings."[151] A church moving toward maturity and the fullness of Christlikeness must leave behind the instability of false doctrine and deceptive human wisdom. Maturity will bring about stability. Paul compares believers without maturity as a boat adrift in a stormy and tempestuous sea.[152] Paul warns them about dangerous and deceitful people ready to manipulate and take advantage of immature and unstable believers.[153] This verse underlines the importance of Christ giving ministers to the church. Immaturity cannot be "treated as a neutral state which will be outgrown," but it is a highly dangerous condition because it opens the church up to cunning people and the forces of evil.[154] Individual members are obligated to "be no longer infants" (4:14).[155] Thus, ministers (4:11) are given to equip and mature believers. They are given to protect believers from the wolves that would lead them astray.

Paul returns to the positive side by focusing on "speaking the truth in love" (Eph 4:15). Believers do not use deception and manipulation but speak the truth in love. They are to wage their spiritual warfare by sharing the truth of the gospel with others. Speaking the truth in love is a part of growing toward maturity. Believers and the church

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[149] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 282.

[150] Klein, *Ephesians*, 120.

[151] Thielman, *Ephesians*, 283.

[152] Arnold, *Ephesians*, 267.

[153] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 258.

[154] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 259.

[155] Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 351.

become more like Christ through speaking the truth (1 Tim 3:15). "Teaching the truth in love is a means to the goal of equipping saints for ministry."[156]

Paul has now reached the climax and end to his lengthy sentence. He has created a vivid picture contrasting an infant and an adult. The adult is mature, Christlike, stable, and grounded in truth, while the infant is unstable, vulnerable, and not pleasing to Christ.[157] "The goal is a fully formed and functioning body of Christ with each part contributing to the health of the whole."[158] Verse 16 is the model church leaders are aspiring and striving for in their congregations. Every part is working properly because it has been equipped which leads to the body growing and building itself up in love. "Each believer is to utilize his or her gift in order for the body to attain full maturity."[159] Growth is expected from all believers and should touch every area of their lives. It is a lifelong journey of seeking Christlikeness. This is all made possible through the strength and life of Christ which supplies power to the whole body. "Each one functions best in union with him and with the others."[160] The church grows in many ways, but all involve the chief quality of love. "Love is the lifeblood of this body, and, therefore, the ultimate criterion for the assessment of the church's growth will be how far it is characterized by love."[161]

Leadership Principles for Church Leaders Today from Ephesians 4:11-16

After substantially demonstrating that Ephesians 4:11-16 supports the thesis that God expects elders to teach and equip his sheep for the work of ministry and the

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[156] Cohick, *Ephesians*, 113.

[157] Cohick, *Ephesians*, 113.

[158] Cohick, *Ephesians*, 113.

[159] Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 91.

[160] Bruce, *Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, 353.

[161] Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 264.

building up of the body of Christ, it seems appropriate to draw five practical applications for modern elders.

First, church leaders must envision their primary work as equipping church members for ministry. Contrary to traditional expectations and roles where church leaders often do ministry for the church, church leaders must shift to focusing on training, preparing, and equipping the body to minister. This begins with intentionally shifting thought patterns within the leadership from doing to delegating. Churches must develop equipping programs and have a plan for training members in ministry. Church leaders should engage in ministry but should always seek to be mentoring and modeling while they engage.

Second, church leaders must recognize the unique gifts which Christ has given the church. Christ has given each one talents and gifts to be used for the body (Eph 4:7-16). Leaders have the responsibility of using and bringing out these diverse gifts and resources for the good of the whole community. Church leaders should not make each member fit a precise mold but should seek to harness their unique talents and gifts for the good of the body.

Third, church leaders must keep their focus on protecting, growing, and maturing the local church. Paul's primary concern in this passage is the growth and maturity of the local church. The leaders are to protect the church from false doctrine and cunning schemes. They are to focus on the growth and development of the church. "For Paul, the major goal of each believer is not self-fulfillment but being a growing member of a strong loving church."[162] Our church culture today often focuses on individual gifts and talents being used for the fulfillment, satisfaction, and maybe even, glory of the

[162] Cohick, *Ephesians*, 108.

individual. The focus should be on "saints equipped for ministry and church growth, not on individuals receiving special gifting."[163] When leading the church and seeking to equip and utilize members, leaders must always prioritize the health and growth of the whole over the fulfillment and attainment of individuals.

Fourth, church leaders must understand the vital role of teaching the truth in maturing the body. The import of teaching is found all through this section. The common trait found in all five groups of leaders is that all were teachers of God's word. Christian leaders equip through teaching the Word of God. Great leaders for Christ are great teachers for Christ![164] Leaders provide stability, protection from error and deceit, and grow the church through teaching. Leaders have the responsibility of feeding the flock of God (Acts 20:28).

Fifth, church leaders must understand a healthy church is one where each member is empowered by the life of Christ and contributing their gifts so the body can grow in love and good works. It is not enough for leaders to simply offer equipping on a voluntary basis. Shepherds must seek unequipped, apathetic, disconnected sheep with the encouragement that their role in the body is essential. A church body will never be at its full potential for Christ until each member is doing their part. Church leaders must constantly keep love at the forefront and as the tie "which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col 3:14).

Summary. According to Ephesians 4:11-16, God expects his shepherds to teach and equip his church for the work of ministry. Church leaders must recognize their God-given role and gift to the church by focusing on equipping the unique gifts within

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[163] Cohick, *Ephesians*, 110.

[164] Gary Bredfeldt, *Great Leader, Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 2006), 13. This is the thesis and overall theme for this book.

the church for doing ministry and maturing the church into the image of Christ. It is through this pastoral leadership that Christians and the local church as a whole can experience the maturity and productivity that Christ desires.

Conclusion

After examining God's rebuke of His shepherds in Ezekiel 34 and Christ's gift to the church of leaders to equip and mature in Ephesians 4, it can be concluded that God calls elders to shepherd his flock for their protection and productivity. These texts serve as foundational passages for undergirding the work and calling of New Testament church elders.

CHAPTER 3

A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF ELDERSHIP MODELS

Paul David Tripp in his 2020 book on leadership stands convinced that we have a "leadership crisis."[1] Tripp goes on to ask these piercing questions: "Could it be that we are looking to the wrong models to understand how to lead? Could it be that we have become enamored with corporate models of leadership, we have lost sight of deeper gospel insights and values?"[2] I adamantly affirm Tripp's questions. In developing a pastoral leadership training class, it is fundamental to consider the polity and model being followed in the church. While there are numerous models and church polity doctrines in existence, for the scope of this study I will examine three leadership models: a) single-elder, b) a board of directors, and c) a plural, pastoral leadership model. All three of these models are based upon a congregational polity.[3] Each of these models will be defined, briefly surveyed in history, and considered theoretically. Some observations from their usage throughout history will be considered, but my primary focus will be comparing these models to contemporary leadership theories. My discussion is conceptual and theoretical, far more than it is doctrinal. I will observe the typical tendencies and outcomes of these three models. Ultimately, I aim to convince the reader that the current leadership crisis is due, in significant part, to the failed models often employed by the

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[1] Paul David Tripp, *Lead* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 17.

[2] Tripp, *Lead*, 17.

[3] Daniel L. Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church: The Bible's Witness to a Congregational/Single-Elder-Led Polity," in *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity*, ed. Chad Owen Brand and R. Stanton Norman (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004), 27. "Congregationalism locates the authority of the church in each local body of believers. No person or organization is above or over it except the Lord Jesus Christ alone as its head."

church. It is my conviction that this historical and theoretical survey will reveal the plural, pastoral leadership model to be biblical and effective, while free from the autocratic, authoritarian, legalistic tendencies of the other two.

Single-Elder Model

The single-elder or pastor model is a common form of church government today. The singular nature of one man serving as an elder/pastor over a local congregation distinguishes this model from the other two models. While advocates of the single-elder position follow the same Biblical teachings regarding the character and function of elders as plurality advocates, they argue "the Bible never specifies a precise number of elders over a local congregation."[4] As Daniel Akin writes, "Who they are and what they do is far more important than how many hold the office."[5] Single-elder proponents defend the position in several ways. Akin argues Paul in Ephesians 4:11 is referring to the leadership role of pastor-teachers in the church. He suggests Paul is referring to one man fulfilling that role with oversight of the congregation. He sees an overall pattern in the Old and New Testaments of one man having a prominent leadership role above a group of men.[6] Proponents also use the house church concept of the first century to argue that one elder was possibly over each house church.[7] Paige Patterson argues that in the New Testament pastors are "spiritual leaders of the congregation" and that "even when multiple elders were necessary, one of the elders remained the decisive spiritual leader of the flock."[8]

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[4] Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church," 64.

[5] Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church," 44.

[6] Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church," 63-69.

[7] Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church," 44-45. A. Burge Troxel, "Accountability without the Bondage: Shepherd Leadership in the Biblical Church," *Journal of Christian Education* 2, no. 2 (1982): 39-40.

[8] Paige Patterson, "Single-Elder Congregationalism," in *Who Runs the Church? 4 Views on Church Government*, ed. Paul E. Engle and Steven B. Cowan (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 134.

A significant nuance of this position is the view that a single-elder or senior pastor could be the primary leader. Gene Getz who favors a plurality of elders as the Scriptural polity, believes that there should still be a "primary leader" or "senior pastor."[9] This senior leader is the "pastor to the pastors" or "leader to the leaders."[10] Akin allows such a polity in his argument for a single-elder.[11] The model I am discussing conceptually is the traditional single-elder model, wherein one man has the authority and oversight of leading the church. While the principles and concepts discussed could apply to the "leader among leaders" polity if the senior pastor gained most of the authority and influence, this polity is not what I am discussing in this section.

A Brief Biblical and Historical Survey of the Single-Elder Model

In critiquing this model, I must observe there is no New Testament evidence for a single leader as the head of a local congregation, but rather the New Testament reveals that each church was led by a group of men who were recognized leaders of that congregation.[12] However, the development of a single leader over a congregation will develop very early on in the church's history. Ignatius of Antioch (AD 107) taught that there was a difference between the office of bishop and elder.[13] Historians point to at least the early years of the second century when churches began to see single-elder rule

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[9] Gene A Getz, *Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 252.

[10] Getz, *Elders and Leaders*, 256. It seems Getz's model is fashioned from a contemporary business model like a chairman-of-the-board model.

[11] Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church," 68.

[12] Benjamin L. Merkle, "The Pattern of Leadership in Acts and Paul's Letters to Churches," in *Shepherding God's Flock: Biblical Leadership in the New Testament and Beyond*, ed. Benjamin Merkle and Thomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014), 82-83.

[13] Daniel Evans and Joseph Godwin Jr., *Elder Governance: Insights into Making the Transition* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2011), 20.

over single congregations or multiple congregations in a geographical area.[14] Jerome writing in 420 said, "It was decreed in the whole church that one of the presbyters should be chosen to preside over the others, and that the whole responsibility for the Church should devolve on him, so that the seeds of schism should be removed."[15] Bishops gained more power as churches spawned more congregations which fell under the authority of the mother church's bishop.[16] This evolution led to the episcopal form of government which was seen in the historical Catholic church and the development of the papacy.[17]

The single-elder model may produce prideful, autocratic leaders who build the local congregation around their influence and authority. This concept and danger of one man having preeminence in the church dates to the New Testament itself. John must deal with Diotrephes, "who likes to put himself first" in the local church (3 John 9-10). Diotrephes refused to respect the authority of the apostles and controlled church membership. While he may not have occupied the position of a single-elder or pastor he is certainly functioning in many ways like an autocratic, dictatorial leader that this model tends to produce.

Paul's meeting with the elders of the church at Ephesus at the coastal city of Miletus is recorded in Acts 20. Paul seems to allude to the development of single leadership over an existing eldership in this meeting. Paul says, "I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock, and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). Notice Paul emphasizes that it is from within this plural eldership

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[14] Chad Owen Brand and R. Stanton Norman, eds., "Introduction: Is Polity That Important?," in *Perspectives on Church Government*, 11-13.

[15] Brand and Norman, "Introduction: Is Polity That Important?," 14.

[16] Evans and Godwin, *Elder Governance*, 22.

[17] Brand and Norman, "Introduction: Is Polity That Important?," 15-16.

that men will arise seeking to draw away disciples after them. Single leaders will attempt to garner a following.

This polity persisted for centuries as the primary church polity in history. The Protestant Reformation begun by Luther would bring sweeping changes to church polity. Anabaptist and Separatist groups developed during the reformation period. They developed congregational forms of polity. This congregational form of government led most of these churches throughout the 17th and 18th centuries to have a plural eldership model.[18] The Restoration movement, from which 7OCOC traces its historic linage, developed as a congregational polity with a plurality of elders. In Baptist and many protestant churches in America, plural eldership waned and was replaced in the 20th century with a single-elder or single-pastor model.[19] Often as an expediency because a plurality of qualified men was not available, a single elder would assume the leadership of a church.[20] This model is basically synonymous with traditional American evangelical churches today.

Theoretical Issues Related to a Single-Elder Model

After defining and briefly observing the historical development of the single-elder model, I will now examine the theory behind the model and explore the tendency for the model to lead to autocracy and pride. It seems that our culture and human tendency is to drift back to a single leader concept. This is default thinking for organizations, governments, and businesses. Our society lauds great leaders and seeks individual leaders to show the way. Throughout the Bible we see great men and women

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[18] Phil A. Newton, *Elders in Congregational Life: Rediscovering the Biblical Model for Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 24-25.

[19] Evans and Godwin, *Elder Governance*, 29.

[20] Newton, *Elders in Congregational Life*, 29; Benjamin L. Merkle, *Why Elders? A Biblical and Practical Guide for Church Members* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009) 62.

leading as individuals for God. From judges, prophets, kings, and apostles these leaders were often single individuals who influence others through their faith and works.

There are three leadership theory approaches which I wish to consider which offer credibility and understanding to the single-elder model. These models are the traits, skills, and transformational approach. One of the first systematic attempts to study leadership came through the "traits approach."[21] Leadership traits were studied to determine what made great leaders. These are traits that are possessed by individuals which elevate them above their peers and communities as leaders. The approach has identified "intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability" as major leadership traits.[22] When you compare these traits to pastors who have grown churches and had primary authority over a local church you see the similarities.

The skills approach to leadership theory suggests that effective leadership is based upon three basic personal skills: technical, human, and conceptual.[23] Skills are the "ability to use one's knowledge and competencies to accomplish a set of goals or objectives." Technical skills are knowledge and unique proficiencies in work and activities. For a pastor this would involve his special pastoral training and superior Bible knowledge. Human skills are the abilities one has to work with people. These social skills are key for a pastor who is often skilled at loving, caring, and serving people in a way that conjures reciprocal loyalty and love. Conceptual skills are the ability to work with ideas and concepts. For pastors this is goal setting, vision, and strategic planning. The skills approach is primarily "descriptive;" that is "rather than providing prescriptions for success in leadership, the skills approach provides a structure for understanding the

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[21] Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 7th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2016), 19.

[22] Northouse, *Leadership*, 23.

[23] Northouse, *Leadership*, 44.

nature of effective leadership."[24] The skills approach describes well why the single-elder model has been effective with church growth and development.

A third leadership approach is transformational leadership. "Transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower."[25] Transformational leadership focuses on transforming or changing the followers through an influential leader. The leader has "charisma" which is similar to the traits and skills discussed above. The leader has a "strong set of internal values and ideals, and they are effective at motivating followers to act in ways that support the greater good rather than their own self-interests."[26] James Kouzes and Barry Posner, researchers in this field, applied their findings to Christian leaders suggesting that leaders should 1) model the way, 2) inspire a shared vision, 3) challenge the process, 4) enable others to act, and 5) encourage the heart.[27] A leader uses their influence to inspire motivation, intellectually stimulate their followers, and give individualized consideration to reaching and attaining the goals.[28] Transformational leadership applies well to the single-elder model. A charismatic pastor can model the way, inspire and motivate others, lovingly challenge, and equip others to join him in shared goals for the church. In fact, "to a significant degree the common spirit of the congregation is a shadow reflection of the pastor's inner world."[29] In many ways the church takes on the personality of the pastor after a number of years.

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[24] Northouse, *Leadership*, 56.

[25] Northouse, *Leadership*, 162.

[26] Northouse, *Leadership*, 163.

[27] James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 38.

[28] Northouse, *Leadership*, 170.

[29] Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Managing the Congregation: Building Effective Systems to Serve People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 125.

John Trent developed a personality assessment related to leading from your strengths. This assessment tool divides people into four categories which he relates to animals (lion, otter, golden retriever, and the beaver). When considering this single-elder model and the possibility of autocracy it is helpful to realize that many pastors score high on the lion scale. Lions are described by Trent as "driving, forceful, ambitious, strong-willed, determined, aggressive, responsible, and decisive."[30] Autocratic leaders tend to hire yes people who do not question their decisions. Leaders tend to be highly directive and low in support for staff. There is no question where the authority and power reside and there is often one-way communication. The leader is the vision and goal setter for the church but can sometimes micromanage out of a sense of control and power. Decision making is quick and clear with centralized control. The single-elder has power, the question becomes with his management will he use that to be a "people-shrinker" or a "people-grower."[31]

There are three main autocratic tendencies which the single elder is tempted to yield to in his life. The single-elder model tends toward the sin of pride, the professional outcome of burnout, and the ministerial failure of refusing to equip and delegate. Each of these are serious issues, unfortunately far too common in the church today. Each of these are possible because of the unbiblical single-elder model.

First, the single-elder model particularly makes one vulnerable to the sin of pride. "Henry Nouwen, in his book *In the Name of Jesus*, describes the three seductive temptations of Christians leaders: the temptation to be relevant, the temptation to be spectacular and the temptation to be powerful."[32] The modern church measures its

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[30] John Trent, *Leading from Your Strengths: Building Close-Knit Ministry Teams* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004), 79.

[31] Shawchuck and Heuser, *Managing the Congregation*, 232.

[32] J. R. Briggs, *Fail: Finding Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 64.

success by three metrics—buildings, bodies, and budgets. Pastors tend to evaluate their success based upon these standards, which are far from the ethos of the New Testament.[33] Because of these metrics, pastors face seductive temptations. But what results when success occurs? Where does the glory get laid when the metrics are met each year? In the corporate world, the CEO gets the credit and the glory. In the church world, the pastor gets the glory and recognition. This can naturally lead to the sin of pride. Pride is based in selfish ambition (Jas 3:16). Diotrephes, the autocratic leader of the church, no doubt was guilty of the sin of pride (3 John 9-10). The mega-church movement, with its prominent pastors, has given numerous examples of prominent pastors succumbing to pride. In fact, the "very act of building an organization from insignificance to prominence . . . tempts hubris."[34] Tim Irwin studied prominent failures in the business world and observed, "the big lesson is that no matter how brilliant, charming, strategic, or commanding in presence a leader is, the consequences of a failed character are extraordinarily disabling and will bring down even the strongest among us."[35] Pride can cause leaders to leverage their influence and power to serve themselves rather than their followers.[36] As Jim Collins explained "great leaders channel their ambition toward building their organizations rather than personal aggrandizement."[37]

Second, the single-elder model tends toward burnout personally and professionally. J. R. Briggs tells in his book, *Fail*, the overwhelming weight he felt as a single pastor responsible for the sustained growth of the church which led to his

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[33] Briggs, *Fail*, 63-64.

[34] Tim Irwin, *De-Railed: Five Lessons Learned from Catastrophic Failures of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 4.

[35] Irwin, *De-Railed*, 12.

[36] Clay Scroggins, *How to Lead When You're Not in Charge: Leveraging Influence When You Lack Authority* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 80.

[37] Irwin, *De-Railed*, 136.

ministerial burnout.[38] Briggs's describes burnout in ministry as bringing on feelings of failure, rejection, and shame. Briggs writes, "The treadmill is continually cranked up to higher speeds—no matter how tired the pastor may feel—until eventually the system overloads and then shuts down."[39] Statistical data is immense on the great harm that burnout is causing pastors across North America.[40] Pastors have a high drive to feel significant while being needed affirms their importance. Thus, their "identity is found in the neediness of others."[41] This combination results in pastors working hard, feeling compelled to meet everyone's needs, and being the center of the church. But a leader needs "regular rest, relational boundaries, open accountability in a trusted relationship, and the recognition that the weight of the church's success is not on his or her shoulders."[42] The single-elder model tends toward this result, while the plural elder pastoral model offers shared weight and mutual accountability. As Paul David Tripp said, "Today there will be pastors and leaders who lose their heart and their way in the middle of the hardships of ministry, and many of them will lose their way because they are not warned, encouraged, confronted, supported, and loved by a group of leaders who function in a community of grace."[43]

Third, the single-elder model often fails at accomplishing the Ephesians 4:11-13 instructions of equipping the members for the work of ministry. As discussed earlier in chapter 2, God expects church leaders to equip Christians to be able to carry out the work of ministry. Each member's gifts should be utilized in order to build up the body of

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[38] Briggs, *Fail*, 28-42.

[39] Briggs, *Fail*, 46.

[40] Briggs, *Fail*, 46-48. Briggs offers many statistics on pastor burnout.

[41] Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 39.

[42] Cole, *Organic Leadership*, 51.

[43] Tripp, *Lead*, 53.

Christ. The single-elder model tends toward a failure to delegate. Power and authority are too often held as a commodity that is not to be shared with others. Neil Cole discusses delegation in terms of delegated and distributed authority. Delegated authority is top-down leadership when a leader gives his authority to another to do his will. While distributed authority is when someone's power or authority is given to the person themselves. They have the permission and ability to carry forth the mission themselves.[44] The Ephesians four leader seeks to practice distributed authority. Poor leadership is seen in a need to control all ministry, rather than equipping and releasing to serve. Delegation empowers others to mature in Christ. It helps the body "work properly" and "build itself up in love" (Eph 4:16). Moses was instructed by his father-in-law to delegate rather than being the single leader over Israel (Exod 18:13-23). The apostles saw the need to delegate for the ministry of the church in Acts 6:1-6.

Summary of the Single-Elder Model

The single-elder model has a long history dating back to the early centuries of the church and finding increased popularity in the 20th century. The model reflects well similar models in the corporate and political world. The model is also well represented in leadership theory finding support in the trait, skills, and transformational approaches. Though the model is efficient, and at times highly effective, it might lead toward autocracy, pride, burnout in ministry, and a failure to properly equip members. Even Akin who had advocated for the model writes it is not the "most desirable," but in his judgment "a plurality of God-called men in leadership, led by a senior pastor/teacher, mutually accountable to one another, is certainly preferable."[45] He goes on to add in

[44] Cole, *Organic Leadership*, 179-80.

[45] Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church," 68.

reference to the type of autocratic leader just discussed, "there is no biblical defense for a dictatorial, autocratic, CEO model for ministry leadership."[46]

Board of Directors Model

The New Testament model is for a local congregation to be led by a plurality of elders.[47] Paul told Titus to "appoint elders in every town" (Titus 1:5). Paul and Barnabas established churches and appointed elders for them (Acts 14:23). There are several examples of New Testament churches being led by a plurality of elders (Acts 15:2; 20:17, Phil 1:1; 1 Pet 5:1-2). The Bible uses three terms to refer to the same leadership office. The terms elders, pastors, and overseers are used interchangeably to refer to the leaders of individual congregations (Acts 20:17-38; 1 Pet 5:1-5).[48] The council of elders model is an ancient form of leadership which was adopted into the church from the practices of Israel and the Synagogue.[49] Getz defines the plural elder model as a "collective form of leadership in which each elder shares equally the position, authority, and responsibility of the office."[50] Each leadership model used by the church has been adopted, in part, to its present culture and philosophical framework.[51] Thus, it should be expected that in the American culture, elder councils have frequently adopted a

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[46] Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church," 69.

[47] Merkle, "The Pattern of Leadership in Acts and Paul's Letters to Churches," 82-83; Getz, *Elders and Leaders*, 209-16; Thomas R. Schreiner, "Overseeing and Serving the Church in the Pastoral and General Epistles," in Merkle and Schreiner, *Shepherding God's Flock*, 117; Shawn D. Wright, "Baptists and a Plurality of Elders," in Merkle and Schreiner, *Shepherding God's Flock*, 251-52; James R. White, "The Plural-Elder-Led Church: Sufficient as Established—The Plurality of Elders as Christ's Ordained Means of Church Governance," in Brand and Norman, *Perspectives on Church Government*, 269-74.

[48] Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 320-22; Schreiner, "Overseeing and Serving the Church in the Pastoral and General Epistles," 94.

[49] Rod Parrott, "New Testament Elders in Their Context," *Impact* 4 (1980): 27-37. Parrott demonstrates that New Testament elderships were developed and served along political lines as typical of their existing culture. Getz, *Elders and Leaders*, 39.

