

# SHEPHERD THE FLOCK OF GOD<sup>1</sup>

Following the example of Jesus, *1 Peter 5:1-4*

Near the end of his first letter, Peter encouraged the elders in his audience to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you” (*1 Peter 5:1-3*). He followed his encouragement with a promise – if the elders faithfully fulfilled their duty, Jesus, “the chief Shepherd”, would give them an “unfading crown of glory” (*1 Peter 5:4; cf. Hebrews 13:20; John 10:7-18*). The connection Peter makes between elders who “shepherd the flock of God” and Jesus “the chief Shepherd” offers an insight into being an elder – **elders follow the example of Jesus.**

Our elders have announced the beginning of a process to appoint additional elders for our church family. This lesson, which concludes a series about elders, reminds us of elders’ responsibility to follow the example of Jesus, “the good shepherd” (*John 10:7-18*), whose teachings and behavior outline the expectations God has for those to whom He entrusts the care of His church.

## Elders and the “Chief Shepherd”

Jesus, responding to his disciples’ argument about leadership positions in his kingdom, offered a surprising take on leadership – he defined leadership, not as a position of authority, but as a position of service (*Matthew 20:20-28*).

The gospel accounts of Jesus’ ministry offer insights into the unusual leadership model he instructed his disciples to embrace. Consider the following teachings he offered to them that outline some of the expectations that should characterize those to whom Jesus entrusts leadership.

Elders should be men who:

***Trust God and “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”***

Matthew 10:5-10; 6:19-33

***Embrace love-motivated, service-orientated leadership***

John 13:3-17, 34-35; Matthew 20:20-28

***Focus on hearts and not merely actions***

Matthew 15:1-20

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<sup>1</sup> *1 Peter 5:2*. All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.



***Focus on relationship building and not merely decision making***

John 10:1-18; Matthew 22:34-40

***Embrace the slow and messy process of discipleship***

Matthew 10:1-11:1; 28:18-20

***Elevate Jesus' concerns above their own concerns***

Matthew 10:34-39

## Applications

- Leadership ability is not cultivated through a career in business but through a lifetime dedicated to following Jesus.
- But the leadership one learns from Jesus differs from the leadership models embraced by our world; Jesus' leadership focuses on people rather than productivity or profit.
- The relationship-oriented leadership Jesus desires will introduce difficulties and complexities; do not, however, settle for the artificial peace of our world's leadership models.
- Jesus' leadership model offers a glimpse of what it means to be truly human.

May God bless us with godly elders who follow the leadership modeled by Jesus.