[50] Getz, *Elders and Leaders*, 39.

[51] Bruce Guenther and Doug Heidebrecht, "The Elusive Biblical Model of Leadership," *Direction* 28, no. 2 (1999): 163.

board of directors model in which they function similarly to the board of a business or non-profit organization. This model is similar to the "elder rule" concept employed by churches, which divided the function of elders into teaching and ruling elders.[52] A "ruling' elder carries the idea of authoritatively leading from a distance and giving out rules/directions to the church rather than leading the church. The board of directors model is a conceptual model, not a church polity. This model has a biblical form, but not the proper function. In practice, it has the tendency to lead to authoritarian, legalistic rule that lacks discipleship and shepherding of Christians under the Shepherd's watch. I will now explore the board of directors model from a brief historical and theoretical perspective. I will focus on understanding the pervasiveness of this model while reflecting upon its typical outcomes and inherit dangers.

A Brief Biblical and Historical Survey of the Board of Directors Model

While this model is not expressly seen in the New Testament some roots of it are seen through the terms used. The term πρεσβυτέρος, which is translated elder, is primarily a designation for age. "The word identified bearers of community leadership, i.e. offices, authority, and power."[53] This term refers to the aged, experienced, and respected of the community who could be trusted to lead. The term ἐπίσκοπος translated overseer or bishop belongs to the same "language cluster of government and administration."[54] It involves the concept of supervision, superintendence, overseeing, and handling monies of the city or temple.[55] God himself was called an ἐπίσκοπος. The word carried a strong sense of "guardian" and was frequently related to the word

[52] Robert L. Reymond, "The Presbytery-Led Church: Presbyterian Church Government," in Brand and Norman, *Perspectives on Church Government*, 121.

[53] Parrott, "New Testament Elders in their Context," 28.

[54] Parrott, "New Testament Elders in their Context," 30.

[55] Parrott, "New Testament Elders in their Context," 31.

shepherd.[56] Thus, there is inherent in the terminology a political, ruling, authoritative function of a council of men. This is consistent with the elders of Israel, ancient near eastern culture, and the early church.[57]

According to the New Testament, leadership is based on service (Matt 20:25-28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:1-20). "Authority among the followers of Jesus is the moral authority of those who show the most interest in and do the most in the way of loving service for others."[58] Church leaders did not rise to occupy an office or position but had a "work" to do (1 Tim 3:12; 2 Tim 4:5). "The designated workers in the church have a task, a ministry, a service to perform, not a title or official position."[59]
But this attitude did not prevail long in the early church as the church fathers indicate an early development of an episcopacy form of government.[60] This political, authoritarian, hierarchal view of church government accelerated tremendously after Constantine officially recognized Christianity and merged church and state in many forms. Church leaders now had privilege and power, which lead to abuse.[61] While this was not a board of directors model through these centuries, the spirit of aloofness, legalism, power, and authoritarianism is the same.

Churches in America in the last 200 years have developed this model further based on New Testament principles, business practices, and cultural ideals. Church governments are influenced heavily by their existing culture. When you consider modern philosophy with its emphasis on authority, along with the simultaneous emphasis on

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[56] Parrott, "New Testament Elders in their Context," 31.

[57] Ed Glasscock, "The Biblical Concept of Elder," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144, no. 573 (January-March 1987): 70.

[58] Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 296.

[59] Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 297.

[60] Samuel E. Waldron, "Plural-Elder Congregationalism," in Engle and Cowan, *Who Runs the Church*?, 194-99.

[61] Guenther and Heidebrecht, "The Elusive Biblical Model of Leadership," 156.

management in the business world over the last 200 years, it is easy to see how this model became normative for plural-elder led congregations. “In many churches today, men are placed into positions of pastor or elder based on education, personality, or professional achievements.”[62] Rather than focusing on a man’s character and service to the fellow man, churches have tended to select successful men who serve on or work with community and business boards. This model has then come directly into the church. The board of director model is further seen in a 2015 survey done of Dallas Theological Seminary graduates regarding their current elder boards at their congregations. The “survey revealed that two things concerned the pastors: (1) an elder’s lack of biblical knowledge and (2) a need for further developing their respective leadership skills.”[63] Notice how both of these cited deficiencies represent, it seems, an existing board of directors model.

In churches of Christ, the brotherhood to which I belong, it seems this model became normative until challenges came to it in the 1980s. Timothy Willis in surveying and studying elderships across churches of Christ concluded that most have traditionally held a “monarchic model” of understanding authority in that they are agents of the king and are entrusted with God’s authority over followers by right of their office and meeting of qualifications, rather than a “traditional” authority. He argues a “traditional” model is one where people follow a leader because of his character, service, and place in the community.[64] Ian Fair, writing about churches of Christ, commented “many church members consequently see elders occupying an ‘office’ at the top of a hierarchal structure

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[62] Glasscock, “The Biblical Concept of Elder,” 70.

[63] W. Rodman MacIlvaine, William C. Stewart, and D. Scott Barfoot, “A Biblical Theology and Pastor Survey on Local Church Leadership,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 140.

[64] Timothy M. Willis, “‘Obey Your Leaders’: Hebrews 13 and Leadership in the Church,” *Restoration Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (1994): 318.

of authoritarian decision makers, rather than as spiritual shepherds caring for the flock."[65] He further states the tendency to "consider church leaders as a 'board of elders' has biased church leadership in favor of an administrative, rather than a shepherding ministry."[66] While, I am certainly not arguing that elders do not have authority as overseers of the church, I am arguing that this duty has been over-emphasized to the neglect of other shepherding and teaching duties creating a board of directors model in many churches.

Theoretical Issues Related to a Board of Directors Model

After considering the historical lineage and development of this model, I will now examine leadership theory behind the model and explore the typical negative qualities of this model. It seems that the board of directors model has a theoretical basis in the behavioral approach, in management theory, and in a directive/authoritarian model. But in practice and in theory the model has been shown to cause aloof, authoritarian, and legalistic leadership. This is displayed in its tendency to lead to bureaucracy, interpersonal relationship issues, and the absence of trust.

The behavioral approach is a leadership theory which has been developed through studies dating back to the 1940s. The theory "focuses exclusively on what leaders do and how they act."[67] The theory categorizes various leader/follower interactions along a grid based upon management styles. One of those categories is the authority-compliance style. There is a "heavy emphasis on task and job requirements, and less emphasis on people." The style is "result driven" with the leader often being seen as

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[65] Ian A. Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom: Sensitive Strategies for the Church in a Changing World* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 1996), 226.

[66] Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom*, 226.

[67] Northouse, *Leadership*, 71.

"controlling, demanding, hard driving, and overpowering."[68] The theory "reminds leaders that their actions towards others occur on a task level and a relationship level."[69] Church leaders always have to balance this tension between tasks and people. I am arguing the board of directors model is skewed toward the task side and the authoritarian style.

The board of directors model which is taken from the business world has been significantly influenced by managerial theory. In comparing management and leadership, Ian Fair writes, "the fundamental mindset of management is to serve as a conservator of the status quo; to administer efficiently the resources of the organization. The mindset of leadership is that of the entrepreneur who is willing to press beyond the status quo, who is willing to develop new resources, to envision new horizons."[70] This quote seems to capture the essence of the board of directors mindset in many churches. Managers tend to direct their energies towards programming and strategies. Managers maintain control, sometimes even through micro-managing details or refusal to share information with others.[71] Many churches are well-managed, but not well-led. Colin Marshall and Tony Payne argue persuasively that many churches have allowed the work of building trellises (structures/programs/ministries) to overtake the church's primary work of building the vine (people, discipling, growth).[72] This is the board of directors model which focuses on managing, tasks, authority, and structure.

A third theoretical approach is the "directive model." The directive leadership style "operates mostly under the traditional, hierarchical model of leadership which assumes that the interests or expertise of the leader or leadership team is greater or more

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[68] Northouse, *Leadership*, 75.

[69] Northouse, *Leadership*, 79.

[70] Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom*, 276-77.

[71] Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom*, 279-80.

[72] Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-shift That Changes Everything* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 7-15.

necessary to the health of an organization than the ability, knowledge, or interests of the followers."[73] Every organization has a need, at times, for directive leadership, but it should not be excessive. It can create a "love-hate dichotomy" among followers, which is often what happens with church boards. This style is connected with a strong authoritarian style, which has serious implications for post-modern followers accustomed to being valued and having input. It can lead to a "we-they" mindset which is often how elderships have been described in the church. "Since most church leaders are directively-oriented by reason of age or gender, this style is often interpreted as an excessively autocratic, male-dominated attitude, and can lead to congregational apathy or worker frustration, especially on the part of well-prepared deacons."[74]

The board of directors model may tend towards an aloof, authoritarian, legalistic leadership relationship between elders and church members. This model typically creates a gap in the relationship between leaders and followers, so it fosters a "they-versus-us" mentality. This gap is warned about in Biblical texts like Ezekiel 34 and 1 Peter 5:1-5 where shepherds abuse and lord over their sheep. This failure is seen through bureaucracy in the church, poor interpersonal relationships between leaders and followers, and the absence of trust.

A board of directors model tends to develop a system of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is simply defined as an "institution that exists to carry out an organization."[75] Bureaucracy developed as an innovation spawned from the industrial revolution. It is connected in common thought with the agonizing slow processes of government which is often hampered by paperwork and redundancy. Max Weber identified the structural components of bureaucracy as having such structural components

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[73] Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom*, 184.

[74] Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom*, 187.

[75] Shawchuck and Heuser, *Managing the Congregation*, 164.

as "a hierarchical chain of command; specialization by function; and impersonal relations."[76] A hallmark of bureaucracy is hierarchy or paternalism. The board of directors model follows bureaucratic and paternalistic thoughts which results in control from the top down and establishes well-defined structures that often inhibit the flow of energy and growth of the congregation. The sad result of this bureaucracy in most churches is the failure of churches to use their members in the work of ministry. Because of the hierarchical mindset, elder boards can fear any challenge to their authority. This typically leads to them micromanaging and often doing or controlling most of the work of ministry for the church. Thus, members talents are not used for the building up of the body of Christ and the church fails to follow Ephesians 4:11-16.[77] Rather than promoting bureaucracy, elders should seek to "enable others to act."[78]

A second tendency of a board of directors model is for the members of the board to struggle with interpersonal relationships with their followers. Since there is fear and protection swirling around maintaining power and authority, there exists a lack of transparency and vulnerability from teacher to disciple. Every leader has their weaknesses and struggles with sin. Gary McIntosh and Samuel Rima call this the leader's "darkside." This "darkside" involves such concepts as pride, selfishness, self-deception, ambition, and fears. They write, "The key that will determine whether we experience success or tragic failure is the degree to which we become acquainted with our darkside and put in place the defenses that will prevent it from running rampant and trampling our ability to lead effectively."[79] They will go on to point out that a "great majority of conflicts in leadership are the result of a leader's own sensibilities being offended, his

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[76] Shawchuck and Heuser, *Managing the Congregation*, 166.

[77] Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom*, 227.

[78] Kouzes and Posner, *Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge*, 26-30.

[79] Gary D. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, *Overcoming the Darkside of Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 99.

ideas being rejected, and his being outperformed by a staff member or not receiving the attention or respect he feels he deserves, and various other petty issues."[80] This attitude and actions aptly fit a board of directors model that creates distance and fear between shepherds and sheep. What keeps people from connecting is their "fear of being unworthy of connection."[81] Shepherd leaders have the courage to be imperfect. They are willing to be vulnerable and transparent making their lives available as an example for Christ. They are willing to let their lives be seen.[82] Board of directors focus on position, title, and authority. The problem is they too often fail to have a burden for their followers. "Without a burden for their followers, leaders can also become consumed by their own ambition."[83] This burden for followers coupled with an understanding of your own weaknesses creates a church leader Christ can use, rather than a board member who rules from closed door meetings with little interaction or transparency.

The third tendency of the board of directors model is the fostering of an absence of trust. This model, which is focused on hierarchy and authority, can specifically foster a lack of trust between church members and the board. The board often suffers from a lack of transparency and vulnerability, which contributes to suspicion and doubt. Trust lies at the heart of a leader/follower relationship. Patrick Lencioni lists several applicable results of an absence of trust between the board/church member: "conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another; fail to recognize and tap into one another's skills and experiences, jump to conclusions about the intentions and aptitudes of others without attempting to clarify them; and hesitate to ask for help or

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[80] McIntosh and Rima, *Overcoming the Darkside of Leadership*, 152.

[81] Briggs, *Fail*, 77.

[82] Briggs, *Fail*, 77-83.

[83] Steve Moore, *The Top 10 Leadership Conversations in the Bible: Practical Insights from Extensive Research on over 1,000 Biblical Leaders* (Atlanta: NexLeader, 2017), 88.

provide constructive feedback."[84] This lack of trust often exists within the eldership board as well. The elder team "should function as a small model of what the larger church ought to be, bearing each other's burdens, praying together, challenging and teaching one another, and forgiving one another."[85] When the board functions like a board of directors they project the same attitudes and expectations upon the church as a whole. This creates a lack of trust between elders/members, members/members, elders/staff and elders/deacons.

Summary of the Board of Directors Model

The board of directors model is found throughout history in spirit, if not always in practice. It is seen today in many churches, as the eldership is often associated with a title or position of achievement in the church typically connected with secular, financial, or business success. The model has philosophical descriptions in leadership research and theory being explained in the behavioral approach, management theory, and directive model. Though the model is typical and appropriate in many business and non-profit organizations, it has significant drawbacks in the church context. It has a strong tendency toward aloof, authoritarian, and legalistic leadership. These characteristics are seen in fostering bureaucracy, interpersonal relationship problems, and a lack of trust between Christians.

Pastoral Leadership Model

Having examined the single-elder model and the board of directors model with their failures and tendencies highlighted, it is now appropriate to argue for the plural, pastoral leadership model. This model has, in essence, the same form as the board of

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[84] Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 197.

[85] J. R. Briggs and Bob Hyatt, *Eldership and the Mission of God: Equipping Teams for Faithful Church Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 113.

directors model, but a significantly different function. By "plural," I mean it is a model where two or more men share equal authority and responsibility for the shepherding of the congregation. By "pastoral leadership," I am referencing the style or type of leadership exercised by the elders—they practice the Biblical teachings on pastoral leadership. I believe this to be the biblical model that results in the church being known, fed, led, and protected by their shepherds. This model offers several key advantages to other models and should be practiced by congregations today. As with previous models, I will examine this model first historically, then theoretically, and finally observe some results or outcomes of this model.

A Brief Biblical and Historical Survey of the Pastoral Model

As previously established, the New Testament gives no evidence of a single leader being a pastor or head of a local church, but rather local churches were led by a group of men called elders/shepherds/overseers.[86] The New Testament model was for a plurality of shepherds to lead each congregation.[87] While pastoral leadership is the essential biblical characteristic of leadership that could be applied by a single leader, it must be noted that the plural nature is an essential component of this model. God chose for there to be a plurality of men to share the burden and weight of the leadership of the local church. This allows for multiple men to display a Christ-like example to the body and a team of brothers to lean on one another and learn from each other. This model was displayed in the early centuries, though as previously discussed in the single-elder model, was overall quickly eschewed from with single leaders rising to prominence.

[86] This point was discussed and established in the first two models. Merkle, "The Pattern of Leadership in Acts and Paul's Letters to Churches," 82-83.

[87] Akin, "The Single-Elder-Led Church," 68.

Pastoral leadership has a rich Old and New Testament lineage. Shepherds were common throughout ancient cultures and was a common idiom for political and religious leadership. In chapter 2, the biblical and cultural symbolism and heritage of pastoral leadership was discussed in more detail. But as Timothy Jones and Michael Wilder note, "The authors of the New Testament do, however, apply the metaphor of the shepherd in a unique sense to those who serve as elders or overseers in the church (John 21:15-19; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 5:1-4)."[88] All of God's people are called sheep, but only their called leaders are called shepherds. Pastoral leadership is not a call to a particular office, but a call to lead in particular way.[89] Chiefly it is the way of leading like Christ who offers himself as the "Good Shepherd" (John 10:11) and the "Chief Shepherd" (1 Pet 5:4).

The pastoral leadership model is difficult to definitively trace, since it involves a particular leadership style in relating to the church which is often unknown from historical records. It is easy to assess the plural aspect of the model, but whether the eldership tended toward a board of directors philosophy or a pastoral leadership philosophy is not always ascertainable. While some Baptist historians argue that a plurality of elders was common amongst Baptist churches in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, other historians consider this practice highly abnormal and rare for churches during this period.[90] Tennessee Baptist Churches had non-vocational "lay-elders" involved in "pastoral leadership."[91] W. B. Johnson, one of the founders of the Southern Baptist convention, advocated for a plural eldership because of the New Testament evidence and because "each elder brought a particular talent to the needs of

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[88] Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones, *The God Who Goes before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018), 111.

[89] Wilder and Jones, *The God Who Goes before You*, 117.

[90] Evans and Godwin, *Elder Governance*, 27. Wright, "Baptists and a Plurality of Elders." 249-82.

[91] Evans and Godwin, *Elder Governance*, 28.

the church."[92] In Johnson's teaching each elder was equal in rank and authority. What limited practice and advocating there was for a plurality was almost wholly deserted by Baptist churches, but has seen a tremendous revival in the last 30 years with many Baptist churches shifting to a plural, pastoral leadership model.[93]

A plurality of men was used as elders to oversee the local body in Churches of Christ throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This plurality pattern has gone unchanged throughout the twentieth century and into the present century.[94] What has changed in Churches of Christ has been a greater awareness of the need for pastoral leadership, rather than a board of directors style leadership. While always present in limited degrees, as the culture shifted, leadership theory developed, and as Biblical texts were reexamined, there became an increased emphasis upon pastoral leadership. This trend began in the 1980s, but especially gained momentum in the 1990s. This trend can be historically seen in the books published.[95] Some congregations even changed the common title used for their leaders from the traditional "elders" to the term "shepherds."

Theoretical Issues Related to a Pastoral Leadership Model

In considering leadership theory approaches it seems that there are four current theories where the pastoral leadership model finds support. These four approaches, which I will briefly survey are transformational, authentic, servant, and team leadership approaches.

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[92] Evans and Godwin, *Elder Governance*, 28-29.

[93] Advocates and examples of this revival are seen in the works of Mark Dever, Benjamin Merkle, Jeramie Rinne, and 9Marks ministry. See also Newton, *Elders in Congregational Life*; Evans and Godwin, *Elder Governance*.

[94] Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom*, 225-27.

[95] Some books that reflect this shift include Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom*; Lynn Anderson, *They Smell like Sheep: Spiritual Leadership for the 21st Century* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Books, 1997); J. B. Myers, *Elders and Deacons: A Biblical Study of Church Leadership* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2003); J. J. Turner, *Shepherds, Wake Up! Ancient Training for Modern Shepherds* (Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, 2005).

First, just as the transformational approach had implications for the single-elder model, it carries the same effect with the plural eldership model as they apply the principles as a team. The focus is raising the level of motivation and morality in both the leader(s) and the followers.[96] Kouzes and Posner, transformational researchers, discovered five practices for exemplary leadership, which in many ways parallel the biblical principles of pastoral leadership. They are: 1. Model the Way; 2. Inspire a Shared Vision; 3. Challenge the Process; 4. Enable Others to Act; 5. Encourage the Heart.[97] Shepherds are to live out their faith, inspire others to catch the gospel vision, challenge lukewarm, apathetic Christianity, empower others to ministry, and encourage the heart of each believer as a Barnabas. While one person can do these principles, the Biblical ideal is that the church's witness is able to shine brighter, and more sheep have intimate shepherds when there is a plurality of these individuals. Their example is multiplied and their witnesses for the church and the world are exponential.

Authentic leadership is a new area of leadership theory. As its title implies, it is about the "authenticity" of leaders and their leadership. The focus is upon whether they are genuine and real. Because of the many upheavals of society, people are looking for leadership they can trust and depend upon. One focus of authentic leadership is upon the interpersonal relationships of the leader. Authenticity must involve a reciprocal process between leader and followers.[98] Pastoral leadership is filled with similar principles; concepts such as values, purpose, compassion, consistency, self-discipline, and relationships. Authentic leadership requires self-awareness.[99] Paul demonstrated authentic leadership throughout his writings, even telling the Corinthians, his "heart was

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[96] Northouse, *Leadership*, 162.

[97] Kouzes and Posner, *Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge*, 2.

[98] Northouse, *Leadership*, 195-96.

[99] Northouse, *Leadership*, 198-202.

wide open" to them (2 Cor 6:11). Peter tells elders to shepherd by "being examples to the flock." (1 Pet 5:3). True pastoral leadership will be real, genuine, and authentic.

Servant leadership theory has gained significant attention and traction as an approach to leadership in the last 50 years. Originating in the writings of Richard Greenleaf and having found crossover application with the teachings of Christ by Christian authors, servant leadership has become an in-vogue leadership style in business and non-profit organizations.[100] It is a "paradoxical approach to leadership" in that it focuses on serving rather than being served as a leader.[101] Servant leaders make a "conscious effort to serve first—to place the good of followers over the leaders' self-interests."[102] The ten major characteristics of servant leadership as detected by scholars are: "listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of people, and building community."[103] Pastoral leadership will display these same servant leader traits just as our Lord "came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

A fourth leadership approach which supports pastoral leadership is team leadership. The concept of leading and working together in teams has become the norm for businesses. Amy Edmondson, a Harvard Business School researcher, coined the phrase "teaming" to describe the active process of working together to accomplish tasks. Teaming calls for "developing both affective (feeling) and cognitive (thinking) skills."[104]

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[100] See Richard Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977); Ralph E Enlow Jr., *Servant of All: Reframing Greatness and Leadership through the Teachings of Jesus* (Bellingham, WA: Kirkdale Press, 2019); Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead like Jesus Revisited: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2016)

[101] Northouse, *Leadership*, 253.

[102] Northouse, *Leadership*, 253.

[103] Northouse, *Leadership*, 253.

[104] Amy C. Edmondson, *Teaming: How Organizations Learn, Innovate, and Compete in the Knowledge Economy* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 2.

Team leadership demands attention and focus on all members of the team. Each person must contribute their knowledge and ability in order for the team to succeed. This involves the concept of "shared leadership" which involves risk and courage on the part of each team member.[105] Teams need a "clear, elevating goal, results-driven structure, competent team members, unified commitment, collaborative climate, standards of excellence, external support and principled leadership."[106] Lencioni's book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* presents five common pitfalls of team leadership.[107] These various team leadership studies and applications offer theory and instruction for elders working as a team. This pastoral model involves functioning together as a team.

The results or outcomes of the plural, pastoral leadership model has been articulated in diverse ways, though all similar in scope. Each of these involve an explanation of what the Bible says about the responsibilities of shepherds. These are the outcomes when pastoral leadership is practiced. Alexander Strauch chose the descriptions: "protecting the flock; feeding the flock; leading the flock; and caring for practical needs."[108] Getz categorizes the pastoral work into "managing and shepherding God's flock."[109] He then went on to list six essential components of pastoral leadership as: "teaching biblical truth; modeling Christlike behavior; maintaining doctrinal purity; disciplining unruly believers, overseeing financial matters, and praying for those who are ill."[110] Jones and Wilder describe a pastoral leader as one who is "a protector and

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[105] Northouse, *Leadership*, 365.

[106] Northouse, *Leadership*, 369.

[107] Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 188.

[108] Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth, 2003), 15-34.

[109] Getz, *Elders and Leaders*, 191.

[110] Getz, *Elders and Leaders*, 191-200.

provider who is present with his people."[111] Timothy Witmer breaks down the shepherding function of elders into macro (whole-church duties) and micro (individual member duties). He sees the four duties of shepherds as knowing, feeding, leading, and protecting the sheep.[112] These descriptions lay out the focus of pastoral leadership, which is ultimately to imitate the example of the Chief Shepherd (John 10; 1 Pet 5:1-4).

There are five benefits from a plural, pastoral leadership model. First, the burden of the eldership is shared by a plurality of men. While the weight of responsibility and duty can be overwhelming, it is eased by knowing that it is a shared weight. This sharing of the responsibility allows for men to serve longer, accomplish more, and sleep easier. Second, the eldership provides a built-in system of accountability and encouragement in their personal holiness and walk for Christ. The eldership should shepherd one another. "Every pastor must, however, see himself as a co-laborer with others in gospel ministry; this requires humility toward fellow elders and accountability to the congregation."[113] Third, it allows the collective wisdom and talent of the group to far surpass any one individual (Prov 11:14). By combining their strengths, they provide a more complete and balanced leadership vision and practice for the church. Each man can use his unique gifts to bless the whole team. Closely connected with this is simply sharing the workload of the ministry so it does not overburden one brother. Fourth, plurality helps eliminate blind spots both in doctrine and in ministry.[114] There are more contacts and opportunities for shepherds to know and minister to sheep. They multiply their ministry as a church and seek to ensure programs, and people do not 'fall through

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[111] Wilder and Jones, *The God Who Goes before You*, 109.

[112] Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010), 101-89.

[113] Wilder and Jones, *The God Who Goes before You*, 181.

[114] Andrew M. Davis, "Leading the Church in Today's World: What It Means Practically to Shepherd God's Flock," in Merkle and Schreiner, *Shepherding God's Flock*, 317.

the cracks.' Fifth, they are able to develop a close, intimate relationship that allows trust to abound and joy to flourish. When they serve together in the trenches of ministry for years, they develop bonds like soldiers who have fought together in battle. They are able to model unity and love for one another to the church. An effective elder's meeting should "look like an intense conversation between friends and less like a board meeting."[115] When consensus is sought, mutual needs are shared, humility envelops, and a desire to place the church first exists, an eldership becomes a rewarding ministry, rather than a burden to be feared.

Summary of the Pastoral Leadership Model

The plural, pastoral leadership model is a biblical model based on the polity of the primitive church. It involves a plurality of shepherds serving together with shared authority and responsibility over the church. The model has a rich historical tradition, though it was eschewed for centuries, but has made a pervasive comeback in the last fifty years. The model is shown significant theoretical support in leadership theory approaches including transformational, authentic, servant, and team leadership studies. The model when effectively applied results in the biblical outcomes of elders/pastors/overseers knowing, feeding, leading, and protecting the church of God. The model has several key advantages and benefits. I have argued throughout this chapter that the plural, pastoral leadership model, though not without its challenges in application, is the scriptural model and avoids some of the major tendencies and drawbacks inherit in the single-elder and board of directors models.

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[115] Briggs and Hyatt, *Eldership and the Mission of God*, 122.

Conclusion

I have surveyed the concepts and theories behind three leadership models within congregational polity. I observed that the single-elder model and the board of directors model may have a tendency toward autocracy, legalism, and authoritarianism. Our current leadership crisis is due, at least in some part, to these failed models. I have argued from leadership theory and biblical teaching that the plural, pastoral model is the most effective and biblical model. It contains innate checks against abusive authority, legalism, or aloofness. It provides mutual encouragement and accountability that allows the work of pastoral care and overseeing to be performed by elders in a local church.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

A fifteen-week ministry project was launched in order to develop and implement a pastoral leadership training course for current and potential elder candidates at Seven Oaks Church of Christ in Mayfield, Kentucky. The project began the first week of January 2021 with a meeting with the present elders to discuss objectives to be taught, men to invite, and the schedule. The project concluded the week of April 11th with the successful implementation of a six-session course for training current and future elder candidates.

The content for the course was developed in part through the foundational Biblical exegesis set forth in chapter 2. The class content was centered heavily on the primary texts of Ezekiel 34 and Ephesians 4:11-16. Additionally, much of the content arose from my two years of study in the Doctor of Ministry program. As I was reading the books and studying in the classes, I was constantly thinking of key components I wanted to include in this pastoral leadership course. While the class did not specifically dive into a detailed explanation of the three models surveyed in chapter 3, the course used these principles to discuss the necessity of a plural, pastoral leadership model and sought to show the dangers and problems with a single-elder and board of directors model. Finally, I sought to allow my seventeen plus years of experience working with the elders of SOCOC to impact many of the lessons and objectives taught.

Three goals were used to determine the effectiveness of the project. Each goal was accomplished in its own unique phase of the project. The first goal was achieved in phase 1. It was to assess the knowledge and pastoral practices of the SOCOC present and

future elders. Phase 1 encompassed weeks 1 through 7 of the project. This was accomplished through the Pastoral Leadership Knowledge and Practices Survey (PLKPS) (see appendix 1). This goal was successfully met when candidates for the class had taken the survey showing a picture of their understanding and practices related to pastoral leadership.

Achieved in phase 2 of the project was the development of a pastoral leadership curriculum to be used to teach the course. The goal was to develop a six-week, twelve lesson pastoral leadership curriculum to train SOCOC present and future elder candidates. This phase was implemented in weeks 2 through 9 of the project. The topics of each class session progressed from general overview of shepherds in the Bible to specific, practical details of how to serve as a shepherd at SOCOC. Class content was determined through research on the twelve topics. Each session included supplemental readings supplied in the notebook. Each of the lessons were in complete, full-sentence outline form and given to the students to provide a completed notebook (see appendix 4). I selected an expert panel of three brothers in Christ with expertise in the Bible and practical experience serving as shepherds of a local church. Each of the experts reviewed each lesson they received through email. Their feedback was received using the curriculum evaluation rubric (see appendix 2). The rubric was used to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the subject to pastoral leadership. This goal was considered successful when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. The material was revised based upon the suggestions given by the expert panel.

The third phase of the project was to implement a six-session course with the SOCOC present and future elder candidates. The goal was to equip present and future elders through teaching a pastoral leadership course. This goal was implemented in weeks 7 through 15 of the project. After discussion with the current elders and men involved in the class it was determined the best time to do the class was on Sunday

afternoons from 1:30 – 3:00 each week. The formal meetings of the course began on February 14th and concluded on March 21st. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the course was altered from an original Wednesday evening timeslot over thirteen weeks, to a Sunday afternoon slot over six weeks with longer sessions. The course was also made available via Zoom for class members who desired or needed to participate remotely and safely. Following the formal class meetings, in weeks 13 through 15, I gave the PLKPS again to each of the men. An appendix lesson was added to the material covering a method to select shepherds in your congregation. I met with the current elders to discuss the class, further training, and the addition of more shepherds to SOCOC. This third goal was considered successfully met through a t-test demonstrating a positive statistically significant difference in the pre and post survey scores. As a part of this evaluation, supplemental questions were added to the PLKPS (see appendix 3). These three additional questions helped assess the positive difference the course made and allowed for further suggestions on improving the course for future classes. These results were tabulated after the class had concluded in week 14 (see table A1 in appendix 5).

Enlistment of Course Participants

The primary target group for the pastoral leadership course were men already exhibiting the characteristics and qualifications established in the Bible for a Shepherd. While existing shepherds were also a key focus of the instruction, the main focus was on preparing potential candidates to fulfill this role in the church. A third target group was a broader pool of younger men who are likely years away from being scripturally qualified to be an elder but need to be trained and begin preparing for this role in the future. One of the desires was to help them better understand the work of a shepherd and create aspiration for the role in their hearts.

In discussions with the elders it was determined to make the class as broad as possible with the men who wanted to attend. Because of this, I publicly announced the

class through the bulletin and public announcements. Men signed up that were interested in taking the class. I began announcing the theme, topics, and dates for the class in the bulletin on January 10th. I produced a flyer detailing the topics, the purpose of the class, and the time frame of the class for all men. I personally texted numerous men inviting them to the class. Recruitment was hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. I personally contracted the virus along with my teenage son and wife. The youth minister and his wife also had the virus. We both had to quarantine for a two-week period in January and early February. I had to allow for zoom participation due to the concerns of some men, and we moved the class to a large fellowship room to allow for plenty of social distancing. It is also possible due to the lack of Sunday and Wednesday evening worship that men were hungry for spiritual nourishment, which helped class participation and interest. Also, I think interest was high because of the congregation's perceived need for more elders in the future.

The elders and I were all pleased with the interest and participation level of the men of the church. We had nineteen men who participated at some point during the class. We had seven men who attended all of the sessions and seven who attended five out of the six sessions. We had four men who attended four out of the six sessions, and only one who attended only three. Overall, we had an 84-percent attendance rate. The men who participated are the men currently most involved in church leadership and hold the greatest potential and responsibility for future church leadership.

Phase 1: Assessing the Present and Future Elders

Using the PLKPS (see appendix 1) which I formulated based on the objectives and teaching aims of the class, I assessed the men. This phase took place in weeks 1 through 7 of the project. While the original intentions and ideal method would be to gather all the men in one room and administer the survey, this was not possible due to external factors. Our congregation was experiencing the spread of COVID-19 at this

time. I prepared the surveys on January 19th but was not able to attend church services for the next two weeks due to contracting the virus. Our congregation had been forced through the pandemic to divide into two services—one at 8:30 am and another at 10:30 am on Sundays. Since the class involved men from both services, and I was not able to be at services, I decided to use the bulletin and oral announcements to encourage men to pick up the survey and return at their convenience. I also did not know how many men were going to be involved in the class. When I returned to services on February 7th, I encouraged each man to take the survey and spoke to as many men as possible who I knew were in the class regarding the survey. Finally, the first day of the class was February 14th. I made sure each man in my discussions with them about the class and to the class in general had completed and turned in the survey before class began.

Phase 2: Developing the Pastoral Leadership Curriculum

In order to accomplish the second goal of developing a six-week, twelve lesson pastoral leadership curriculum to train the present and future elders, I spent much time in research and writing of lessons (see appendix 4 for the complete lesson outlines). This phase took place between weeks 2 through 9 of the project. I first laid forth the twelve broad topics I wanted to cover in the course. I had kept a file of notes and themes I wanted to include in the class since the start of my doctoral seminars. So, I had references and concepts from many books that I wanted to include. I assembled all of my resources together and put sub-topics and themes I wanted to cover into the twelve broad lesson titles. I consulted with the present elders, my wife, and other leadership courses to ensure I was not leaving out a key theme or area. My wife suggested I add a lesson on the "A Shepherd's Family" so I made this one of the main topics and combined two of the others. I also consulted the completed surveys in order to know where to place the class emphasis depending upon the knowledge and practices of the men.

I sought to write two lessons each week, since the lessons would be taught together. This also helped in sending the lessons in pairs to the expert panel. I recruited the expert panel the first week of the project. The expert panel included three men—Stan Dauck, Eric Lyons, and Jim Faughn. These men were selected because of their Bible knowledge and experiences as shepherds. All three men have completed Bible degrees, preached for congregations for decades, and served as shepherds for many years too. They all currently serve as shepherds in congregations. Also, they each lead different congregations. Stan serves in Bernie, Missouri where he has served as the preacher and now elder for over thirty years. Eric Lyons works for Apologetics Press while also preaching and serving as an elder in Wetumpka, Alabama. Jim Faughn preached with several congregations in Missouri, Illinois, and Kentucky. He currently serves the Central Church of Christ in Paducah, Kentucky as one of its shepherds.

I would email each week's lessons to the expert panel. They would review the lessons for content, doctrinal correctness, practical principles, and grammatical issues. The panel proved to be very encouraging in the process and helpful in constructing the lessons. They gave grammatical improvements, shared helpful illustrations, and offered insights on the lessons. The panel filled out a rubric on each of the lessons and offered comments regarded each lesson. Each of the lessons met the panel's grading with the rubric score of higher than 90 percent.

I developed the lessons in complete sentence outline form. I had hoped to complete them all by the first class, but this proved impossible with the time each lesson took. I did not finish all of the lessons until half-way through the class sessions. But this proved beneficial because in writing the later lessons, I could envision teaching them to the men who were attending the class.

Phase 3: Implementing the Pastoral Leadership Course

The third phase of the project involved teaching the course to present and potential shepherds. This goal was accomplished in weeks 7 through 15. My family had helped me compile twenty-three three-ring binders filled with the class outlines and supplemental readings. I set Zoom up and coordinated with the men who would be watching on Zoom. While the Zoom component was not my ideal desire, it allowed for more participants, gave flexibility to the men with their travel schedules, and worked well overall for the class. Zoom was especially valuable the first day of class with the extreme temperatures. We also had a couple of men who were high-risk and needed to avoid the exposure in a classroom setting. Finally, Zoom gave flexibility to a couple of men who live a considerable distance away from the building.

The first class took place on February 14th. This class was almost postponed due to an ice storm, but the roads cleared enough for us to have the class. We had good attendance at the first class with eleven men in person and four on zoom. Due to a technical issue that was resolved during the week, two men could not get on the Zoom call, so two brothers missed the first class. Lesson one on "Shepherds in the Bible" went well. The focus was on the concept of the shepherd throughout the Old and New Testaments. Though the concept was familiar to most, the lesson examined the plurality of elders in a local church and the three terms used in the New Testament to describe the one office or work. The lesson included several application sections which seemed to grab the listeners attention. Lesson two was on the "Shepherd's Qualifications." This lesson had a lot of content, but concepts from the lesson are covered in other lessons as well. Plus, the men are generally more familiar with these texts and the qualifications given in the Bible. The organization method used in the lesson seemed to work well and my lecture was able to answer most of the typical questions raised regarding the qualifications. We had enough class time to discuss how the qualifications have been applied in the past at this congregation. The concept of the church having authority over

the elders and the responsibility to select, appoint, and ordain was very insightful. Also, the young men seemed to really appreciate the discussion and explanation of the qualifications as many of them had not studied them or heard them discussed in such a manner.

Class session two took place on February 21st with twenty students in attendance through Zoom and in-person. This would be the largest class session. The men were demonstrating a high interest in the class, and I was pleased with the diversity we had in the class of young and older men. Lesson three was on "A Shepherd's Vision." I felt this lesson really connected with the men and was a needed topic for our men to consider. Our church family is in need of clarifying its vision due to COVID and my transitioning out of this work. We discussed the difference in goals and vision. This issue was raised by a student. We used Acts 6 and the appointing of servants in the early church to feed the widows as a text often in this class. While I did well emphasizing the need for specific vision in various ministries, in observation I wished I would have emphasized a more wholistic vision for the entire church and doing things that work to accomplish it. Lesson four on "A Shepherd's Teaching" was a needed lesson since it is an area that our men struggle with regarding the confidence and ability to teach. I emphasized that teaching revolves on two concepts: training and talent. They may not have a great talent, but they can gain the training and put in the effort to adequately perform the function as an elder. In serving as a shepherd, they may not be gifted in giving sermons or adult Bible classes, but they must be able to teach others in conversations, personal Bible studies, small groups, and to defend the faith. The key is preparing today for what they may be called to do tomorrow!

The third-class session was held on February 28th where lessons five and six were taught to nineteen men. Lesson five was on the topic "A Shepherd's Care." This lesson based off of Ezekiel 34 focused on practical lessons for shepherds knowing and caring for the flock. To begin the discussion, we talked about macro or collective

shepherding (i.e. shepherding as a group of elders leading and guiding the whole church) versus micro or individual shepherding (i.e. shepherding to an individual or family). Surprisingly, most of the men were more intimidated by the concept of micro or individual shepherding. Many of the men felt uncomfortable with the traditional pastoral duties of prayer, counseling, visitation, and admonition. While not a quick fix, the lesson did provide some practical steps and lessons for the men in accomplishing this task. Lesson six was entitled "A Shepherd's Authority and Protection." While shepherds traditionally in the Church of Christ like to emphasize their authority and the need for the church to submit, in this lesson I focused on how Biblical authority is tied to their respect and relationship with the sheep. They are not to lord over the flock, but to be an example to them. Shepherds have both positional and moral/relational authority. It is about having the trust of the sheep, because the church delegates this authority to them to lead. This lesson also discussed the need for shepherds to protect the flock through accountability, watchfulness, and discipline.

The fourth-class session was taught on March 7th. Lesson seven was entitled "A Shepherd's Equipping and Multiplication." This lesson relied on the text of Ephesians 4:11-16. It focused on the work of equipping church members to do the work of ministry. The lesson discussed delegating and adjusting as the church grows in size to different levels of management. Due to time, I was not able to go into details on how to train the next set of leaders as a leader. Lesson eight was on "A Shepherd's Family." This lesson was shorter because of the length of lesson seven. I chose to not focus much on the first three general points which were pretty standard lessons heard regularly. Rather, we dove into more details related to a shepherd's wife and children. We discussed confidentially and when and how much you should share with your wife. We talked about the affect the work can have upon your children inside and outside your home. I closed the class by encouraging them to lean on one another. I tried to emphasize throughout the class the need for elders to share burdens and rely on others.

The fifth-class session took place on March 14th. Lesson nine and ten were the longest of the lessons in outline form and contained the most content. This was the lowest class attendance due to trips, a funeral, and other factors. Unfortunately, a part of the absences were the two present elders, so the discussion on some parts pertinent to present elders were hindered. These lessons were being recorded and shared for the men to listen during the week. Lesson nine was entitled "A Shepherd's Administration." This lesson was on a topic most of the men have rarely considered as it relates to the work of a church shepherd. I emphasized communication in numerous areas as the key to being effective with administration. We also discussed the role deacons and ministers play in the church and how elders should function in relation to deacons and ministers. Lesson ten was entitled "A Shepherd's Teamwork." This lesson began by discussing the pros and cons of shepherds being assigned an area of work for the church in comparison to the whole eldership leading with deacons assigned ministries. The best discussion that seemed to resonate well with the men centered on Patrick Lencioni's book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. The men seemed to think that fear of conflict, lack of commitment, and avoidance of accountability were the most common and biggest problems in the church. We then launched into a good discussion on the need for healthy conflict within the eldership and amongst the leadership team. One of the key concepts I sought to make was that people will typically support a decision if they feel like their voice was heard and respected during the decision-making process. This applies to getting feedback from and keeping the church informed. We closed by discussing signs within a leadership team that conflict has become damaging and is crippling the team.

The sixth and final class session was held on March 21st. This class saw sixteen in attendance. The eleventh lesson was entitled "A Shepherd's Calm Leadership." This lesson was taken substantially from the book *Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger. The lesson focused on how to bring about transformation through persistent, resilient, calm leadership that stays the course despite the sabotages and resistance that will occur.

Also included in this lesson was a discussion of burnout causes and solutions. While the thought was raised that discussing burnout could discourage men wanting to go into the office, my hope was for men to understand the inherent risk of burnout and how to deal with it when it comes. The final lesson entitled "A Shepherd's Heart" was meant to inspire and convict men in the role of a shepherd. The lesson also served as a review of the main emphasizes throughout the class as I highlighted the main points of each of the lessons in review. We closed our time by addressing a worksheet I had given after lesson three on vision. I had asked the men to consider various vision-oriented questions. We then discussed these questions and the vision for the church in the next three years. This discussion did not go as well as I had hoped for various reasons. After finishing the discussion on vision, I passed out the post-training surveys. The men were encouraging and thankful for the opportunity of taking the class.

While the class sessions ended on March 21st the implementation was not finished. I still needed to collect post-training surveys from those not in the last class session. Also, I wrote an appendix to the class on how shepherds can be selected and appointed in a local congregation. I reflected and wrote a discussion and recommendation guide for the present elders. I used both of these for the discussion and feedback session I had with the elders. After collecting the surveys, in order to determine if there was a positive statistical difference gained between the pre-course and post-course survey, I ran t-test on dependent samples (see table A1 in appendix 5). The post-surveys also contained an additional page with two open ended questions and an evaluation of numerous topics value to the student. I reviewed these survey results and found the feedback encouraging and helpful.

Conclusion

I am thankful that my Doctor of Ministry studies allowed me to address this crucial and pertinent need in our church family of developing pastoral leadership. I was

privileged to devote significant time and energy to this pursuit which I believe will pay dividends in years to come for both SOCOC and other congregations whom I teach this course. This endeavor proved to be a tremendous learning experience for me, and I am thankful to all those who helped guide me through the process. In chapter 5, I will show that the project was successful in accomplishing the project goals and provide additional reflection and recommendation for future endeavors in pastoral leadership training.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter will serve as an evaluation of this project to develop and implement a pastoral leadership course. The purpose of this project was to develop and implement an effective pastoral leadership course for present and future elders at the Seven Oaks Church of Christ in Mayfield, Kentucky. The project's purpose will be evaluated first. Then the project's goals will be evaluated. Following this, respective sections will be devoted to evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the project leading to a section proposing future modifications. Next, I will consider theological and personal reflections garnered from the project.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

As the project's purpose set forth, the project resulted in the successful development and implementation of a pastoral leadership course for training current and potential elder candidates at SOCOC. As a result of this project, nineteen men from the SOCOC were trained and equipped with the knowledge and skills to serve as an elder. The project also provided a curriculum that can be used in the future to train additional elders both at SOCOC and other churches.

Several components were crucial to the project accomplishing its purpose. First, the current eldership of the SOCOC contributed significantly to achieving the purpose. They were supportive in allowing me to enroll in the Doctor of Ministry program. They were interested in leadership training and supportive of the training class project. They welcomed the idea of having formal training themselves and also providing this for future elders. Their continued support and cooperation in the goals of the class

evidenced their recognition and need for this course. The elders supported the class through their presence, encouraged the other men, and contributed to the discussions of class.

A second component crucial to the project's accomplishing its purpose was the active participation of men at the church. The men were willing to sacrifice precious time on their Sunday afternoons for the class. They also contributed time outside the classroom for reading and preparation for the class. Their dedication, energy, and eagerness for the class shaped the classroom environment and energized me as the teacher.

A third component crucial to the project's accomplishing its purpose was the educational experience I gained through Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The seminars, fellow students, professors, and the many required readings shaped this project. Having taught leadership classes for years before, this class raised the bar and brought many new areas of knowledge to the classroom. The wealth of knowledge and experiences I gained through the seminary program all helped in to construct this class.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Each of the project's goals were successfully completed, as evidenced by the data collected from the various project research instruments. The first goal was to assess the knowledge and pastoral practices of the SOCOC present and future elders. Using the Pastoral Leadership Knowledge and Practices (PLKPS) (see appendix 1), the present and future elders contributed helpful knowledge. This goal was accomplished by each of the men completing the survey.

The second goal was to develop a six-week pastoral leadership curriculum to train SOCOC present and future elders. This course had as its foundation the biblical teachings regarding shepherds and church leadership. The course also drew upon personal ministerial experience to teach practical principles for carrying out the duty of a

shepherd. Also, the course was based upon contemporary research and findings related to church leadership, leadership theory, business research, and team dynamics. The challenge in developing the course was balancing traditional Biblical topics on shepherds with the need to incorporate leadership principles and insights. I wanted the course to be a how-to manual that covered all the basic areas a shepherd needs to consider in doing the work of an elder for a local church. The course prepared participants to understand the biblical teachings and responsibilities regarding shepherding a church. It sought to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to serve as a shepherd. I presented each of the twelve lessons along with the curriculum evaluation rubric (see appendix 2) to a three-member expert panel. The expert panel evaluated the material as "exemplary" in the rubric. The expert panel shared encouraging comments and highly recommended the material.

The third goal was to equip present and future elders through teaching a pastoral leadership class. Nineteen men enrolled in the class which was taught over six weeks on Sunday afternoons. The men faithfully attended the class and contributed to the class discussion. These men had taken the PLKPS before to give an assessment of their knowledge and practice. This same survey was used at the conclusion of the class along with an additional page of three questions (see appendix 3) to serve as a post-training survey. This goal was met when a t-test (see table A1 in appendix 5) for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistical difference between pre and post-training survey scores: ($t(_{12}) = 4.017$, $p<.001$).[1] The goal was deemed successful as knowledge and pastoral practice beliefs increased significantly due to course implementation. In reviewing the pre and post-surveys, it was also insightful to see how men tend to hold to

[1] The t-test was based on thirteen dependent samples. Nineteen men took the pre-class survey. Sixteen men returned the post-class survey. But three of those did not match in the self-assigned unique user code with any from the first group of surveys. Thus, the t-test is based upon the thirteen matching pre- and post-class surveys.

their entrenched notions and beliefs, even when the class taught differently. While there was some change, I was surprised at how numerous individual questions remained constant. My observation from this is that it takes significant effort and teaching for men to relearn and apply concepts that are deeply entrenched. Three additional questions were added to the post-class survey. Though not evaluated through a t-test, these open-ended questions and numeric evaluations of the value of given topics indicated the class was highly successful. For example, two students wrote "very informative and encouraging" and "very good class looking at some very timely topics." While the results were positive and the value of the class assessed highly, the impact and value of the class in the students' minds was less than I expected and felt in my own mind. Several factors may have impacted this perception, but one of the biggest is the prevailing leadership culture and how different some of the class suggestions seemed to current and traditional practice. It takes much effort and time to change the leadership culture.

Strengths of the Project

The fifteen-week project had several strengths that will now be considered. First, this project provided a practical solution for an important need of the SOCOC. The pastoral leadership course filled a gap in our church's educational needs. The course was an intentional effort to specifically do what is often talked about and addressed in an indirect manner. The class was well received by both present and future elders because there had been nothing of its kind in the past.

Second, this course helped to fill a perceived need in other congregations of Churches of Christ. In talking to others about my project, many have told me about the need they have for a similar training at their congregation. Several factors play into the lack of adequate training attention. Possibly it is because preachers feel intimidated to teach elders because they are hired by the elders. The assumption is often made they only need to know the Word of God well, so traditional Bible classes and sermons suffice.

Elders themselves don't consider the need for a formal class because of its rarity and possibly their own insecurities and fears in attending one. As I am transitioning to a professorship role at a Christian university, I hope to make this material available to a larger audience. It is my plan to provide this material to churches and individuals through a book, workbook, classes, and weekend seminar. Most elders have had no formal training, and there are few seminars or classes similar to this content in the brotherhood now.

A third strength of this project was the course notebook that was developed for participants. The notebook included almost the entirety of my lecture from the class. The notebook allowed students to stay up to speed if they missed a class. It allowed for class review and preparation. The supplemental reading assignments, included in the notebook, allowed the students to gain various perspectives and thoughts not addressed in class. Finally, the notebook has the potential to be used as a reference tool for elders years into the future. The notebook will provide an extensive classroom resource for future teachers.

A fourth strength of this project was some of the unique subject matter taught. Given the format of the leadership training class with just men, the class was able to address issues not often addressed in Bible classes or sermons. The material was narrowly focused on shepherds and addressed how being a shepherd affects one's life. One student wrote, "It helped me develop my leadership in life, the church, and work." Another wrote, "It helped me see that everyone, even elders need help, edification, and prayers; to also see a vision that is not just now, but 3, 5, and 7 years down the road." The class emphasized the need for a vision and leadership principles that apply across the spectrum of roles. A couple of men pointed out they benefited from the study of the qualifications and understood them better than before. The class addressed the role of a shepherd's wife in the church and the affect the position has upon children. The class also discussed in numerous ways the roles of deacons, ministers, and elders and how they all must work together in their respective roles for the church to move forward. These

unique areas of emphasis were a real strength of the class because they taught, in a practical way, what is not often addressed.

Weaknesses of the Project

In addition to these strengths, several weaknesses were apparent. First, the class sessions were filled with great content, so much so that it was tough to complete each lesson in the allotted time. Some information was quickly perused for the class and given for their own study. While this amount of content was a strength, the major weakness was the lack of discussion. Several men commented that they wished they would have had more time to discuss the material. The men desired more illustrations or case-study discussions around shepherding issues.

A second weakness tied to the first one was the Sunday afternoon timeslot. The class met from 1:30 to 3:00 each Sunday afternoon. This is not a traditional meeting time for our church family, so it was out of the men's normal routine. Due to the short class period of forty-five minutes for each lesson and only an hour and half total (which included a five-minute break), time was simply very tight. The class really needed to be in a two-hour time slot, but the elders feared that was too long for a Sunday afternoon. In addition, the men tended to slip into the habit of arriving late which meant most classes started late. While enjoying the class, they were also eager to go on some of the beautiful early spring days.

A third weakness was the participants' availability for class. While the class had good overall attendance at an 84-percent rate, ideally this should have been higher. Both of the present elders had to miss the fifth week of class which hurt that week's discussion. Trips, funerals, and other activities invaded the weekly commitment of the men. While all normal and expected, this was still a weakness to the overall effectiveness of the class.

A fourth weakness of the class was the time to discuss the supplemental readings. If there had been more time, the readings would have provided good discussion material. Also, if the men knew the readings would be discussed, they would have had more accountability to read the supplemental articles and chapters weekly.

Suggested Project Modifications

Although the project goals were met, several modifications are recommended. First, more class time is highly recommended. I would not recommend any new content being added but the existing content being extended over two more weeks or three additional hours. Additional time could be used to discuss some of the content better in lecture, go deeper into more discussions, provide small group case-studies, and do role-play exercises. The additional weeks would also allow for more time to discuss the supplemental readings and the students' questions raised from the class.

Second, while this class targeted a large segment of the congregation, there would be value in having a smaller class with specific men who will likely become elders in two years or less. Due to SOCOC's need for more elders and never having had a class of this nature, this class was broad, but if future editions of the class were done, two segments would be beneficial: one for young men ages 16 to 40 who aspire to the work and another for older men who are actual potential elder candidates. The discussion was often hindered from being very specific because of the size and broad age range of the students in this class.

A third suggestion would be to add a mentoring component to the course. The current situation with only two shepherds at the SOCOC made this component unfeasible with eighteen participants, but this component would be helpful if you taught the class to candidates soon to be appointed. A mentoring relationship where students meet with an existing elder to discuss class content and supplemental readings would really add a

personal and practical component to the class. This would also develop bonds with existing shepherds and allow the transition of the man into the eldership to be smoother.

Theological Reflections

The Bible is a leadership manual. Scripture says much about the importance of leadership for God's people. God's people rose and fell based upon their leaders. God worked through great leaders in the Bible. Christ gave the gift of leaders to his church (Eph 4:7-16). This project was primarily about leadership. By viewing Scripture as teaching leadership principles and calling men into leadership of God's family, whole new paradigms emerge and convict the reader. This is especially seen when considering the topic of shepherds.

The shepherd imagery found throughout Scripture testifies to the character of God, the compassion of Christ, and the calling of elders. God was the shepherd of Israel (Ps 23). Israel's shepherds failed God miserably because of their selfishness and greed (Ezek 34). Jesus comes as the good shepherd (John 10). The church appoints shepherds from amongst the body to lead, direct, watch over, and provide for it (Acts 20; 1 Pet 5). This imagery displays the care, compassion, and concern of God. It also lays forth a challenge to all under-shepherds to provide care, compassion, and concern to God's family in His name. This is an awesome privilege and responsibility.

It is through frail men taking up this challenge and living as shepherds to the flock of God that the church is equipped for the work of ministry (Eph 4:12). It is through faithful shepherds that the church matures into the image of Christ, not tossed to and fro by false doctrine, but grows and builds itself up in love (Eph 4:13-16). Church shepherds take upon themselves an ancient and holy calling to lead and protect God's people. This calling is vital for men of the 21st century to grasp and willingly accept to move the church forward in a world of sin and darkness. The kingdom of Christ still rises and falls

with its leadership, just like Israel of old. May God raise up faithful, courageous shepherds who live like Jesus.

Personal Reflections

As I personally reflect upon the impact of this project, several thoughts come to my mind. First, I am grateful for the additional scriptural understanding I gained through this project. The shepherd metaphor and the work of shepherding is taught all throughout the Scriptures, but my focused attention upon it yielded personal and professional insights. The study of Ezekiel 34 was illuminating and emphasized the care and protection a shepherd must give to the sheep. The study of Ephesians 4:11-16 presented a paradigm for church organization and ministry. It presented a clear goal and destination for the shepherd to be aiming as he leads the flock of God. This deep study enriched my theology and understanding of shepherding greatly.

Second, I benefited from the great amount of research and reading that went into compiling the pastoral leadership class. I had never spent so much time and reading on one class topic. When you consider the four doctoral seminars, the writing of chapters 2 and 3, and study for the lessons themselves the sheer amount of material that was packed into those 12 lessons was astounding. While not practical for most teaching situations I find myself assigned, the result was certainly far above normal as well. Often, academic settings foster a situation where a student learns and learns, but never concludes the overall study by applying all the knowledge to a specific problem. By having to prepare and teach the class, I was able to allow the academic knowledge to take on a specific focus and be turned into a useful format in the notebook.

Third, I benefited specifically from the challenge of chapter 3. I humbly hope that this project's unique contribution to this field of study are the insights and analysis of chapter 3. The attempt to apply leadership theory models to current church polity models and practice proved rewarding, thought-provoking, and insightful. I found the discussion

interesting within my own context of Churches of Christ as many congregations are transitioning between a board of directors model to a pastoral leadership model.

Conclusion

As demonstrated, the development and implementation of a pastoral leadership course for current and future elders at the SOCOC has reaped many blessings for our church family. While no additional elders were added to the eldership at the conclusion of the class, eighteen men were trained and prepared for this task. These men represent different stages of faith, maturity, and age, but it is my fervent belief that the future of these men's service and the future of the church's eldership will be impacted positively because of this class. Further this project proved to be a very fruitful effort for me personally through 1) educating me in the role and calling of shepherds, 2) bringing contemporary leadership insights into the shepherding role, and 3) providing a resource to use for years to come to train more shepherds in the church. May this material, and the men trained through it, result in shepherds after God's own heart, who will feed God's people with knowledge and understanding (Jer 3:15).

APPENDIX 1

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES SURVEY

The following survey was used to provide a picture of the pastoral leadership knowledge and practices. This survey was given a second time to the same men as a post-test after completing the training.

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current knowledge and practices of pastoral leadership. Josh Ketchum is conducting this research for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project, and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

[ ] I agree to participate
[ ] I do not agree to participate

Please assign yourself a unique number that you will remember. _____

Part 1: Demographics

The first section of this questionnaire will obtain some demographic information.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

1. How long have you been a Christian (years)?
   ____ A. Less than 5
   ____ B. 5 – 10
   ____ C. 10 – 20
   ____ D. Over 20

2. What is your age in years?
   ___ A. 18-24
   ___ B. 25-34
   ___ C. 35-44
   ___ D. 45-54
   ___ E. 55-64
   ___ F. 65 and over

Part 2: Biblical Foundations regarding Pastoral Leadership

Directions: Answer the statements below based on the following scale, circle the option that best represents your agreement with the statement:

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, DS = Disagree Somewhat,
AS = Agree Somewhat, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

1. In the NT a plurality of elders were overseers and shepherds of a local church.	SD D DS AS A SA
2. In the NT, three terms (elder, shepherd, overseer) are used to describe the one office.	SD D DS AS A SA
3. The qualifications given for the role of an elder are to not to be taken definitely but are only meant to generally describe a man of a godly character and integrity.	SD D DS AS A SA
4. The shepherd concept is one of the most used analogies throughout the Old and New Testaments.	SD D DS AS A SA
5. Israel's shepherds primarily succeeded in pleasing God.	SD D DS AS A SA
6. The motive throughout Scripture for a shepherd leader is one who endures suffering interceding as a protector and provider for God's flock.	SD D DS AS A SA
7. One of the primary responsibilities of an elder is being able to teach and defend sound doctrine.	SD D DS AS A SA
8. The local congregation is to select, ordain, and even rebuke elders when necessary.	SD D DS AS A SA
9. Elders are responsible for the feeding and equipping of the flock.	SD D DS AS A SA
10. Acts 20 teaches that elders must be on guard to prevent discord and false doctrine from arising within their own ranks.	SD D DS AS A SA
11. One of the primary responsibilities of an elder is to set an example to the flock.	SD D DS AS A SA
12. An elder does not have authority.	SD D DS AS A SA
13. An eldership has authority over an individual church member and the church as a body.	SD D DS AS A SA
14. The primary role of deacons is to lead the church's ministries so elders can be relieved to perform their shepherding duties.	SD D DS AS A SA
15. A chief duty of an elder is to pray and watch out for the souls of those in his care.	SD D DS AS A SA
16. The preacher has a significant role in evangelism and edification, but his work is significantly different than the work of elders.	SD D DS AS A SA

Part 3: Personal Practices regarding Pastoral Leadership

Directions: Answer the statements below based on the following scale, circle the option that best represents your agreement with the statement:

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, DS = Disagree Somewhat,
AS = Agree Somewhat, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

1. The 7 Oaks COC culture makes serving as an elder an overwhelming burden and stress.	SD D DS AS A SA
2. I feel I have been adequately trained to serve as an elder of this congregation.	SD D DS AS A SA
3. I believe quibbles over certain qualifications causes us to not have more men able to serve as elders.	SD D DS AS A SA
4. I have sufficient Bible knowledge to be an elder.	SD D DS AS A SA
5. I am an adequate teacher of God's word.	SD D DS AS A SA
6. I have the training and skills to properly study and understand God's word.	SD D DS AS A SA
7. The eldership primarily serves as a board of directors for the church and their main duty is to make decisions.	SD D DS AS A SA
8. I am competent in my ability to visit the sick, unfaithful, and new contacts.	SD D DS AS A SA
9. The most effective eldership will work as a healthy team allowing one another's strengths to come forth without jealousy.	SD D DS AS A SA
10. Conflict resolution and team dynamic training is one of the most important skills for elders to learn.	SD D DS AS A SA
11. Elderships should have regular times for prayer and study together.	SD D DS AS A SA
12. Elderships should have times together for social recreation and friendship.	SD D DS AS A SA
13. The success of the church being built up in Christ is dependent upon the unity of the eldership and its ministers.	SD D DS AS A SA
14. We have a clear vision and plan for the future at 7 Oaks COC.	SD D DS AS A SA
15. We have a clear leadership development pathway for young men who want to serve in the church.	SD D DS AS A SA
16. An eldership's duty is not to do the work of ministry, but to equip and train others to do the work of ministry.	SD D DS AS A SA
17. Christians should place members with a local church so elders know who they are to oversee and equip.	SD D DS AS A SA
18. Elders have the burden of seeking wayward sheep and even leading church discipline for the congregation.	SD D DS AS A SA
19. An eldership should seek to please the flock in its leadership and decisions.	SD D DS AS A SA
20. An elder cannot share his burdens or sins with anyone.	SD D DS AS A SA
21. Often men who seemingly would make good elders, disqualify themselves because of how intimating and stressful the work is in the eyes of the church.	SD D DS AS A SA

APPENDIX 2

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following rubric was used to evaluate the disciple making curriculum developed by the author and distributed to the select expert panel described in the goal section of chapter 1.

Pastoral Leadership Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
Lesson to be Evaluated:					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The material is clearly relevant to the topic of pastoral leadership.					
The material is biblical and theologically accurate.					
The objectives of the material are clear and are consistent with pastoral leadership.					
The material will serve to equip and educate future elders to assume the office.					
The content flows in a logical progression.					
The lessons are practical and applicable to the every-day church work of elders.					
The lessons are sufficiently thorough in their coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lessons are clear and could be re-taught by another person in another church context.					
Other feedback or comments:					

APPENDIX 3

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS FOR POST-SURVEY

Thank you for completing the course and the post survey. Please give me any information you would deem helpful to improving this course.

1. Please comment on the value this class gave to you regarding the topic of pastoral leadership.

2. Please comment on how the class could have given you more value. What areas were neglected or not adequately covered?

3. Please rank in descending order the most valuable topics covered to your understanding of pastoral leadership.

_____Biblical knowledge about Shepherds
_____Biblical knowledge about Qualifications
_____Biblical knowledge about the duties of elders
_____Teaching instruction
_____Member care and visitation
_____Conflict management
_____Elder-to-elder relationships
_____Elder-to-minister relationships
_____Burnout defenses
_____Vision planning instruction
_____The elders spiritual life.

APPENDIX 4

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP COURSE

Lesson 1: Shepherds in the Bible

Teaching Aims:

1. To explain the Old and New Testament metaphor of a shepherd and its application and usage throughout Scripture.
2. To understand the titles given to church elders in the New Testament and see how local congregations were organized under their leadership.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

Edward C. Wharton, *The Church of Christ: The Distinctive Nature of the New Testament Church* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co, 1997) ch. 6 – p. 75-81

J. J. Turner, *Shepherds, Wake Up!: Ancient Training for Modern Shepherds* (Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, 2005) Introduction and Ch. 1 – p. 9-19

Introduction: Ancient shepherds spent hours watching over, leading, feeding, and caring for their sheep. They knew their personality, age, tendencies, and health status. We still market and benefit from sheep. But none of our farms use shepherds to watch and lead the sheep daily. We have replaced shepherds with fences. Fences keep out predators, while simultaneously keeping the sheep inside the pasture. We supply them with water and food as needed. Fences have their benefits, but they are a far cry from a shepherd! In the church, it is a challenge to recapture the ancient ideals of a shepherd who lived with, cared for, and protected his sheep as his daily duty. We tend to think like modern farmers. We come up with really good fences to do our job, but God wants ancient shepherds. Over the next six weeks, we will be discussing the need for the church to raise up shepherds who know intimately, care for deeply, feed substantially, and protect vigilantly Christians under their watch.

I. The Shepherd Metaphor in Scripture
   The shepherd metaphor is one of the most frequent and powerful images in Scripture. The metaphor must not be separated from the flock, which is the people the shepherd has responsibility for knowing and caring for as its shepherd. In an agrarian society they were a common and essential occupation.
   A. Old Testament
      i. God as Shepherd

1. God chose to use this metaphor as a common designation for Himself in Scripture. Gen. 49:24; Ps. 23:1; Is. 40:10; Ez. 34
2. Israel was the flock of God. Ps. 23; 78:48; 80:1; 95:7: Ez. 34

ii. Israel's Shepherds

1. In ancient near eastern culture the kings were most often depicted and expected to be the shepherd of their people. Mesopotamian kings and Egyptian Pharaohs were all depicted as shepherds. Israel's kings were to be shepherds of God's people. Ancient shepherds were expected to rule justly, militarily protect, and offer abundant provision to their citizens. This metaphor defined their role for their people[1]
2. God referred to the people as sheep and their leaders as shepherds. This metaphor placed their leaders among the people personally sustaining and safeguarding the flock. Num. 27:15-18; 2 Samuel 5:2; 1 Kings 22:17; Ps. 77:20
3. David represents the ideal shepherd-king, though he will have his failures which relate to his shepherding. 2 Sam. 5:2; 2 Sam. 24:17
4. Israel's shepherds (kings and leaders) fail, due to feeding themselves and abusing the sheep. God fired them and was forced to do the job himself. Ezekiel prophesied He will raise up for them "one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; and he will feed them himself, and be their shepherd" (Ez. 34:23). This is a reference to the coming Messiah.

B. New Testament

i. Jesus as the "Good Shepherd"

1. In a fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy, Christ comes with this prophetic understanding and announces He is the "good shepherd" (John 10:11).
2. Jesus knows, loves, nurtures, provides, protects, and secures his sheep (John 10:1-18). In a complete reversal of Israel's shepherds who fed themselves, abused the sheep, and grew fat from them, Jesus lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:17-18).
3. Peter will describe Christ as the "Chief Shepherd" to whom all under-shepherds in the church follow (1 Pet. 5:4).

ii. Elders as Shepherds

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[1] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 42-74. Chaps. 2-3 of this work detail the shepherd metaphor as it relates to ancient kings and peoples.

1. It thus should not surprise us that God desired shepherds to lead his church. John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:1-4
2. Elders or overseers are given the task of shepherding the church. Acts 20:28-29.
3. The principles of shepherding apply to any leader, yeah even to every Christian in the expected love and care toward one another.[2]

C. Applications from this Survey

i. Consider the lineage of shepherds throughout the Biblical record and observe these thoughts:

1. God wants shepherd-leaders. The metaphor for His leaders is not CEO's, politicians, kings, wealthy rulers, or generals; it is shepherds.
2. The primary image of a shepherd throughout the Bible is one of a suffering righteous servant. Consider the lineage of shepherds—Abel, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus, and NT Christians (Mat. 23:34-35; Heb. 11; Revelation). Being a shepherd in the church involves righteous suffering—we should expect no less.
3. Shepherding as an under-shepherd of God's people is a great privilege and honor, as you seek to closely imitate the "good Shepherd." 1 Pet. 5:4

II. The Title and Descriptions of Church Shepherds The New Testament uses three distinct Greek terms to describe church leaders.

A. Three Terms for One Office

i. "Episkopos" – "guardians, overseers"[3]; Old English – "Bishop" - Authority

ii. "Presbuteros" – "elder, older"[4]; Old English – "Presbyter" – Age/Experience

iii. "Poimein" – "pastor, shepherd"[5]; Old English – "Pastor" – Caring/Watching/Feeding/Protecting

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[2] The concept of "pastoral leadership," though specifically aimed at the work and duties expected by church elders or shepherds, has application for all Christian leaders. Shepherding duties involve the many "one another" admonitions given to Christians in the NT and are consistent with Paul's instructions in Gal 6.

[3] It was a government, administration term in Greek culture. They handled the monies of the city or temple. They ran the business of the city or village. God was called an "episkopos" in both Greek and Jewish religion. It was frequently related to the word "shepherd." Rod Parrott, "New Testament Elders in Their Context," *Impact* 4 (1980): 31.

[4] It identified "bearers of community leadership, i.e. offices, authority, power." The Old Testament used it as city elders or leaders of tribes and Israel. Parrott, "New Testament Elders in Their Context," 28.

[5] The noun form is used in Eph 4:11. The verb form is used to describe the work of elders in Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4. Jesus used this verb form in John 21:16. "It suggests the exercise of leadership through nurture, care, and guidance." Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 251.

iv. Three passages of Scripture demonstrate that the NT uses these three separate terms to describe and identify the same group of men or office in the church.
    1. Acts 20:17-32
    2. 1 Peter 5:1-4
    3. Titus 1:5-7

B. Always found in a plurality of elders exercising leadership over a local congregation.
    i. All New Testament evidence demonstrates a plurality of elders who exercised oversight and shepherded a local congregation. There is never an example of a single leader over a given congregation or multiple congregations. One-man, autocratic rule was condemned by the apostle John (3 John 9-10).
    ii. References for the term "elders" in the NT over congregations. Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2,4, 6, 22, 23; 20:17, 28; 21:18; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1Pet. 5:1-2; Titus 1:5-6; Heb. 13:17; James 5:14
    iii. The designation does not merely apply to the older men of the church, but to specially designated leaders who are set apart for the ministry of leading and overseeing the church. They form a group, body, or council of elders. 1 Tim. 4:14; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1; Consider the Jewish use of the term – Mat. 26:57

C. Applications from this Study
    i. God desired that men lead his church locally. He wanted men from among the flock to lead the flock. A shepherd was and is a sheep.
    ii. God desired that men lead with other men. He understood the temptations of power and pride inherit in single leadership. He built in mutual accountability and encouragement within the eldership.

Lesson 2: Shepherd's Qualifications

Teaching Aims:

1. To survey the New Testament qualifications given for elders/shepherds in the church.
2. To encourage each Christian man to aspire to these characteristics irrespective of any ordination into the eldership.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

Edward C. Wharton, *The Church of Christ: The Distinctive Nature of the New Testament Church* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co, 1997) ch. 7 – p. 83-94

Introduction: Paul says that "grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph. 4:7). Each man in this room has unique leadership gifts that have been given to you by God. According to the New Testament, you have a stewardship responsibility for your gifts and should use them for service. Gifts lead to service and result in leadership. Who are the leaders in the church? Those who do the service. The church appoints men who are serving in shepherding (elders), serving in evangelizing (evangelists), and serving in the works of the church (deacons). They don't do the work for others, but they lead the church in doing these tasks. So, what kind of servant leaders should be selected to lead the church? This is Paul's list of qualities to look for in a man. This is the kind of man you need to install as your shepherd.[6]

I. The Authority of the Congregation
   D. The congregation or local church is to select men to serve as Shepherds. Acts 6:3; 1 Peter 5:1-2
      i. A man can make a good shepherd in one congregation, but not in another. They are "examples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:3).
      ii. The qualifications as given by the Holy Spirit in Scripture are going to be interpreted and defined by the local church.
   E. The congregation has authority to install, discipline, and rebuke Shepherds. Mat. 18:15-18; 1 Tim. 5:17-21; Acts 13:1-3. In the NT church the apostles, missionaries, and evangelists were involved in this process. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-6; and 1 Timothy 3:1-2
      i. The process of doing such is left up to the local congregation. If time allows, we will discuss some options in a later class.

II. The Qualifications of a Shepherd[7]

The qualifications given for those the congregation are to appoint as overseers are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. These

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[6] These thoughts are taken from Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 292-98.

[7] I will use the category titles and groups as J. B. Myers in *Elders and Deacons: A Biblical Study of Church Leadership* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2003), 67-99.

qualifications give a list of Christian qualities that should be exemplified by all Christian men. These qualifications must be taken seriously as they were given by the Holy Spirit so churches would know what kind of men to appoint to this work.

a. Character
    i. Negative Qualifications
        1. "Not a drunkard" – 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7 – Not given to excessive alcohol abuse. While this passage doesn't require complete abstinence from alcohol, the American culture concept of social drinking and alcohol use would strongly encourage one to abstain completely from its use. (Linked with not being violent in both accounts.)
        2. "Not violent, not quarrelsome" – 1 Tim. 3:3
        3. "Not a lover of money" or covetous or for "dishonest gain" – 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2 – His service is willingly offered, not for financial gain.
        4. "Not quick-tempered" - Tit. 1:7 He is not easily and quickly angered.
    ii. Positive Qualifications
        1. "Sober-minded, self-controlled or temperate" – 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8 Involve the concepts of sober judgment, discretion, wisdom, and discipline of action. He curbs his fleshly desires and is controlled in word and deed.
        2. "Gentle" – 1 Tim. 3:3 – Connected with patience and is the opposite of violent and quarrelsome.
        3. "Lover of good" – Tit. 1:8 He needs a passion for good things, rather than worldly and material things.
        4. "Upright" – Tit. 1:8 Also "just" in KJV, NASV. He is honest and morally righteous in his dealings.
        5. "Holy" – Tit. 1:8 – Devout, pious, or spiritual in his thoughts and actions.
        6. "Disciplined" – Similar to "self-controlled." It has to do with mastery over one's passions and desires. Some think it is in reference to self-control in sexual matters.

b. Leadership
    i. "Not domineering over those in your charge" – 1 Pet. 5:3 – A shepherd is to lead, not drive. He is not to "lord over" but be an example to the sheep (1 Pet. 5:3). Diotrephes is a leader who exemplified this negative type of leadership (3 John 9-10).
    ii. "Not arrogant or self-willed" – Titus 1:7 (NIV – "Overbearing"). He should not think too highly of his own ideas, abilities, or position.

c. Family
    i. "Husband of one wife" – 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6 – Literally a "one woman man." This demonstrates that elders must be males.

While this qualification's meaning is debated with options varying including 1) only having one wife in life, 2) a condemnation of polygamy, and 3) a statement about sexual fidelity in marriage. I favor the third option as the most likely since 1) polygamy had not been common in these places for years, 2) Jesus gives provisions for acceptable remarriage in God's sight, 3) the sexually immoral culture of Paul's day and no other qualifications directly reference sexually faithfulness and 4) the literal meaning of the words to me indicates "faithfulness" not number in life.

ii. "And his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination." – Tit. 1:6 – He must have children (The plural would surely include the singular as this is used consistently elsewhere in the Bible).[8] His children must be "believing" or "believers" (Tit. 1:6). I take this to mean they are Christians. It seems that at least one of a man's children must be of the age to become a Christian. His children are not to be wild, rebellious, or disobedient to his will. It seems that this qualification is speaking primarily about the children when they are in his home and under his authority. Adult children will make their own decisions and churches must consider an adult child's freedom of choice.

iii. "He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" – 1 Tim. 3:4-5 – He is to direct, lead, care for, and guide his family. He must love his wife and children. He must bring up his children in the Lord and honor his wife (Eph. 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:7). He is the head of his home (Eph. 5:22-33). His children should obey him with proper respect and submission. The home is God's training and proving ground for leaders of his church. Brothers, do not neglect your home!

d. Reputation – This is an overall emphasis throughout these passages.

i. "Blameless" or "Above reproach" - 1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:6-7 – This is not perfection, but above an open charge or stain upon his character as a Christian.

ii. "Respectable (ESV), Orderly (ASV), Dignified (RSV)" – 1 Tim. 3:2. The word is from the Greek term *kosmios* which is where we get our English word "cosmos." This Greek term (*kosmos*) meant "order or world." The world is orderly and well put together. It is not an accident. It works orderly and gives honor to its Creator. The man should be respectable or orderly and give honor to His Creator. The other occurrence of

[8] Gen 21:7; Josh 4:6; 1 Cor 7:14; Eph 6:4; 1 Tim 5:4.

the word is in 1 Timothy 2:9 regarding women dressing modestly.

iii. "Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders" – 1 Tim. 3:7. He must have the reputation of a Christian.

e. Service

i. "If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." – 1 Tim. 3:1. A man must desire to lead God's church. I think a humble attitude of self-deprecation should not disqualify a man. But if the church desires him to serve, yet he is not willing or desiring of such then he is not qualified. We must do all we can to encourage and equip men to be ready to humbly accept this "noble task." [That is a big focus of this class!]

ii. "Willingly" – 1 Pet. 5:2 – A man should not do it from impure motives either out of a desire for power, prestige, or profit.

iii. "Hospitable" - 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8 – Literally "one who loves strangers." He is friendly, welcoming, and loving toward others.

f. Faith

i. "Able to teach" – 1 Tim. 3:2 – Elders should have the ability to teach an unbeliever the gospel. They should be able to teach in one-on-one settings and preferably in group settings. Not all men are gifted to speak to a large gathering in an adult Bible class or sermon, but all shepherds should be able to teach. Traditionally elders/shepherds have had the responsibility of teaching before it became so common and churches were large enough in size to have trained preachers. See also 1 Tim. 5:17-18 (Not all have skills and time for laboring in preaching and teaching) and Acts 20:27-28

ii. "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict." – Tit. 1:9 – One of the primary jobs of an elder is to guard the church from false doctrine (Acts 20:27-33). They must be able and willing to rebuke those who are teaching or espousing false doctrine or going into sin. They must know the faith, so they can correct those in error. There is a positive (exhort in the truth) and negative (reprove opponents) duty here of elders.

iii. "Not be a recent convert" – 1 Tim. 3:6 – He needs to have experience in the faith. His faith must be tested and he needs time to learn.

III. Applications from our study.

a. "Two opposite tendencies, both incorrect, have been exhibited toward these lists of qualifications. One is to set the standard so high that virtually no one can meet them and so not to appoint men to the work. The other is to minimize the requirements with the attitude of choosing

the best available even if unqualified. Both approaches have the consequence of ignoring or setting aside the instructions and thus not taking seriously the biblical standards for congregational leadership."[9]

b. These qualifications should be aspired to by all men. Your duty is to prepare yourself now. You are becoming the man you want to be! The Lord will choose when, how, and in what ways he chooses to use your gifts for service.
c. Don't appoint men expecting them to become qualified, appoint men who are qualified.

[9] Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 324.

Lesson 3: Shepherd's Vision

Teaching Aims:

1. To foster a deeper understanding of the importance and value of vision.
2. To learn effective tools at developing a clear vision for the future.
3. To convict men of the church's leadership responsibility to see a vision for the church.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

James Kouzes and Barry Posner, Eds. *Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004) p. 55-68

Steve Cloer, "The Minister-Elder Relationship within Churches That Work." *Discernment* (2:2 2016) p. 1-15

Introduction: Everyone is familiar with the humanitarian organization—Habitat for Humanity. What is their vision? Their stated vision is "A world where everyone has a decent place to live." They have principles that define their work such as "demonstrate the love of Jesus, focus on shelter, advocate for affordable housing, promote dignity and hope, and support sustainable and transformative development." They work in all 50 states and 70 countries. In 2005 when the CEO Jonathan Reckford came into the position they were serving 125,000 individuals a year. In 2019 they served 7 million individuals. They have about 15,000 full-time employees and 1.4 million volunteers. How did they grow so much? They decided they needed to open their minds to other models. So, they started doing more with financing, restoration, property rights, and other possibilities.[10]

I. The Necessity of a Vision
   a. Biblical examples.
      i. The apostles could not be diverted from doing the work only they could do (Acts 6:1-6).
      ii. Nehemiah's vision resulted in the completion of the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1-6).
      iii. Paul's vision determined his evangelistic philosophy (Rom. 15:20; Col. 1:27-28).
   b. "Articulating the vision may be a leader's single most important responsibility. The leader keeps the vision—the mission, the reason the church or organization was formed—before the people, continually asking what we need to do today and tomorrow to live out that vision."[11]
   c. Leaders set the course!
      i. Ephesians 4:11-16

[10] Habitat for Humanity, Habitat.org.

[11] Walter C. Wright, *Relational Leadership: A Biblical Model for Influence and Servic*e (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 108.

ii. Leaders are to direct and equip the church in doing ministry. They are to build up the body of Christ. They are to protect it from false teaching and crafty schemes. They are to allow each part to work properly for the growth of the body. This is leadership!
iii. Leadership is casting a vision.
iv. "Vision is the ability of leadership to see beyond and not be bound by existing horizons. Vision enables the leadership to conceptualize what the organization could be, where it could go, and what it could do."[12]
v. Shepherds cannot allow the church to determine the direction and purpose of the work. Elders lay before the church the aims, ministries, goals, and directives. Elders challenge, dream, and direct. They are not content with status quo or remaining the same but have somewhere to go for the sake of the Lord. (Consider Paul's work and writings.)

d. Vision is essential for a healthy, growing church.[13]
i. Vision promotes unity within the leadership team. The preacher must be a part of helping establish and promote the vision. He is the most visible person in the congregation and communicates the most.
ii. Vision requires an investment of risk, time, money, and reputation.
iii. Vision invites others to join the effort. People want to know where they are going and when they will arrive.
iv. Vision must be future oriented.
v. Vision inspires endurance and sacrifice (Heb. 12:2).

II. Clarity Drives Confidence, Confidence Drives Commitment[14]
a. Clarity
i. All churches share a generic vision (ie. Love God, Love Man; etc)
ii. What is your specific (vivid) vision for the church?
iii. Illustration – Habitat has a clear vision; In 2008, we had a clear vision for the La Cruz church in El Salvador.
iv. Involves overarching goal and direction
v. Strategic priorities for reaching the goal.
vi. Resources
vii. Roles and responsibilities of people

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[12] Ian Fair, *Leadership in the Kingdom: Sensitive Strategies for the Church in a Changing World* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 1996), 132.

[13] Steve Cloer, "The Minister-Elder Relationship within Churches That Work," *Discernment* 2, no. 2 (2016): 1-15.

[14] Frank LaFasto and Carl Larson, *When Teams Work Best: 6,000 Team Members and Leaders Tell What It Takes to Succeed* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 169-72.

viii. The intended results and outcomes

b. Confidence – Clarity creates confidence in the leadership and momentum going forward.
   i. Confidence in the leadership and their direction. (911 and George Bush's speech with a bullhorn at the WTC.)
   ii. Confidence builds with things getting done and accomplishments taking place.

c. Commitment – Confidence builds commitment to the clear goals and mission of the church.
   i. Commitment involves the tenacity to persevere despite the challenges and diversions along the way. Deal with the issues that come up along the way.
   ii. Commitment makes the actions be toward the goal.
   iii. Commitment creates accountability for the results.

d. Consider Nehemiah's use of this same strategy.
   i. Clarity – Rebuild the wall around Jerusalem.
   ii. Confidence – Started building and seeing it going up (built where emotionally invested and in community with one another).
   iii. Commitment – They persevered to accomplish the goal despite the attacks of Tobiah and Sanballat. They got results (Neh. 6:15).

III. Some Tools for Developing a Vision

a. Questions to Help Create Clarity[15]
   i. Why do we exist?
   ii. How do we behave?
   iii. What do we do?
   iv. How will we succeed?
   v. What is the most important right now?
   vi. Who must do what?

b. What is required to make a vision successful?
   i. Specific
   ii. Funded (resources and budget support is necessary)
   iii. Easily seen (not overly complicated and intricate)
   iv. Talked about (It has to be communicated in many different forms; You want your membership discussing and talking about it; enthusiasm)

c. SWOT Analysis – This analysis is helpful to do for a church overall or a given ministry or mission effort.
   i. Strengths
   ii. Weaknesses
   iii. Opportunities
   iv. Threats

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[15] Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Busines*s (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 77.

d. Enlist others in the vision.
    i. A one-person vision is just a dream.
    ii. Leaders must listen deeply to their people and know what they need and desire.
    iii. Leaders are the CRO's [Chief Reminding Officers] of the church.
    iv. You can never overcommunicate your vision. It has to be constantly reminded and aimed for regularly.
e. Questions to help a local church clarify its vision.
    i. "If we accomplished one thing during the next _x_ months, what would it be? In other words, What must be true _x_ months from now for us to be able to look back and say with any credibility that we had a good period?"[16]
    ii. What are the most pressing needs in our community that our church needs to address in order to make an impact for Christ?
    iii. What are the current strengths of our church family (i.e. gifts, talents, blessings)?
    iv. What programs or ministries have made the most impact for Christ in the last thirty years at our church?
    v. What is our burden? (Is our burden children/families/marriages/grieving individuals/specific mission field/etc?)
    vi. What would you tell a friend who asked, "What is your church doing?"
    vii. Where does God want us to go/do in the next five years?

IV. Applications from this Study
a. Time spent in clarifying the vision is not time wasted, but essential to the work of an eldership. It will promote the unity, help in understanding roles, and avoid future problems.
b. The church follows its leaders! They look to leaders to determine where they will go. The essential thing that elders must do, that members cannot do, is establish the vision and direction of the church. Don't allow the pressing of the urgent and regular routines to keep you from doing the role that only you can do (see Acts 6:1-6). Ministers, deacons, and members should help with this process, but the ultimate responsibility is the shepherds.
c. "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Peter Drucker. This strategy is essential and necessary for a church to have, but the culture of the church will still determine the vision's success. By "culture" I mean the group norms of behavior and shared values. So be aware—in order to accomplish the vision you are going to have use your church's

[16] Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 122.

culture and that may take some modification.[17] We will talk more about this later.

[17] Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 72-73.

Lesson 4: A Shepherd's Teaching

Teaching Aims:

1. To impress upon the students the importance of teaching to pastoral leadership.
2. To supply the basic knowledge and core resources necessary for shepherds to effectively teach God's word.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:
Wayne Jackson, "The Responsibility of a Bible Teacher." (ChristianCourier.com)
Wayne Jackson, "The Establishment of the Church of Christ." (ChristianCourier.com)

Introduction: In the church, it seems that one of the biggest qualifications that prevents men from serving as shepherds is "able to teach." While all men are not gifted orators or have the ability to stand before the whole church, every elder must reach a level of competence when it comes to teaching. What is this level that satisfies this command?

I. The Importance of Teaching to Leadership
   a. "Great teachers are leaders, and conversely, great leaders must be teachers."[18]
   b. "The Biblical leader is first and foremost a Bible teacher, and the people of God are a distinctive teaching-learning community where the principles of business leadership may not always apply."[19]
   c. "The most powerful means of leading the people of God is by teaching them the Word of God."[20]
   d. Consider this Biblical evidence
      i. Moses taught God's word and commanded Israel to teach it. (The entire book of Deuteronomy is an example.)
      ii. Ezra 7:9-10
      iii. Jesus was primarily a teacher (Mark 6:34; Sermon on the Mount – Mat. 5-7).
      iv. The apostles turned the world upside down through their teaching (Acts).
      v. Teachers are a gift of Christ to the church (Eph. 4:7-11).
      vi. Elders conduct their leadership of the church through teaching.
         1. 1 Tim. 3:2
         2. 1 Tim. 5:17-18 – Those which work hard in studying and preaching God's word are to receive honor.
         3. Titus 1:9-11 – They are to give instruction (teach truth) and rebuke (correct) error or false teaching.

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[18] Gary Bredfeldt, *Great Leader, Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 2006), 13.

[19] Bredfeldt, *Great Leader, Great Teacher*, 15.

[20] Bredfeldt, *Great Leader, Great Teacher*, 18.

4. Acts 20:28-30
5. John 21:15-17 – Biblical leadership's most basic duty—"Feed my sheep."
6. 1 Thess. 5:12-13 – Elders admonish believers.

e. Teachers are great leaders because of three basic reasons.[21]
   i. Teachers have great influence.
   ii. Teachers can bring about great change.
   iii. Teachers can invoke the highest levels of followers' development. (Consider the levels of interaction between leader/followers.)
      1. Lowest level – Command
      2. Second level – Tell
      3. Third level – Sell
      4. Fourth Level – Teach – Followers own the ideas and implement them into their lives. Teaching empowers!
         a. Model
         b. Delegate
         c. Coach
         d. Entrust

II. The Essentiality of Knowing Key Bible Doctrines
   a. In the context of 7 Oaks Church of Christ, church leaders need to be able to fulfill Titus 1:9. Shepherds must know the truth and be able to teach it in a one-on-one (conversational) way and be able to refute false doctrine. Elders are the guardians of the flock. They have to be able to detect when false teaching is being done from the pulpit, in the classroom, or by individuals.
   b. Preparing yourself for this task
      i. Involve yourself in daily study of God's word.
         1. Read the Bible daily in some organized fashion.
         2. Read brotherhood journals, blogs, and books.
         3. Listen to the Bible while driving or exercising.
      ii. Take our Bible classes and sermons seriously.
         1. Prepare for class.
         2. Commit to teaching and you will learn even more.
         3. See sermons as opportunities to increase knowledge and collect resources.
   c. Focus on understanding some key doctrines (While this list is not exhaustive, it gives you a basic overview of key doctrines you should seek to know and understand.)
      i. Bible
         1. The significance of the inspired Word of God.
         2. The authority of the Word of God.
         3. The major sections and background of the Bible.

[21] Taken from Bredfeldt, *Great Teacher, Great Leader*, 19-28.

ii. Jesus
    1. Essential to know of his miracles and basic teachings (Mat. 5-7)
    2. Understand and be able to share the story of his death, burial, and resurrection.
iii. Church
    1. The distinctive non-denominational nature of the church.
    2. The aim of the restoration plea and its purpose.
    3. How the NT church is to be organized and led with elders, deacons, and ministers.
iv. Worship
    1. The responsibility of male spiritual leadership.
    2. Reasons why we sing without instruments of music in worship to God.
    3. The significance and importance of the Lord's supper, prayer, giving, and preaching
v. Salvation
    1. Salvation only being available through Christ.
    2. The necessity of belief, repentance, confession, and baptism.
    3. The purpose of baptism to forgive sins and add one to the church.
    4. The necessity of faithfulness in life (one can fall from grace).
vi. Moral Doctrines
    1. An understanding of Biblical sexuality and gender.
    2. An understanding of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

d. Resources you should have in your library.
    i. Dan Chambers. *Churches in the Shape of Scripture: Churches of Christ and the Quest to be More than Just Another Evangelical Church* (Franklin, TN: FaithWorks Press, 2012)
    ii. Paul Sain, *Ready Reference for Growing Christians* (Pulaski, TN: Sain Pub., 1991)
    iii. Defending the Faith Study Bible, NKJV, Apologetics Press
    iv. Edward C. Wharton, *The Church of Christ: The Distinctive Nature of the New Testament Church* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co, 1997)
    v. Websites:
        1. ChristianCourier.com
        2. ApologeticsPress.org
        3. Biblecourses.com/studymaterials
        4. Biblecharts.org

III. Some Tips on Communicating the Bible

a. As an elder, you must work to be comfortable talking about Scripture and faith issues in one-on-one or small group conversations. Some examples of elders teaching and using Scripture:
    i. During elders' meetings
    ii. Young person wants to talk to you about baptism
    iii. A couple wants to meet with you to discuss marriage struggles they are having.
    iv. You visit a wayward brother to discuss with him his alcoholic addiction.
    v. A discussion in Bible class about worship leads a few members to suggest women should take a more active role in public leadership.
    vi. A church family has experienced a tragedy. You arrive at the hospital first and are ushered into the family's room where they are grieving a loved one's passing. They ask you to read a Scripture and have a prayer.
b. How do you prepare for a teaching/speaking assignment at church?
    i. Determine your topic or text.
    ii. Use aids such as commentaries or Bible dictionaries to help you understand the passage.
    iii. Use assigned curriculum or a good sound book.
    iv. Develop your points with adequate Scripture support.
    v. Develop questions. Don't ask "yes/no" questions, but ask thought provoking, opinion-based questions.
    vi. Keep the class focused on life transformation and the lesson you want to communicate.

IV. Applications from this Study

a. I heard a story about a good man who was put up for the eldership at his congregation. He was well-liked and influential at the congregation. His wife was the only one who privately objected to the elders about him serving. She said that he was a fine man, but he didn't know his Bible. The elders talked to him about this, and sure enough, he didn't have a good understanding of the Word of God. He did not serve as an elder at that point. Brothers, our wives know the truth! We must prepare ourselves with basic knowledge of God's word, so we can share this knowledge with others.
b. Push yourself to teach in a classroom--be it children or adult. It will cause you to grow, set an example to others, and prepare you for future assignments.
c. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I will seek to find out." You don't have to fear not knowing, but you should fear not caring about not knowing!

Lesson 5: A Shepherd's Care

Teaching Aims:

1. To examine the biblical duties of a shepherd to care for the flock of God.
2. To offer practical suggestions and methods to accomplish the biblical injunctions.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

J. J. Turner, *Shepherds, Wake Up!: Ancient Training for Modern Shepherds* (Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, 2005) Ch. 4

Flavil Yeakley Jr. *Shepherding God's Flock* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2014) ch. 4 – p. 43-55

Introduction: Sheep are not self-sufficient animals. They require a shepherd. They need shepherds to watch over them, feed them, protect them, guide them, and heal them when injured. One of the most basic and important works of a church elder is to offer care to the flock.

I. God's Judgment against Selfish Shepherds – Ezekiel 34
   This Old Testament passage teaches some powerful lessons about what God expects from His shepherds.
   A. The "shepherds of Israel" likely refers to former kings of Judah. Their leaders had failed them. To be a shepherd is to be both responsible for the flock and responsible to the Owner.
   B. They were feeding themselves rather than the flock. 34:2-6
      i. They were profiting from the sheep.
      ii. They were not providing care and protection to the sheep.
      iii. The sheep had become lost and scattered. They failed to even search for them.
   C. God's judgement is against the shepherds because of their lack of care. 34:7-10
      i. These shepherds were being removed from their leadership.
      ii. God has been forced to shepherd the sheep himself.
   D. God's shepherding is one of rescue, care, and protection. 34:11-36
      i. God will seek and rescue his sheep.
      ii. God will feed them on abundant pastures.
      iii. God will discipline and judge his flock.
      iv. God will establish "one shepherd, my servant David" over them. This is a prophecy of the coming of Christ as the "good shepherd" (John 10).

II. The Work of a Shepherd.
   A. Two broad categories of a Shepherd's work which we are studying in this class.
      i. Collective Shepherding (Macro) – Done by the whole eldership for the church.

ii. Individual Shepherding (Micro)[22] – Done by an individual elder toward individual members.

B. Chart:

	Knowing	Feeding	Leading	Protecting
Collective/ Macro (Eldership)	Church's strengths and weaknesses, Membership, Issues	Preaching, Bible school, Worship, Special seminars	Vision, Ministries, Purpose, Budget, Admin., Staff	Preaching, Doctrine, Culture, Discipline
Individual/ Micro (Elder, Shepherd)	Personal relationships, regular contact	One-on-one discipleship, Mentoring, Admonish	Personal example, family, Coaching staff, deacons, and ministry leaders	Private warnings (Matt. 18), Admonish, Encourage, Seeking lost sheep

C. Discussion:

i. Which of the categories is most important—Collective or Individual?

ii. Present elders—which do you feel demands or receives the most of your time?

iii. Which category seems the most daunting and challenging to you to perform?

III. Duties of a Shepherd that Provide Care

A. Know the Sheep

i. Jesus knows His sheep. John 10:2-4; 14-15

ii. Shepherds are to be among the flock serving as examples to them. 1 Peter 5:1-4.

iii. How a shepherd can learn the sheep.

1. Attend church fellowship activities.
2. Attend activities of various age groups.
3. Attend and teach various Bible class ages.
4. Be present and friendly before and after services.
5. Visit in a member's home or have them in your home.
6. Do a recreation or hobby together.

[22] This terminology is taken from Flavil Yeakley Jr., *Shepherding God's Flock* (Nashville: 21st Century, 2014), 17-56; Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2010), 189.

7. Choose to have people in your home or go out to eat with members regularly. Take advantage of Sunday lunch or evening after church.
8. As an eldership have an organized method of assigning members to an elder, so that every member has an elder focused on getting to know them. Research has shown that the "back door" can be closed most effectively by elders being assigned new members. New members need to develop numerous relationships, and one of those needs to be with a trusted shepherd and his wife who can serve as a source of accountability and love.
9. Yeakley suggests using Bible classes on Sunday morning at an hour length to serve as fellowship and shepherding groups. With each class having one to three elders involved and having additional time for prayer, mutual concerns, and fellowship. Some churches uses small groups in this same manner. Others divide the church by geographical regions, alphabet, or age structures to assign elders. This can be rotated annually.[23]
10. Have regularly scheduled meetings with an open door policy so members can come to share a concern or request prayer.
11. Sign and send cards to members as an eldership.

iv. Your foundational method in seeking to know the sheep. All people desire these three things:
1. Understanding – They feel understood in that you grasp what is important to them and who they are.
2. Validation – They feel validated when you respect who they are and what they want.
3. Care – They feel care and love when you take active steps to help meet their needs.

v. When you have these three qualities coupled with your vulnerability and openness in your life to share your faith journey and struggles, it leads to intimacy, loyalty, and mutual encouragement. People feel cared for, understood, and validated.

B. Heal the Sheep

i. The shepherd should have a burden for the sheep. 2 Cor. 11:28
1. "Without a burden for their followers, leaders can also become consumed by their own ambition. A God-given burden for others is like a safety rope, protecting leaders from falling into the sinkhole of a prideful preoccupation with success. Leaders gripped by the mission and burden

[23] Yeakley, *Shepherding God's Flock*, 48-55.

for their followers will focus on God's purposes for the group."[24]

2. Leadership creates a burden for hurting sheep. Matt. 9:35-38

ii. One of the best methods for healing the hurts of sheep is simply listening and offering your support.
    1. James 1:19
    2. Good listening is an act of love that comes from the heart as much as the ears.
    3. John 4 – Jesus listened to the Samaritan woman.
    4. Hear more than words. Think about what they are really saying by their words and actions. What are they trying to communicate to you?

iii. Shepherds are not expected to be with the sheep at every moment, but they are expected to be represented in the big moments. Big moments matter greatly. What are some big moments?

iv. Hospital and Nursing Home visits
    1. Visits don't need to be long.
    2. Always offer to pray (often a good way to end the visit).
    3. If needed, connect with family before the visit to know circumstances.

v. Funeral Visits
    1. Often the visitation is the best time to connect with the member.
    2. Don't feel like you have to give a theological answer to "why?"
    3. It is often a good practice to check with them immediately after the death. A short home visit to drop off some food or paper products is also a good idea.

vi. Crisis Visits
    1. Hurry – Get to the person's side as quickly as you can.
    2. Hug – Offer your physical support and love.
    3. Hush – Don't feel like you have to say much or have the right answers. Reading some Scripture and a prayer is the best course of action.

vii. Use your phone well!
    1. Sending a text can be a powerful means of showing care and love today.
    2. Calling to see how someone is doing can leave a powerful impression.

viii. Great verses to use.
    1. Psalm 23 & 46
    2. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

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[24] Steve Moore, *The Top 10 Leadership Conversations in the Bible: Practical Insights from Extensive Research on over 1,000 Biblical Leaders* (Atlanta: NexLeader, 2017), 88.

3. John 14:1-6

C. Seek the Sheep
   i. We will discuss seeking erring and lost sheep more in the next lesson on a "Shepherd's Protection."
   ii. Admonish and encourage the sheep through your visits, words, and teaching. 1 Thess. 5:12-15; Heb. 13:17
   iii. Be a Barnabas. Your encouragement means more! One of the most powerful things you can do is notice members actively serving and compliment and appreciate them for such. Most members feel their labor isn't appreciated.

D. Pray for the Sheep
   i. James 5:13-18
   ii. Always pray when making a visit.
   iii. Invite church members who are going through a crisis or health issue to come to an elders' meeting for prayer.
   iv. Pray through the church role in a year. Send letters to members letting them know the month their family will be prayed for by the eldership.

Lesson 6: A Shepherd's Protection and Authority

Teaching Aims:

1. To explain the duty of shepherds to protect and guard the flock of God.
2. To understand the type and source of authority which shepherds possess.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:
Gary N. Martin. *Elder to Elder* (Henderson, TN: Hester Pub., 2011) ch. 16, 20, and 21

Introduction: Two crucial and often controversial areas of a shepherd's work are protection and authority. These two are closely connected to the previously discussed concept of a shepherd's care. The nourishing care of a loving shepherd extends to guarding the sheep and leading them with authority. These are two difficult areas that shepherds can often tend to shy away from but must be understood as essential responsibilities of God's shepherd.

I. A Shepherd's Protection
   A. A shepherd's protection is not self-protection or self-gratification but focused on sacrifice and service in protecting the sheep (Ez. 34). They put themselves out in front and lay down their lives for the sheep. (See the example of the "Good Shepherd" in John 10.)
   B. Watchfulness – Heb. 13:17; Romans 16:17; 2 John 9-11
      i. False shepherds abuse the flock and run away when danger comes (Ez. 34; John 10). But David and Jesus both risked their life for the sheep (1 Sam. 17:34-37; John 10:14-18).
      ii. The shepherd is constantly on watch for wolves entering to steal unsuspecting and weak sheep (Acts. 20:28-30).
      iii. The shepherds of the church are always on watch for false doctrine, harmful influences, and divisive elements that would harm the flock.
      iv. This doesn't mean shepherds don't allow mistakes, nor are they not open to new ideas, but they are vigilant in protecting the flock from harmful paths.
   C. Accountability – Heb. 13:17
      i. Shepherds have accountability to the Chief Shepherd. But sheep need accountability too. One of the key purposes of placing membership is to provide accountability of sheep.
      ii. Each member needs to feel a sense of duty and accountability to the local church. They need to feel as though they have a group of shepherds who love them, watch out for their souls, and pray for them. This sense of accountability is crucial for members in this lonely world and for them using their gifts in the church. It is also a vital component of a member's faithfulness.
      iii. We will discuss this more on the lesson on "Equipping and Multiplication."

D. Searching – Ez. 34:8-16; Luke 15:1-7; Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; Jude 22-23
    i. Shepherds are to seek out lost and wandering sheep.
    ii. This begins with keeping track of members and observing level of involvement in service and worship attendance.
    iii. Ideas for how this can be done.
        1. Sending of cards
        2. Making contact through text, call, or visit.
        3. The communication is focused on demonstrating concern for their soul.
            a. Listen for bitterness, anger, hurt, or frustration.
            b. Look for a besetting sin or burden of the world that is the problem.
            c. Let them know your love and their place in the body.
        4. Keep the eldership informed and work together on wandering sheep.

E. Church Discipline
    i. Discipline begins with a love and concern for their soul. Heb. 12:5-11
    ii. Discipline is done primarily to protect the church. 1 Cor. 5:1-8
    iii. Discipline should be focused on rebuking sin in the life of the believer and for the sake of the body. 1 Cor. 5:1-8; Heb. 10:24-26; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; 1 Tim. 5:20
    iv. Discipline should follow the pattern set by Christ. Mat. 18:15-17
    v. Public announcements and withdrawal of fellowship should be done with wisdom, discernment, and obedience to the Lord. 1 Cor. 5:1-8; 2 John 9-11. The topic of church discipline should be considered and studied in a more thorough Bible study.

II. A Shepherd's Authority

A. Authority is tied to the Shepherd's Function in the Church.
    i. The term authority or power is never expressly given to elders. Jack Lewis writes, "The observation which strikes one strongest from this survey of *exousia* and "authority" is that though the nouns and verbs for "authority" are used for God, the devil, Jesus, the earthly rulers, the apostles, an evangelist, and even for ordinary Christians, they are never once used in connection with the discharge of the function of an elder or with the attitude the Christian is to have toward the elder."[25]
    ii. The concept of positional authority is implied and given in the terminology used to describe an elder.
        1. Overseers – To desire this position is to desire a "noble work" (1 Tim. 3:2). The term refers to the concept of

[25] Jack Lewis, *Leadership Questions Confronting the Church* (Nashville: Christian Communications, 1985), 11.

"overseeing," "oversight" or "to watch over." "The responsibility of an overseer is described in terms of "to shepherd" (Acts 20:28)—his is a watchful, solicitous direction of the congregation. The point of the office was service, and service alone."[26] They are overseers of God's will, not their own will and preference. Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7

2. Elders – The term refers directly to an "older man," but throughout the ancient world, including Israel, the term refers to leading, respected men who had authority within the community. Acts 11:30; 14:23; ch. 15; 20:17; 1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1
3. Shepherds – The verb form is used for church leaders in Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2. It also appears as a noun in describing leaders of God's people in Ephesians 4:11. It is deeply connected with leadership of the "flock" (congregation). The shepherd relationship is one built on trust (John 10:3). He is to guard and protect the sheep (John 10:1, 8, 10; Acts 20:29). He leads the sheep, he does not drive them. He serves as an example to the flock (1 Pet. 5:3).
4. Stewards – Titus 1:7 – He is accountable to God. His leadership is not one of autonomy, but one of responsibility to God as a "house-manager."

iii. They are representatives of the church selected to direct and lead the church (Eph. 4:7-16). Their authority is based on their roles of service and respect in the church. The church looks to the elders to act properly and decide wisely on their behalf. The church has the greater authority as a whole but has delegated that authority to shepherds to guide and lead them. They give organization to the body. The key is trust and respect (Hebrews 13:17 – "obey" – trusting and following; "submit" – yield your will to their will).

B. Authority must not look like the world's kingdoms.
   i. Mat. 20:25-28; Luke 22:24-27
      1. Gentiles lord over their followers, but elders are not to lord over the church (1 Pet. 5:3).
      2. Shepherds serve and sacrifice for the sheep. The church obeys and submits (Heb. 13:17) out of respect, trust, and love.
C. Authority is derived from respect and trust.
   i. "From the viewpoint of the people, the elder is an example to be followed; a teacher from whom to learn; a shepherd whose voice one heeds; a protector from wolves; a leader to whom one submits

[26] Lewis, *Leadership Questions Confronting the Church*, 25.

in humility because he is God's steward; and an older man to whom due respect is gladly given. If one may state what appears a paradox, the elder should conceive of himself, not in terms of authority, but in terms of doing "a good work"; while the congregation should relate to him as God's steward (1 Cor. 16:15-16)."[27]

ii. 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17

iii. "A sheep's willingness to follow a shepherd is grounded in memories of the shepherd's proven presence, provision, and protection. . . This takes time because trust is relationally earned, not positionally derived."[28]

iv. "A people voluntarily submitting to those in whom they recognize moral and spiritual leadership they want to follow is not the same as leaders insisting on being obeyed because of their position. The authority of elders/bishops is the moral authority that comes from their loving service, their example, and their spiritual knowledge and experience."[29]

D. What is the sphere of a shepherd's authority? In what areas do elders have authority in the church?

i. "Hence the point of discussion should not be whether elders should be obeyed or not—the Bible explicitly and plainly teaches that they should be (Heb. 13:17; I assume that the leaders are elders)—but the question is, obeyed in what and for what reason?"[30]

ii. They certainly do not have authority over doctrine. But do have authority in matters of expediency and wisdom for the church. But this authority is given by the congregation out of respect and humility.

iii. "Often elders find themselves at odds with the church simply because they have failed to communicate their position to the congregation. It is likely that most dissatisfaction with the decisions of elders occurs because the elders act without consulting and informing the church regarding major decisions. Of course, in matters of teaching and truth, the elders must stand for what is right regardless of what is a consensus view in the church."[31]

iv. Some questions for reflection:

1. Do elders have authority over individual Christians?

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[27] Lewis, *Leadership Questions Confronting the Church*, 34.

[28] Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones, *The God Who Goes before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018), 163-64.

[29] Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 327.

[30] Lewis, *Leadership Questions Confronting the Church*, 21.

[31] Myers, *Elders and Deacons*, 147.

2. Do elders have authority over Bible versions used in church?
3. Do elders have authority over the building?
4. Do elders have authority over when and how many service times?
5. Do elders have authority over hired staff?
6. Do elders have authority over missionaries?
7. Do elders have authority over what parents take the youth group to do?
8. Do elders have authority over an area they have delegated to a minister, deacon, or coordinator?

v. A board of directors' mindset can create major authoritative issues between the congregation and the elders. If the church feels like the elders are aloof, distant, and dictatorial (i.e. lording over them) then tension, problems, and conflict are sure to emerge. But where there is a shepherding style of leadership, sheep feel understood, respected, and loved. In this situation, members will trust, follow, and esteem their leaders even when they disagree.

E. Lynn Anderson shares a powerful personal story of the legacy of two former shepherds and why they made such a huge impact upon the churches they served.[32]

[32] Lynn Anderson, *They Smell like Sheep: Spiritual Leadership for the 21st Century* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Books, 1997), 212-14.

Lesson 7: A Shepherd's Equipping and Multiplication

Teaching Aims:

1. To educate shepherds on the need to equip and train Christians for doing the work of ministry.
2. To understand the importance of multiplying your efforts through delegation, coaching, mentoring, and discipleship.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

"Leadership Principles for Church Leaders Today" Section from my Doctoral Project.
Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck. *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B&H Pub., 2016) p. 162-176.

Introduction: How did your dad teach you to mow the lawn? Did he teach you how he felt was the best and require you to do it his way? Did he teach you how to do it efficiently and orderly? Did he start the mower and say cut every bit of grass out there, you figure out how you want to do it? I have two sons whom I have taught to mow. They mow differently. But in both cases the yard is mowed, and I have tried to allow for individual differences. Now how are you going to shepherd or lead in the church as a deacon or coordinator?

I. A Study of Ephesians 4:7-16
   A. Eph. 4:7 – "grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gifts." Christ has given each member gifts that are to be used in the body. 1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:4-8
   B. Eph. 4:8-11 - Christ has given leadership to the church. He gave to the church "the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers." Each of these leaders played, or continue to play, an important part in the development of the body of Christ.
   C. The purpose of these leaders is three-fold in Ephesians 4:12-16 [We will dive into these three in this lesson.]
      i. "To equip the saints"
      ii. "To do the work of ministry"
      iii. "for building up the body of Christ"

II. "To Equip the saints"
   A. Equip – "a strengthening, a training, an instructing, a qualification for a specific purpose."
   B. Illustration – If you are going to do some carpentry work, you have to gather your equipment. You have to be equipped with the knowledge, plans, and tools to do the job.
   C. The job of church leaders is to equip Christians.
      i. Give tools to Christians.
         1. Some tools that leaders give Christians include training, financial resources, delegated authority, curriculum, skills, contacts, and seminars.
         2. What tools can leaders give Christians?

ii. Give opportunities for service to Christians.
    1. A part of equipping is giving church members opportunities to use their gifts. They need practice and opportunities to develop their skills and talents. Some opportunities are provided by ministries such as Bible classes, benevolent outreaches, mission efforts, and leading in public worship.
    2. What opportunities have leaders provided you that allowed you to grow?
iii. Give encouragement to Christians.
    1. A part of equipping is the follow-up aspect of encouraging and walking with the church member. You coach and guide the person so they are trained and grow along the way. Barnabas was a great equipper.
    2. How has someone's encouragement developed your skills and gifts for God?

III. "To Do Ministry."

A. A Christian's duty is to do ministry. Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 2:10

B. The typical expectation in churches looks like this:

Leaders ➡ Minister ➡ Members / World

C. The Ephesians 4 model of ministry looks like this:

Leaders ➡ Equip ➡ Christians ➡ Minister ➡ Members/World

D. Each Christian is a minister. Each Christian has unique gifts and talents that are to be organized, equipped, used, and developed by the leadership to allow the body to function properly (v. 16).

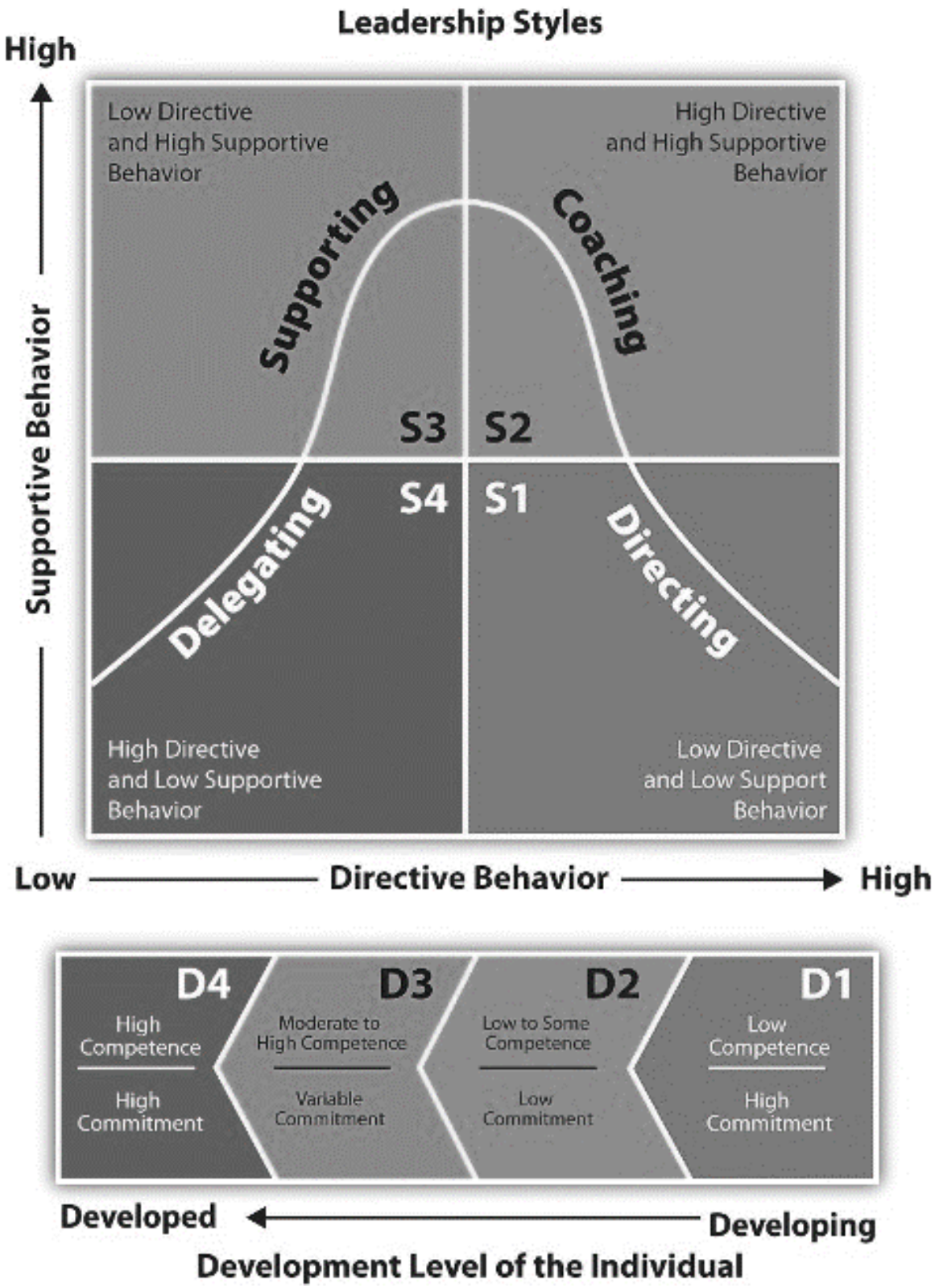
E. This has always been God's plan.
    i. Jethro gave Moses a similar plan. Exodus 18:13-27
        1. Moses – Equip
        2. Israelite Leaders – Entrusted with the work of ministry
    ii. The apostles followed a similar model in the early church. Acts 6:1-7
        1. Apostles – Equip
        2. 7 Spirit-filled men – Entrusted with leading the work of ministry.
        3. Notice a few points from this important leadership passage.
            a. The church needed organization in order to properly serve one another.
            b. Leaders assume different roles in the church. The apostles could not be diverted from their important work. Leaders have to prioritize their efforts. As a leader, your "no" is often more important than your "yes." The key for leaders is not just getting people on the bus but getting them in the right seat. The

main job of a basketball coach is to get each player to know and assume their role so the team can be most effective and reach its potential. Church leaders focus on getting each member to reach their full potential in Christ (Eph. 4:12-16).

c. Leaders delegate for efficiency.
    i. Delegation empowers others.
    ii. Delegation is simply "shoulder-tapping" to those in your influence.
    iii. Delegation is subtraction, addition, and multiplication.
    iv. Delegation is necessary for growth. Leaders have to adjust their equipping and authority as the church grows. Consider being a leader or coach to the following and the differences:
        1. Golf or Tennis Coach (8 players – Individual instruction)
        2. Basketball Coach (12 player)
        3. Football Coach (40+ players)
        4. Athletic Director (10 sports, teams, etc)

d. Leaders appoint spiritual and capable men whom they trust to get the job done.
    i. These seven men had to assume the responsibility and get the job done. The apostles didn't need to watch over them and take meals for them when they failed to do such.
    ii. We need to delegate authority and responsibility, which also gives leaders accountability.

4. Consider the Situational Leadership graph on the process of delegating and mentoring. (Image from Penn State University ; http://atodorov.org/blog/2017/11/11/4-situational-leadership-styles/).


Leadership Styles
High
Low Directive and High Supportive Behavior
High Directive and High Supportive Behavior
Supporting
Coaching
S3
S2
S4
S1
Delegating
Directing
High Directive and Low Supportive Behavior
Low Directive and Low Support Behavior
Supportive Behavior
Low
Directive Behavior
High
D4
High Competence
High Commitment
D3
Moderate to High Competence
Variable Commitment
D2
Low to Some Competence
Low Commitment
D1
Low Competence
High Commitment
Developed
Developing
Development Level of the Individual

5. Which style is most often used in the church?
    a. Research in the business world reveals this:
        i. 54% of leaders can use only 1 style
        ii. 34% of leaders can use 2 styles
        iii. 11% of leaders can use 3 styles
        iv. 1% of leaders can use 4 styles
    b. You can also label the squares as such.
        i. S1 – Tell them
        ii. S2 – Show them
        iii. S3 – Let them try
        iv. S4 – Leave them alone

IV. "For the Building Up of the Body of Christ"

A. It is more thrilling when members "do" ministry. It feels like you are making a difference for Christ and stepping out in your faith. It is more exciting to go on a mission trip than it is to hear about the mission trip!

B. Three things happen to a church when members are equipped to minister.
    i. The body is unified. Eph. 4:13
    ii. Members are matured in Christ. Eph. 4:13-14
    iii. The church is healthy and growing in Christ. Eph. 4:15-16
        1. It speaks the truth in love to the world and one another.
        2. It grows into the image of Christ.
        3. The whole body is joined and held together.
        4. Each part is working properly.
        5. The body grows so that it builds itself up in love.

V. How do you equip future leaders in the church.[33]

A. People grow when godly ***leaders*** apply the ***truth*** of God to their hearts while they are in a teachable ***posture***.
    i. Growing leaders doesn't just happen. Leaders have to intentionally seek to mentor, or disciple, future leaders.
    ii. Christian leaders come from the fertile soil of having the Word of God sown in their hearts and minds. As a leader we must do this for future leaders. James 1:18-25
    iii. But they must be in a mindset or stage in life where they are able to receive the Word. They have to be teachable and eager to receive.

B. How are disciples developed?
    i. Three areas are necessary: Experiences, Knowledge, Coaching
    ii. Jesus trained disciples this way.
        1. Luke 5-8 – Watch and learn (Truth)
        2. Luke 9-10 – Go and do (Experiences)
        3. Luke 9-10 – Let's talk (Coaching)
    iii. In order to train disciples, we must . . .
        1. Give them truth (Bible study, sermons, material)

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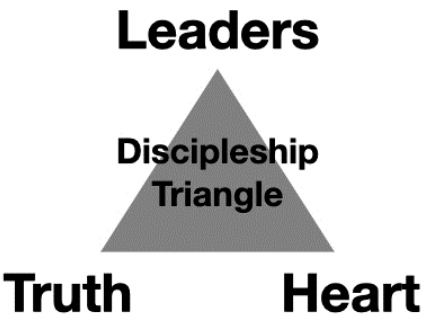
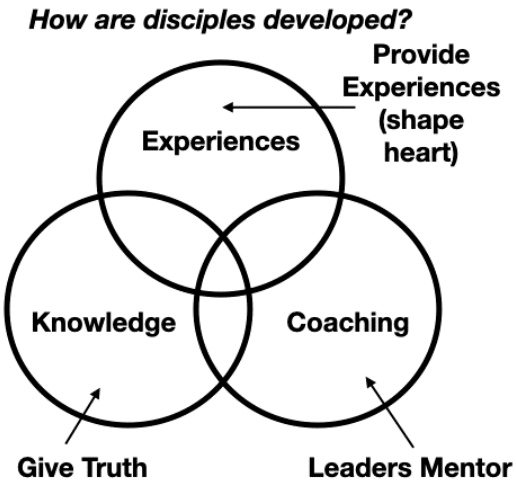
[33] This information taken from Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B&H, 2016), 162-76.

2. Provide experiences (ministry, opportunities, leadership)
3. Coach and Mentor (support, counsel, guide, love) Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7-9; Heb. 13:7

Equipping Future Leaders!

People grow when godly *leaders* apply the *truth* of God to their hearts while they are in a teachable *posture*.





C. You cannot fill anyone else's cup for them! But you are responsible for pouring out your cup into others!

Lesson 8: A Shepherd's Family

Teaching Aims:

1. To impress upon the class the importance of honoring your marriage and training your children.
2. To understand the unique challenges posed to the shepherd's family.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

Gary N. Martin. *Elder to Elder* (Henderson, TN: Hester Pub., 2011) ch. 5 and 6
Jerrie Barber. "Best Shepherd Training I've Seen" April 15, 2019 at www.newshepherdsorientation.com

Introduction: When a man becomes active in church leadership, be it as a preacher, elder, or deacon, his family also is affected by his choice. His wife and children have certain expectations placed upon them because of his role. The Bible also speaks often about the importance of men giving attention to their families.

I. Three Central Priorities for the Shepherd and His Family
   A. Sexual purity
      i. 1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:6 – "the husband of one wife" – As we discussed in lesson 2, this qualification certainly refers to the sexual fidelity of a man. This reputation and commitment of purity should be who church leaders are.
      ii. 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8 – "Self-controlled" – Shepherds must exercise self-control in all areas of sexual purity.
      iii. 1 Thess. 4:1-8 – This is a matter of our sanctification and holiness before God.
      iv. Illustration – A friend of ours from Tennessee, who is a preacher's wife, told us an incredible story of her painful experience. There was an elder at her home church who always was in her life. He cared about her and gave her gifts. He was a close family friend. The kids grew up together. She often had a strained relationship with her dad and was not well accepted by his family. He walked her down the aisle when she was getting married, stepping in for the father. Her mom and dad divorced. Years later only a few years before his death it came out that he was actually her father. He denied it for years and finally when pressed by her admitted it but promised to deny to everyone else. He, the elder in the church, and her mother had a decade plus long affair. She remembers going over to an apartment and waiting in the car or being dropped off at a grocery store while her mom visited him at his secret apartment. This illicit affair between an elder and a highly respected church member went on for years. It never came out in a very public matter, until he was very old and in a nursing home. He had a big personality. He had money and was loud in his talk. He boasted he

was the strength of the church. Both his sons are unfaithful to the church.

v. Satan tempts church leaders more in this area, because it brings more harm on the church when they fall!

B. Manage household well

i. 1 Tim. 3:4-5 - "He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"

ii. Tit. 1:6 – "and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination."

iii. The Puritans referred to the family household as the "little church." This concept underscores the scriptural reasoning that if a man cannot shepherd his family, he can't shepherd the extended family of the church.

iv. This emphasizes the importance of disciplining and training your children.

v. Obviously, it seems that these teachings involve:

1. Children that are within his home being submissive.
2. Children that are outside his home not being charged with debauchery or insubordination."
3. His children becoming believers when they are of the age to do so.

vi. Christian leaders cannot neglect their home for the sake of work, the church, or hobbies. We must prioritize shepherding our children in the Lord.

C. Model Christ

i. One of the most important roles we have as fathers is to set an example to our children. We have to live out our faith. More is caught through their eyes than is taught through our words.

ii. 1 Pet. 5:3 – "being examples to the flock"

iii. Shepherds are to provide a pattern for their families and the church.

1. Phil. 3:17; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:7-9; 1 Cor. 4:16
2. Our wives and children can pick out a hypocrite!
3. We are not going to be perfect, but we must be sincere in our commitment to Christ.
4. "People would rather follow a leader who is always real than one who is always right." Craig Groeschel

II. Unique challenges facing the Shepherd's Family

A. The myth of the perfect family.

i. We have often given the impression that church leaders have and must have ideal, Christian families.

ii. I would suggest another model, "Real people in real families striving to obey God."

1. There are no perfect families in the Bible.

2. We need to give up the myth. We are all dysfunctional, it is just a matter of degree. Rom. 3:23; Phil. 1:6, 1 Cor. 15:10
3. Don't constantly compare yourself with other families. 2 Cor. 10:12
4. Address crushing expectations within your home. Col. 3:21, 12-15

B. Your wife
   i. The issue of confidentiality
      1. Elders will discuss and learn information that needs to be kept confidential. They must be trustworthy and able to keep information private.
      2. Should you tell your wife information you learn through your work as an elder?
         a. It is common for husbands and wives to discuss matters and for the husband to rely on the wise counsel of his wife.
         b. Wives must understand confidentiality.
         c. Ask yourself some questions before telling your wife.
            i. Is this information I wish I did not know; thus, does she need to know?
            ii. Is it going to change how she looks at a church member?
            iii. Is it going to hinder her worship?
            iv. Am I telling her in order to remove my burden and place it on her? I have learned that I have to be careful about venting or expressing frustration to my wife. I let the burden out and feel better and move on, but I have unknowingly transferred the burden to her. She is concerned for me and the situation. I had to learn to think before just sharing burdens.
            v. Am I telling her with the hope of helping me solve, discern, or process how to handle the situation?
            vi. Is it information she needs to know as an elder's wife to know best how to handle a situation?
   ii. Time constraints
      1. Serving as a shepherd takes time. This involves sacrifices by the family in having the husband at home.
      2. Elders' meetings are often regularly scheduled and long.
      3. Visitation and church events can be numerous.
   iii. Stress

1. Wives often are able to know when their husband is carrying a stress and burden. This adds stress to them.
2. They carry stress as an elders' wives and in their love for the church.
3. 2 Cor. 11:28

iv. Expectations of a role
1. Church leaders can feel like they are living life in a "fishbowl." They are being watched and expected to live up to a set standard.
2. Wives can feel a perceived pressure to be friendly, at all showers, teach class, meet new members, and visit the sick with their husband.
3. This perceived expectation which makes one feel judged and criticized is a real hindrance to men wanting to serve in leadership.

v. Isolation
1. Church leaders' wives can feel isolated and lonely.
2. In studies, preacher's wives often cite isolation and loneliness as their biggest struggle.
3. They can have lots of friends, but lack any deep, intimate relationships.

C. Your children
i. Expectations and social stigma which is placed upon them.
1. Old joke – "You know why all the preacher kids get in trouble, because of all the elders' kids!"
2. The other church kids can treat or speak to the church leader's kids differently.
3. They are often held to a higher standard by Bible class teachers, youth workers, and other church kids.

ii. It can harmfully influence their perspective of the church and Christians.
1. When children in your home watch an elder go through a stressful time at church or hear individuals disparaging the elders it can embitter them to the church.
2. Shepherds need to work hard to protect their children from the stressful times in ministry. They need to watch their mouth and guard their heart from anger and bitterness.
3. What is the ideal age to serve as an elder?

D. Yourself
i. Elders face challenges in their own lives. [We will talk more about this in other lessons]
1. Marriage and family problems will come upon shepherds.
2. Elijah – 1 Kings 19:9-10 – He felt isolation and loneliness.
3. Paul – 2 Cor. 11:28 – The worry and anxiety of the church.
4. Burnout – Frustration and weariness with the work.

5. Unrealistic expectations or perceived expectations put upon the shepherd from the church.
6. Lack of an intimate friend to confess sin and share burdens. We can struggle to be vulnerable with our own struggles and needs.

ii. Who can an elder share his burden with? (We will continue this discussion on the teamwork lesson.)
    1. Who shepherds the shepherd?
    2. Who do elders go to when they struggle with their own marriage or children?
    3. Who does the preacher or youth minister go to when they have a besetting sin?
    4. Church leaders should have:
        a. Their wife
        b. Other elders
        c. Ministers
        d. A wise, older Christian
    5. We need one another. This is about establishing a culture or environment of love, vulnerability, and trust.
        a. James 5:13-18; Gal. 6:2; Phil. 2:3-4
        b. See "Best Shepherd Training I've Seen" by Jerrie Barber on April 15, 2019 at www.newshepherdsorientation.com

Lesson 9: A Shepherd's Administration

Teaching Aims:

1. To equip shepherds with the skills and knowledge to lead in administration.
2. To understand the importance of administration to the function of the church and eldership.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

Gary N. Martin. *Elder to Elder* (Henderson, TN: Hester Pub., 2011) ch. 22 and 24
Jerrie Barber, www.Newshepherdsorientation.com. "Four Reasons Elders do the work of Deacons" – Aug. 18, 2015; "Do(es) Your (Preacher) Elders have a Job Description?" – June 4, 2018
Josh Ketchum, A Sample Elder/Staff Covenant Document

Introduction: Paperwork! Most all jobs have a level of administration that is necessary. Farmers get into farming because they like working in the field not in the office! But if he wants to be successful, he has to administer the farm. As a preacher, I enjoy preaching or visiting, but there is a level of administrative tasks that have to be done which I would prefer were not a part of the job. But for some people, they love administration. This is their gift and they prefer to be doing administration rather than working in the field or preaching the sermon. With shepherding, you need to know that there is a necessity of administration. Hopefully each eldership will have some men in the group that are gifted in this area and help the others function better with it. An effective eldership will need to be involved significantly in administration.

I. Good administration requires clear communication.
   A. To avoid misunderstandings, we must be clear on our understandings! To be unclear with others is often to be unkind.
   B. Communication is the lifeblood of the church. If the church is going to be efficient and effective it will require communications.
   C. It is nearly impossible to overcommunicate your vision, values, and expectations.
   D. We must seek to "speak the truth in love" so the church can have "each part working properly" and "build itself up in love" (Eph. 4:15-16).
   E. Clarity drives confidence. Confidence drives commitment. "Leaders work at making the team members as knowledgeable and as smart as possible about the business and its underlying issues. . . No one should be bewildered about the pivotal issues or in a fog about the facts. Be alert for signs that team members lack key information and understandings and give them what they need to approach their task intelligently."[34] This applies so much to churches, preachers, elders, and deacons working together.

[34] LaFasto and Larson, *When Teams Work Best*, 124-25.

F. Communication can help avoid major problems. The story of Reuben and Gad building an altar on the east side of the Jordan river illustrates this truth (Joshua 22). When the other tribes heard of this act, they gathered to make war against them, supposing they were apostatizing from the faith. They considered the act a "breach of faith" (Josh. 22:16). But the tribes of Reuben and Gad explained they did this act out of fear their children would forget the Lord (v. 24). They built the altar as a witness or memorial to remind their children they have a part in the inheritance of Israel across the Jordan and are to worship the Lord (v. 27-29). Communication saved a war!

G. Acts chapters 6 and 15 illustrate how communication of problems was essential for the early church to move forward in growth.

H. Paul communicated clearly with Peter and the Galatian brethren over issues of leaving the gospel and favoritism (Galatians).

II. Areas which shepherds should focus on communication.

A. Communication within the Eldership (This topic will be supplemented in the following lesson on teamwork.)

i. Elder covenants

1. An elder covenant is a mutual covenant pledged to one another of the duties and responsibilities that will govern their relationship together.
2. These are not typical but have value at establishing mutual accountability and rules for the relationship.
3. The elder covenant is very helpful when adding new elders.
4. It should be reviewed each year to remind one another of the mutual obligations.
5. See a sample elder covenant in the reading supplement documents.

ii. Elder Meetings

1. Elder meetings are essential, but often dreaded. They can be stressful, time consuming, and inefficient.
2. Every church has different practices and traditions with elder's meetings.
3. "In the end, there is only one concern that ought to occupy our attention. Are the right decisions happening fast enough to move us toward our goal? A good decision-making process brings together the right people, at the right time, to talk about the right problem, or opportunity in the right way, in order to take the best action available."[35]

iii. Some suggested principles and ideas for effective elders' meetings.

1. There ought to be an atmosphere of warmth, love, accountability, and trust (We will discuss this in lesson 10).

[35] LaFasto and Larson, *When Teams Work Best*, 175.

2. Elders' meetings can be times of personal growth and burden sharing.
3. Elders' meetings must have a focus of dealing with the needs of the church and establishing future vision for the church.
4. Elders' meetings must allow for open communication. There should not be taboo subjects.
5. Elders should schedule regular times and be available at irregular times so church members can meet with elders when they have a need. Setting aside times of prayer and inviting those desiring prayers to attend is a good thing. Elders' meetings often need to involve a deacon or coordinator.
6. Shepherding is not primarily about meeting. Elderships must not have a board-of-director mentality. But meetings are essential to shepherding the flock of God.
7. How many meetings and what type of meetings?
    a. Obviously, this answer depends upon the needs and demands of the church at a given time. But here are some suggestions.
    b. Remember: What gets planned gets done! Intentionality produces results. Categorizing a space for a particular discussion, allows for the freedom to have the discussion, without having to muster the courage to bring something up on your own.
    c. Each meeting should have an elder serve as a facilitator for the meeting. This should be rotated regularly.
    d. I would suggest the following arrangement:
        i. <u>Developmental Retreats</u> – Yearly staff retreat which involves some type of educational experience along with time for planning and vision development. This should take place in the fall of the year to plan the following year. It should involve ministers and possibly deacons. It should serve as a time of reconnection, recommitment, and vision for the future.
        ii. <u>Strategy Meetings</u> – This meeting should be between 2 hours and 2 hours and 30 minutes. This meetings' focus is on the vision and ministries of the church. It is a monthly meeting with an organization such as:
            1. A scorecard review of the last month (the key numbers that give us the

pulse of the church.) A reminder of the big goals we are focused on accomplishing this year. (15 mInutes)

2. Headline discussion and prayer – What is the big news in your life or ministry the last month. Pray about these things. (15 minutes)
3. Problem solving time – Go around the room and let each elder bring forth issues that need the groups attention or awareness. Quickly rank the problems by importance and then discuss and solve in that order. Seeking to clarify the true issue and what is at stake. (1 hr. 30 minutes)
4. To do list and Cascading Messages – This is a simple review of what has been covered and the assignments that have been made. Any plans for a special meeting or further discussions. Responsibilities are delegated. Before closing, address the question of who needs to be told about the decisions of this meeting and how is that message going to be disseminated. (10 minutes)
5. Closing Prayer

iii. Pastoral Meetings – This is a monthly meeting as well. The purpose of this meeting is to focus more on people and the needs of the church. While there will be some overlap with the strategy meeting, this meeting should focus on people. This meeting will be between 2 hours and 2 hours and 30 minutes. It can be organized such as:

1. Devotional - A time of inspiration, education, and encouragement. The group is collectively reading from a book or studying a section of Scripture. One team member will have the responsibility of summarizing the chapter or sharing some thoughts for the group. This will be a time of mutual sharing and learning. (30 minutes)

2. Personal accountability time – "How are you doing; really?" This will help in the prevention of spiritual failure and ministerial burnout. This should be a time to share marital, parental, professional, personal, and ministerial struggles and gain wisdom, prayers, and comfort from one another. (20 minutes)
3. Soul watching and winning – Discuss the souls of the church. Discuss unfaithful, new members, struggling members, etc. Consider evangelistic prospects and those needing to be admonished. Close with considering "next steps" and making plans for contacts. (30 minutes)
4. Card writing and signing time – Following the above discussion write and sign cards for those discussed. (10 minutes)
5. Church ministry/leaders discussion – Discuss any leadership issues with deacons, staff, and coordinators. This is the time to discuss mentoring and preparing new leaders. (20 minutes)
6. Prayer time – (10-20 minutes)

iv. Weekly or Service Time Check-in Meetings – These meetings are not as scheduled. They are conducted through text, email, or standing up quickly after services. They should not be longer than 15 minutes. The purpose is to communicate about something pressing or to get a quick decision. The goal is communication, so no one is surprised. Technology can be helpful with these meetings but must not take the place of face-to-face meetings.

B. Communication with the Deacons
   i. We discussed Acts 6 and the need for delegation of service to deacons in lesson 7.
   ii. Elders focus on shepherding and the overall mission of the church.
   iii. Deacons should be given specific ministries of the church to carry forth for the church. One of the deacons' main jobs is taking responsibility off of shepherds so they can do their pastoral work.

Deacons should be given a ministry description and resources to do the job.

iv. Elders must resist the temptation to do the work of deacons. Why do elders do the work of deacons?
    1. They were good deacons.
    2. They feel productive.
    3. They may have more time than deacons.
    4. They don't want to communicate the need to the deacon.
    5. They want to do it their way.
    6. They may disagree with the deacon's thoughts on doing the work.
    7. The deacon may not be doing a good job, but they don't want to talk to him about this issue.

v. Elders must clearly communicate with deacons their duties and expectations. Deacons should be assigned a ministry, delegated authority, and given trust.

vi. Deacons should be given accountability for their ministry areas.

vii. How can elderships destroy the productivity of their deacons?
    1. Go over them when making decisions and dealing with the ministry with a member.
    2. Do the job for the deacon.
    3. Make decisions about the ministry without consulting or discussing it with the deacon.
    4. Fail to hold them responsible and accountable to do a good work with their ministry. If a deacon cannot do the work, he needs to not be a deacon. It is not about a title, but a service.
    5. Fail to support and back your deacons when there are complaints or issues with the ministry.

viii. Elderships should clearly communicate and work with the deacons to establish their goals and visions and then entrust them to carry out this vision.
    1. There should be yearly meetings.
    2. There should be coaching given by the elders.
    3. There should be a recognition of the delegated authority and responsibility of the deacon. For example, church announcements should point people to the deacon over the area, not the elders. His input and thoughts should be considered.

ix. Time spent in communicating with and encouraging deacons to do their work well results in exponentially more time saved by elders for themselves to do their pastoral duties.

C. Communication with the Ministers and Staff

i. This is one of the most important relationships in the church. The ability of elders and ministers to work together typically leads to

success and growth of the church, while the opposite usually involves stagnation and decline.

ii. Administrative issues that should be considered, though we don't have the space to fully cover.
    1. Job descriptions – Each employee should have a written job description which makes clear as best possible the expectations of their work. Job descriptions are to ensure there is oneness of mind and clarity of communication.
    2. Contracts – Each employee should have a written contract stating the mutual obligations and expectations for both employer and employee. The contract should include issues such as vacation time, sick leave, salary, benefits, morality clauses, and separation plans.
    3. Yearly reviews – Each year the job description and contract should be reviewed along with the employee's performance. A general outline to be used during these meetings could be: "Same as, More of, Less of." It is advisable that written documentation should be made and kept of meetings with employees that require correction or disciplinary action. This can be a time of encouragement and education. A dismissal should NEVER come as a surprise to a minister or staff member. We must speak the truth in love and communicate concerns clearly.

iii. Additional thoughts on administration and staff issues.
    1. Most elderships will use church staff to carry forth most of the administrative tasks and keep the elders informed. Communication is key.
    2. Should the ministers meet with the shepherds?
        a. Close communication and constantly working together is essential for elders and ministers.
        b. They are functioning as a leadership team in many ways for the church.
        c. The preacher serves the function of the evangelist and vision caster. He is the most visible and public member of the team. He is the chief communicator and face of the church to the public. He will often have good ideas and can spend large amounts of time planning and executing ideas. The preacher, if doing the job well, will be in contact through visitation and ministry with many members of the church. Thus, his thoughts and council are vital. The youth minister will know the thoughts and concerns of the youth and their parents.
        d. But the ministers are employees of the church and there will be times when the elders need to meet without them present.

e. But the more they can work as a team, the more effective the church can be for the Lord.

3. The key aspect of a good working relationship is trust and respect. Trust and respect are built on constant loving communication and sharing of needs, information, and concerns with one another. There should not be fear from preacher to elders or elders to preachers, but love, trust, and good-will. "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). If we love the way God intended, we will not be afraid of one another.

D. Communication with the Church

i. Budget

1. Doing the budget is an important administrative task.
2. A budget is closely connected with your vision. Your vision must be supported. Budget is about people.
3. Those who lead ministries should be consulted in making the budget.
4. The budget and treasury accounts should be communicated to the church.

ii. Vision

1. You cannot overcommunicate your mission and vision.
2. It needs to be reinforced regularly in various messaging and platforms.

iii. Problems

1. "If elders make a genuine effort to keep the congregation informed about all major issues being considered and to get input from the members before making their decisions—they are shepherding. If they consider all points of view with an open mind and carefully consider relevant instruction in the Bible—they are leading with the heart of shepherds."[36]
2. Elderships need to be transparent, preemptive, and truthful with the congregation. Eldership should own shortcomings or failures.
3. Consider how the early church handled the issue of circumcision in Acts 15.

iv. Cascading messaging is very effective.

1. This is when elders and ministers intentionally choose to spread the word. This could be intentional through visiting or in Bible classes. It can be personal and conversational.
2. People will listen well and appreciate hearing the message directly from an elder.

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[36] Yeakley, *Shepherding God's Flock*, 26.

3. There will always be areas that elders cannot share, but simply acknowledging the issue and asking the church to trust them goes a long way.

v. Working with the volunteers
    1. Can you fire a volunteer church member?
        a. How do you remove a deacon from his ministry?
        b. Can you discuss with a volunteer coordinator the problems with their ministry?
        c. Yes! You cannot let the good of the overall church be held back by the lack of leadership of one key volunteer.
        d. "Speak the truth in love." It is not loving for many in the church to know and discuss the problem, but not discuss this with the volunteer.
    2. Job descriptions and ministry expectations are very helpful.
    3. Yearly review and discussion of problems and goals for the future also help this issue.

III. Other administrative tasks to consider
    A. Communication with missionaries
    B. Insurance considerations
    C. Building use policies
    D. Incorporation documents
    E. Monthly budget expenditures
    F. Construction projects

IV. "One often hears that elders should not be like a Board of Directors. However, in their role as overseers they should perform functions similar to those performed by a Board of Directors in other organizations. They should make the most important policy decisions, create organizational structures, and delegate day-to-day operational management to others. A good Board of Directors avoids micro-managing. So does a good eldership."[37]

[37] Yeakley, *Shepherding God's Flock*, 30.

Lesson 10: A Shepherd's Teamwork

Teaching Aims:

1. To explore the challenges and offer principles for successful teamwork in church leadership.
2. To discuss conflict and ways to foster healthy conflict within the leadership team.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

Gary N. Martin, *Elder to Elder* (Henderson, TN: Hester Pub., 2011) ch. 3

Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2002) "Understanding and Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions" p. 195-220.

Introduction: One of the most important aspects of a coach is getting his players to fulfill their roles. His job is to define their roles, lay forth expectations for them in their role, and help each player reach their highest potential in the role. The challenge the coach has is figuring out everyone's best role and getting them to buy into the team concept of everyone's need to play their role.

I. Adopting a Team Concept
   A. Ephesians 4:7-16
      i. Various gifted leaders who are fulfilling their roles, are to equip the saints to fulfill their role in the body so that the church can grow and build itself up in love.
      ii. Romans 12:3-8
   B. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31
   C. God designed the church to be led with a plurality of men (Acts 14:23, Phil. 1:1).
      i. NT churches are always led by a plurality of elders. There is not a single example in the NT of one elder overseeing a local church or several local churches. The pattern is a plurality of men overseeing a local church. (See lesson 1 for further information.)
      ii. God also designed church leadership to contain various roles (1 Timothy, Titus, Ephesians 4).
         1. Shepherds/Elders/Overseers
         2. Deacons
         3. Evangelists
         4. Members
      iii. We see Paul working with others in his missionary service (Rom. 16; Phil. 2:19-30, Acts - Luke, Silas, Barnabas, Titus)

iv. Just like teams, churches work best when everyone fulfills their God-given role for the sake of the body.[38]

II. Understanding the importance of fulfilling your role.
   A. After adopting a team concept, the church's leadership must understand one another's roles.
      i. Each team member must be willing to "stay in their lane."
      ii. Each team member must be dedicated to fulfilling their role.
      iii. Each team member must have respect and trust for other team members.
   B. Some issues concerning roles and teamwork
      i. Consider the skills, talents, experiences, and passions of each team member.
      ii. Consider using professional testing to better understand one another and form a healthy team. These tests are a combination of personality and skills test that are aimed at work and understanding your gifts. Some resources:[39]
         1. Working Genius Assessment by The Table Group (Patrick Lencioni)
         2. Strengths Finder 2.0 – Clifton Strengths Assessment
         3. John Trent Strengths Assessment - Leading from Your Strengths
      iii. Discuss this with one another.
      iv. Recognize that new team members are often going to offer different skills and talents (for example- the new preacher or new elder will not fit the same mold as the old one did!).
      v. Seek to let each team member live up to their potential and use their God-given talents for the church. Don't tightly define the mold and squelch their potential.
   C. Teamwork within the Eldership
      i. How should elders organize their work? Should they each have an "area" of focus or ministry that they "oversee"?
      ii. Observe this helpful quote by Flavil Yeakley Jr regarding this topic. "One man rule might be more efficient. It probably would not take as long to make decisions, but the quality of the decisions made by a plurality of elders is better. In some congregations today the eldership is far too departmentalized. There is just one elder (or at the most a small group of elders) in charge of each ministry area. That arrangement misses the important contribution made by the group process. A group acting together may take longer to make

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[38] See the article by Steve Cloer in the Supplemental Readings entitled "The Minister-Elder Relationship in Churches that Work," which was discussed in lesson 3.

[39] Table Group, www.workinggenius.com; Gallup, https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253868/popular-cliftonstrengths-assessment-products.aspx; Focus on the Family, https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/4-animals-personality-test/; Ministry Insights, https://www.ministryinsights.com.

decisions and may have more communication problems—but the quality of their consensus-based decisions is likely to be far superior to the decisions made by any one elder or small group of elders. That does not mean that it would be wrong for different elders to have a liaison assignment to different ministry areas. In that arrangement one or more elders stay in close touch with a particular ministry. They serve as a communication link between the eldership and the leaders of that ministry. The problem comes when the other elders just "rubber stamp" any recommendations that come from the ministry leader by way of one or more liaison elder. A related problem comes when the liaison assignments of elders are made public. Even if the elders have appointed one or more deacons to manage a particular ministry area, church members are likely to take their complaints, criticisms, comments, and suggestions directly to the one they perceive to be the elder in charge of that ministry. Suppose that the apostles in Acts 6 had given Andrew, one of the twelve apostles, a liaison assignment to keep informed about the work done by "the Seven" and everyone know about that assignment. Any of the Greek-speaking members who still had complaints about their widow being neglected in the daily distribution of food would likely have gone straight to Andrew."

iii. It must be kept in mind that the authority and church leadership responsibility rests with the body of elders.

iv. Avoiding situations that puts one man making significant decisions for the group without consulting the others, will significantly help avoiding division and harmful conflict within the eldership. Church members are like kids that know which parent to ask in order to get their way. Elders must be wary of being used or manipulated by church members or cliques within the church.

v. The goal should be for deacons to be leading the ministries and elders to be able to focus on their overall guidance and pastoral leadership.

D. Teamwork with the Preacher

i. Gene, Glenn, and Mark Newton, who are a father and two sons, wrote a book entitled, "Elder/Preacher Relationships that Last." It was published by 21st Century Christian in 2012. They define the roles of preacher and elder in the book.

ii. They make the following suggestions.

1. The preacher needs security.
2. The elders need respect.
3. The preacher needs to be himself.
4. The elders need cooperation.
5. The preacher needs protection.
6. The elders need support.
7. The preacher needs encouragement.

8. The elders need accountability.

iii. They suggest these all hinge on the important concept of trust.
   1. I would also suggest that love and constant communication is vital.
   2. 1 John 4:19 – "perfect love casts out fear."

iv. Love the preacher's family. Minister and care for his wife and kids. The preacher's wife is often the most isolated, lonely, and least encouraged member of the congregation.

E. Teamwork is enhanced through . . .
   i. Recreation time together
   ii. Prayer time together
   iii. Bible study time together
   iv. "Team members point to two factors that help keep people in sync: time together and common physical location."[40]
   v. Appreciation and encouragement of one another, rather than jealousy.

III. Five Dysfunctions of a Team[41]

A. View these as a pyramid graph with the first being the bottom and working upward to the point.
   i. Absence of Trust – Without trust, teamwork is all but impossible. In the context of a team, trust is the confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. In essence, teammates must get comfortable being vulnerable with one another. When there is trust, team members can focus their energy and attention completely on the job at hand, rather than on being strategically disingenuous or political with one another.
   ii. Fear of Conflict – All great relationships that last require productive conflict. When conflict Is personality attacks, mean-spirited, and filled with anger, teams desire to avoid it. But the tension still exists, and the productivity of the group is highly hindered. Teams that engage in productive conflict know the purpose is to find the best solution to the problem. This conflict is ideological, rather than personal.
   iii. Lack of Commitment – Great teams make clear and timely decisions and move forward with complete buy-in from every member of the team, even those who had hesitancy. The key is that everyone's voice was heard and the team can move forward with confidence. Everyone needs to be committed to accomplishing the vision and the plan agreed upon. If an elder leaves the meeting and

[40] LaFasto and Larson, *When Teams Work Best*, 179.

[41] Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

fails to support the agreed upon decision with his word and deed it harms the effectiveness greatly.

iv. Avoidance of Accountability – In terms of teamwork, it is the willingness of team members to call their peers on performance or behaviors that might hurt the team. We fear jeopardizing a personal relationship or causing tension or disharmony. So many teams allow ineffective leadership to exist for years without addressing the harm it is doing to the team. "Excellent team leaders never knowingly ignore a performance problem; they are action oriented. They try to do something about the problem early enough and in a constructive way."[42]

v. Inattention to Results – The final dysfunction is when team members care about something other than the collective goals of the team. When church leaders get focused on worldly pursuits, individual gains, personal agendas, and are apathetic the team suffers greatly. Satan has won because the leadership isn't focused on leading the church forward, but is satisfied with status quo or involved in personal pursuits. The Bible warns us about this in passages such as 3 John 9-10, 1 Cor. 12-14, and Peter's actions in Matthew 16:21-23.

B. "Max Ringlemann observed that the expenditure of individual physical effort decreased as additional people were added to the task of pulling on a rope. Two people pulled at 93% of the sum of their individual efforts, three people at 85%, and groups of eight at 49%. The "Ringelmann effect" has been described more recently as "social loafing," the tendency of some members of a group effort to slack off or take it easy, letting other members do the work."[43] This effect can happen with elders, preachers, and deacons.

C. Individual efforts must continue to be focused on the goal of building the church for the glory of Christ. The more the team and individuals keep the focus, the greater work that can be done. Team energy must be focused on the vision, not diverted into personality conflicts and political maneuvering.

D. Which of the five dysfunctions of a team do you feel is the most harmful and common amongst church leadership teams?

E. How have you seen these dysfunctions exist in the church in your past experiences?

IV. Dealing with Conflict

A. Encouraging healthy conflict

i. Successful teams have an open communication climate. How do you think Paul interacted with Luke, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, and Titus? Open communication allows you to deal with whatever

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[42] LaFasto and Larson, *When Teams Work Best*, 144.

[43] LaFasto and Larson, *When Teams Work Best*, 77.

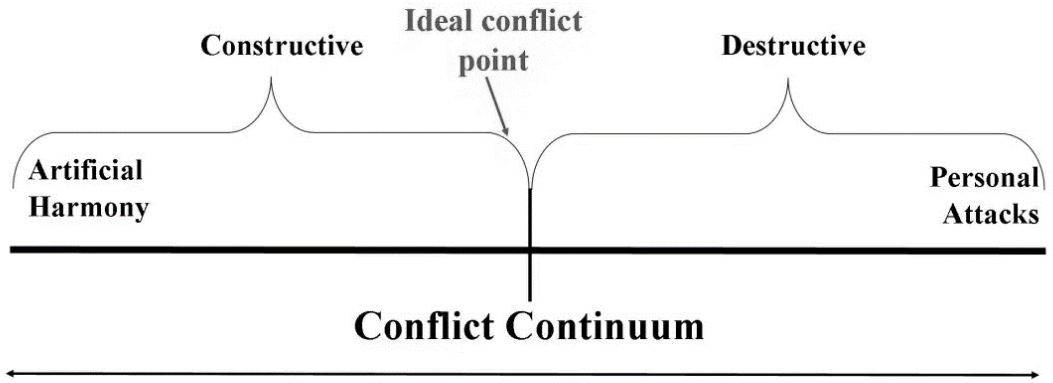
problem Satan puts in the church's path. A dysfunctional team has a communication climate that has closed down, rendering the team incapable of dealing productively with any of the problems.[44]

ii. "Teams are incredibly good at avoiding the real problems."[45]

iii. Openness and supportiveness are the two most important factors within team relationships. "Openness refers to the ability to surface and deal with issues objectively. Supportiveness refers to bringing out the best thinking and attitude in the other person."[46] But we have a problem in dealing with conflict which oppose these two principles. Most of our experiences in dealing openly with people have been painful. It takes time and emotional energy. So we often avoid them. Our basic nature wants to remain safe and in control. We can respond defensively through either counterattacking or withdrawing.

iv. But conflict is good and necessary if we are going to move the church forward with the best solutions. The key is keeping the conflict focused on the issue at hand. Consider the early church's necessary conflict over circumcisions and Jewish/Gentile relations. We must clarify what is the real issue and what the true conflict is over.

v. Patrick Lencioni's conflict continuum.



1. The hope is to get all options on the table. The goal is for each person to be and feel heard. Most of the time, we can

[44] LaFasto and Larson, *When Teams Work Best*, 12.

[45] LaFasto and Larson, *When Teams Work Best*, 13.

[46] LaFasto and Larson, *When Teams Work Best*, 41.

agree and support a decision, even if we disagree, if our concerns were heard and respected.

2. Someone is going to step over the line on occasions. But rather than fearing this, and thus living in the artificial harmony, productive teams are willing to deal with the messiness of conflict. As this occurs regularly, teams develop an environment that is open, supportive, trusting, and open to diverging views. Trust is built and productivity increases.
3. Jesus lived in healthy conflict and taught us how to live in healthy conflict. Mat. 18:15-18; 5:23-26; 7:1-5, 12;
4. Paul taught us how to deal with inappropriate conflict and hurt feelings with grace and love. Eph. 4:25-32; Col. 3:12-17

B. Avoiding crippling conflict
   i. Crippling conflict can destroy a church and eldership.
   ii. Signs that spoken or unspoken conflict is harming a church leadership team.
      1. When you have meetings about the meeting outside of the meeting. When calls are made and discussions about the real issues take place outside the meetings.
      2. When you have alliances or noticeable division within the eldership.
      3. When you have unspoken off-limit subjects. Jerrie Barber shares about working with one elder who would shut down the discussion, by saying, “We need to go welcome the brethren.” He would get up and leave. The others would just follow, and the group was never able to deal with some of the problems.
      4. When you discuss the same issues over and over, but never reach a decision or find a solution, because you don’t speak about the real issue.
      5. When there is a palpable tension and cloud of fear within the room.
      6. When members dread coming to the meeting and the room takes on an air of anxiety. It is like everything changes when you enter the room.

Lesson 11: A Shepherd's Calm Leadership

Teaching Aims:

1. To understand how shepherds handle stress, crisis, and produce transformational change in a congregation.
2. To equip shepherds with an understanding of and skills to cope with burnout.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

Josh Ketchum, "Six Challenges Church Leaders Face." Blog Post – www.JoshKetchum.com; Nov. 10, 2016 and "Feeding the Problems, and Starving the Star Performers." Oct. 9, 2016; "A Stumbling Block is Not A Complainer's Stone." June 25, 2014.

Introduction: "In the harsh midsummer African heat, a herd of impalas finds an increasingly rare water hole. They rush to drink, crowding in, fearful of not getting enough water to sustain them. Suddenly, an impala raises his head in high alert. Immediately every other impala stops drinking and stands at attention. No impala moves, none utter a sound. But the tension is palpable, there seems to be a crackle of electricity in the air. Every impala at that moment has a life-or-death decision to make: Is that a lion or not? If there is a lion lurking near the hole and they don't run, they become lion lunch. If there is no lion lurking near the hold and they do run, they lose their place at the watering hole and could die of thirst. If there is a lion and they do run, or if there is no lion and they don't run, they live another day. But all that matters is: Is that a lion or not?" Shepherds often feel the anxiety of the herd. They sense tension, conflict, and become uncomfortable. What shepherds choose to do often determines the success or setbacks of the church. *Is it a lion or not?*[47]

I. A crucial duty of shepherds is handling crises and leading a church through transition and transformation.
   A. God's leaders are going to face tension, criticism, and setbacks. Consider Bible characters such as Moses, Joshua, David, and Paul.
   B. There are three stages of church life.
      i. Churches about to have problems.
      ii. Churches dealing with problems.
      iii. Churches getting over problems.
   C. It has been observed by a long-time preacher and coach of elders that most elders operate under two subconscious goals.
      i. Keep everything going smoothly with the congregation. Make sure the vast majority of the members are "happy."
      ii. Keep the personal disruptions of the stress and work of the eldership to their family and life as low as possible.

[47] Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, 143.

D. But Christian leadership is about influencing your followers for Christ. It is about going somewhere for and with God. It will involve challenges, setbacks, and problems because Satan is opposed to the mission of God.
    i. How do you bring about transformation and change?
    ii. How do you deal with crises and problems within the church?
    iii. How do you handle the church when it is anxious and worried?
    iv. How do you handle the church when it is struggling with conflict and division?

E. Leadership involves:
    i. Max Depree says, "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality."
        1. Shepherds have to be honest with the issues at hand.
        2. Prov. 27:23 – "Know well the condition of your flocks, give attention to your herds."
        3. Jim Collins in his classic book *Good to Great* discussed the "Stockdale Paradox." He tells about James Stockdale, a former VP candidate and high-ranking Naval officer who spent over seven years in a Vietnam prison. He was tortured and abused terribly. When asked about how he managed to survive the terrible ordeal. He said, "You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be." Simply stated, the "Stockdale Paradox" is hoping for the best, while acknowledging and preparing for the worst.
        4. The Old Testament character of Joseph is a great character study in this virtue. Joseph remained optimistic, hard-working, and devout despite the circumstances he faced. He was real and honest with the facts of his situation.
    ii. "Leadership is disappointing your own people at a rate they can absorb." Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky[48]
        1. This may sound counterintuitive. But a church leader's job is not to please each follower, but to produce transformation and change in each of their lives (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:11-16).
        2. Disappointing your followers means challenging, pushing, leading, and guiding. But you do it at a level that allows them to tolerate and receive the instruction and challenge.
        3. This principle applies to taking up a new sport. Suppose you wanted to take up tennis or golf. But your first opponent after only a couple of weeks of practice was a super good player. Most would feel discouraged and want

[48] Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, 123.

to quit. The key is progressing at the right pace, so you feel challenged, but not overwhelmed.

4. Consider your role as a leader as slowly adjusting the thermostat. Too much they overheat and bail; too little and the room is not changed or affected.
5. Consider how Jesus lead his disciples in this manner (Mat. 5-7; John 6:60-66).

iii. Four principles for bringing about transformation and handling problems in a congregation.[49]

1. **Start with Conviction** – A congregation has to constantly be reminded of its mission and purpose (Lesson 3 – Vision). "Leadership is taking people where they need to go and yet resist going."[50] A shared mission is vital. The mission has to trump our personal agendas and desires. The church and its goals and purpose must motivate and convict us. The convictions are what will never change. This is the truth (John 8:32). Our decisions must be made based on Biblical convictions. Elderships must communicate their clear purpose and rationale for making decisions. When faced with crises, problems, and anxiety the leadership team must return to its core values and purpose.
2. **Stay Calm** – As a leader we have to monitor our own emotional reactions. The calm leader is self-aware. He measures his words, actions, and emotions. Most growth in a church takes place over an extended period. It takes "crock-pot" leadership. This is how God typically brings transformation in our lives (Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18). The key to successful crock-pot cooking is the proper amount of heat. Too much and it will burn or dry out; too little and the meat and carrots are not cooked. Too much heat in the church is typically called anxiety. The church gets anxious when problems arise, or change is coming. Leaders can have greater anxiety as they feel the stress and weight of their responsibility. But leaders must remain calm under pressure! The key is not responding to the anxiety of the people and trying to please them but responding to the actual situation at hand. Nehemiah is a great example of a leader who maintained his calm and kept the focus on completing the task at hand. Whether it was external or internal threats, Nehemiah remained resolute, calm, and determined. In many ways, the church looks to the elders as the thermostats or anxiety sensors to

[49] Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, chaps. 10-13.

[50] Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, 124.

know how serious and critical the issue is. If the leader is panicking, then everyone better run!

3. **Stay Connected** – Leadership is always relational. God created us as relational beings that live in community with one another (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Cor. 12). The key to being able to lead the church through problems is communicating and staying connected with all the various groups. We have a tendency to listen to small groups of people, either the same critics over and over or our allies who are our close friends. It is important to stay connected with all of the various demographics and participants in the church. With the plurality of the eldership and the aid of the ministers, a collective approach can stay connected with all the members. This helps in clarifying the issues. This helps in knowing what the source of anxiety is and to what level. This brings calm, respect and peace. By staying connected, you are able to understand the issues and be able to address the solution to the right people. Paul in his mission work was able to deal with the church's problems because he stayed connected with them. They knew his heart. He could slowly turn up the heat in their lives trying to bring transformation into the image of Christ because he was connected (1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Galatians).
4. **Stay the Course** - Leaders should always expect, even anticipate, resistance and sabotage to their leadership. Your own people will try to knock you off course. The key is not reacting to the sabotage in unchristian ways, but responding to it with perseverance, love, understanding, and grace. People like things the way they are or have always been. So, when you try to bring about change for Christ there is a resistance by the status quo. For example, if you are trying to bring about a new educational curriculum or a new youth development program like Lads-to-Leaders, you will have resistance and sabotage against the programs. Don't take the attacks personal as a leader. Jesus challenged the status quo in every parable He taught. He challenged the Pharisees and religious leaders of his day (Mat. 23). They sought to sabotage his work at every turn (the gospel of John emphasizes this conflict between Christ and the Pharisees). But Christ exhibited determination, nerve, courage, and stayed the course. He didn't compromise his teachings or actions. He would not even yield to Satan's attacks in the garden but remained determined to be the sacrifice (John 10:17-18). Staying the course means leaders choose to act despite the resistance and attacks. Rather than allow indecisiveness and stagnation to remain, they plot a

path forward and lead their followers to that end. Often the most important element is choosing a road forward and acting, even if it isn't the best of all possible choices. (Consider Paul and Barnabas and their separation in Acts 15:36-40.)

II. How do shepherds deal with burn-out and discouragement?

A. Who shepherds the shepherds? Shepherds are sheep too who experience the challenges of life while serving.

i. Other shepherds (Lesson 10 - Teamwork)

ii. The preacher

iii. The church

B. What are some causes of burnout and discouragement in church leaders?

i. Too many irons burning in their life. They are busy men who have a lot going on professionally, personally, and as church leaders.

ii. Conflict within the church, eldership, family, or with staff.

iii. They feel overwhelmed with the weight of the responsibility and task of leading.

iv. A lack of excitement with the work. No burning fire within your bones for the work. No vision or dream, or a general doubt that the vision is possible.

v. Discouragement from your wife or children in doing the work of a shepherd. They make it difficult to dedicate the time or emotional energy needed to the work.

vi. Numerous years of service that have just worn you down as an elder.

vii. The sacrifices to one's personal life seem so high and happen so regularly compared to friends and family who are not elders.

viii. Which is the most common? What others would you add?

C. How can you prevent or deal with burnout when it comes?

i. It might involve personal depression issues. You may have unresolved grief or issues that are causing depression and general lack of vigor for life. You may need to have visit a counselor or medical doctor.

ii. Dream again. Remember Caleb's vigor at 85 (Joshua 14:9-12).

iii. Allow yourself to be vulnerable with your emotions and feelings.

iv. Consider what you are putting into your mind (Phil. 4:8-9)

v. Consider your physical health (rest, diet, exercise, etc.)

vi. Remember the reason for your ministry. Do something you enjoy in your church leadership. It may involve starting a new project or diving into an old one again (2 Tim. 1:6).

vii. Determine to deal with the issues causing the frustration. "Speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

viii. Clarify where the frustration or discouragement is coming from. It may be that you are feeling anxiety in areas that are not yours to worry about. It may be that you need to turn it over to God (Phil. 4:6-7). Draw healthy boundaries.

ix. Attend a conference, lectureship, or read an uplifting leadership book.

x. When a church situation allows, consider encouraging a church leader to take a “leave of absence” or “sabbatical” from the work for a period of time.

xi. Pray!

Lesson 12: A Shepherd's Heart

Teaching Aims:

1. To encourage shepherds and future shepherds in this crucial work.
2. To review and apply the information covering in this course.

Supplemental Reading for this Lesson:

Gary L. Herridge, "Avoiding Discouragement as Leaders" 2009 FHU Lectureship, p. 416-421

Jerrie Barber, "Preventing Leadership Suicide." Feb. 16, 2016; www.Newshepherdsorientation.com

Introduction: The ideal shepherd of Israel, David, was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). God described him in Psalm 78:70-72. He was a man of an "upright heart" who shepherded the people with a "skillful hand." David was far from a perfect man, but he had a good heart! Later in Jeremiah, God will speak of faithless Judah whom he calls to return to Him. He promises to give them "shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15). May the church have today and raise up for future generations, shepherds after God's own heart. What is needed in our hearts to shepherd as God would have us?

I. May God give you a heart for shepherding.
   A. A Heart of Faith
      i. Hebrews 11 – esp. v. 32-34
      ii. Law of the Lid[51] – The church's leadership puts a lid on the church so that it will not exceed or grow above its leadership.
      iii. Church members need their leaders to step out in faith; challenging and calling them to greater levels of faith.
      iv. To be a shepherd will challenge your faith. Men will disappoint you, but the Lord will be faithful. Heb. 12:1-2
   B. A Heart of Love
      i. Jesus displayed an incomprehensible love for us as his sheep.
      ii. John 10:17-18
      iii. 1 John 3:16-18 – A shepherd lays down his life for his brothers.
   C. A Heart of Confession
      i. A shepherd is not perfect.
      ii. David confessed his failures (2 Sam. 12:13; Psalm 32; 51).
      iii. What does a church leader or eldership do when they sin, make a wrong decision, or fail to act when appropriate?
         1. Acknowledge or confess this to the church (James 5:16).

[51] "The Law of the Lid" is a concept developed by John C. Maxwell in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You*, 10th anniversary ed. (Nashville: HarperCollins Leadership, 2007).

2. Be vulnerable and open with the truth and the thought process.
3. Ask the church to understand and forgive.

D. A Heart of Service
   i. A shepherd is a servant leader. Jesus came to serve (Mark 10:45).
   ii. Peter describes the work of an elder in terms of one who serves (1 Peter 5:1-6; 4:8-11).
   iii. A shepherd must not let it become about himself, but he must be focused on serving the Lord and the church.

E. A Heart of Worship
   i. David loved to worship the Lord. He wrote beautiful psalms that we still use in worship today (Psalms 3, 8, 18, 24, 29, 95, 142).
   ii. David strengthened himself in the Lord (1 Sam. 30:6). He understood the great value of worship (2 Sam. 23:14-17; 2 Sam. 24).
   iii. Shepherds are nourished through worship. They value worship for its central and powerful place in the church.
   iv. Their heart ascribes power and praise to God. They tell of his goodness and lead the saints in worship to His name.

F. A Heart of Truth
   i. The good shepherd brought truth (John 1:14, 17). We are to know the truth (John 8:31-32). This truth will sanctify us (John 17:17).
   ii. The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).
   iii. Shepherds are to love and defend truth.
   iv. Shepherds are like the apostle John who have "no greater joy than to hear that [their] children are walking in the truth" (3 John 4).

II. Putting it all together. A course review and summary.

A. Each of the lessons has attempted to build on one another.

B. Some key concepts I hope you have gained from our study.
   i. God desires leaders to function as shepherds who offer protection, provision, and presence to the church.
   ii. The NT uses three terms to describe one office; "elders, overseers, shepherds."
   iii. We always find a plurality of elders leading a local congregation in the NT.
   iv. The qualifications give a template of virtues and aspirations for all Christian men.
   v. Shepherds are responsible for establishing the vision and direction of the church. It is the one job they must not delegate to others.
   vi. Shepherds influence and change the sheep through teaching the Word of God. They must know the truth so as to defend sound doctrine.
   vii. A shepherd must know and care for the sheep through service and love.
   viii. A shepherd protects the flock through watchfulness and discipline.

ix. A shepherd's authority is derived from his position, reputation, and relationship of care and trust with his sheep. He leads the church as a shepherd but is not "domineering over those in your charge" (1 Pet. 5:3).
x. A shepherd's work is not to do all the ministry, but to equip, train, and delegate the work of ministry to members of the body.
xi. A shepherd leads his own family in Christ.
xii. A shepherd communicates clearly and truthfully with other elders, deacons, staff, and church members.
xiii. Shepherds see their ministry as a team ministry with other church leaders.
xiv. Shepherds encourage and allow healthy and productive conflict within the eldership and church leadership team.
xv. Shepherds maintain an example of calm, faith, and resilience in the face of anxiety, stress, and conflict in the church.
xvi. Shepherds nurture their passion, provide time for restoration of spirit, rely on their fellow shepherds, and seek personal growth in order to avoid burnout and discouragement.
xvii. Shepherds seek the heart of God.

III. Discussion of the Vision Exercise (Assigned as a part of Lesson 3).

APPENDIX 5

Table A1. T-test: Paired two sample for means

	Pre-Test Total	Post-Test Total
Mean	175.8333	186.6666
Variance	225.0606	172.4242
Observations	12.0000	12.0000
Pearson Correlation	0.7874	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.0000	
Df	11.0000	
T Stat	4.0178	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.0010	
T Critical one-tail	1.7958	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0020	
T Critical two-tail	2.2009	

Note: $t(12)=4.0178$, $p < 0.0010$

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A PASTORAL LEADERSHIP COURSE AT THE SEVEN OAKS CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MAYFIELD, KENTUCKY, FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE ELDERS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021
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The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a pastoral leadership course at Seven Oaks Church of Christ in Mayfield, Kentucky for present and future elders. Chapter 1 explains the ministerial context of Seven Oaks Church of Christ and demonstrates the need for a pastoral leadership course for training present elders and future elder candidates.

Chapter 2 demonstrates that Scripture reveals that God calls a plurality of men to shepherd his local church for their protection and productivity. Chapter 3 surveys three leadership models used in churches concluding that the plural, pastoral leadership model is biblical and effective, while free from the autocratic, authoritarian, legalistic tendencies of the other two. Chapter 4 provides a detailed process along with the methodology utilized for this project's implementation. Chapter 5 is an evaluation of this project demonstrating this project was effective in training present and future elders at the Seven Oaks Church of Christ.

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