

He chose his servant David,
and took him from the sheepfolds;
from tending the nursing ewes he brought him to be
the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel, his
inheritance.

With upright heart he tended them,
and guided them with skillful hand.

Psalm 78:70-72



Images of LEADERSHIP



COPYRIGHT © 2003

INTERVARSITY.
LEADING EDGE®

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD

GOD AS SHEPHERD

PSALM 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul. He leads me in

right paths for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod

and your staff- they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the

presence of my enemies; you anoint

my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow

me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell

in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

JOHN 10

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good

2

What are the benefits of having God as a shepherd?

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



GOD AS SHEPHERD

shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away-and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.”



Jesus uses three images to contrast the good shepherd: stranger, thief/bandit, hired hand. What does each teach us about being a good shepherd?



What are the temptations a shepherd faces?

3

What do you learn about sheep and shepherds from these passages?

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



GOD APPOINTS SHEPHERDS

EZEKIEL 34:1-16

The word of the LORD came to me: ² Mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel: prophesy, and say to them—to the shepherds: Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? ³ You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. ⁴ You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. ⁵ So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. ⁶ My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them. ⁷ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸As I live, says the Lord GOD, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild animals, since there was no shepherd; and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep; ⁹ therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord GOD, I am against the shepherds; and I will demand my sheep at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, so that they may not be food for them. ¹¹ For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. ¹² As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord

4

List characteristics of bad shepherds.

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



GOD APPOINTS SHEPHERDS

GOD. ¹⁶ 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, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.



What are the results of bad shepherding?



How does God respond to bad shepherding?

JOHN 21:15-19

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." ¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."



What does it mean to love Jesus?

5

How does God feel about the flock?

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



SHEPHERDS APPOINT SHEPHERDS

ACTS 20:17-38

From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him. ¹⁸ When they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. ²⁰ I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to you and teaching you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus. ²² And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me. ²⁴ But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace. ²⁵ And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again. ²⁶ Therefore I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, ²⁷ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. ²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. ²⁹ I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. ³² And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified. ³³ I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. ³⁵ In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" ³⁶ When he had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed. ³⁷ There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, ³⁸

6

List characteristics of Paul's good shepherding to the Ephesians.

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



SHEPHERDS APPOINT SHEPHERDS

grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.



What are his concerns for them as he leaves?

1 PETER 5:1-4

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you ² to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it — not for sordid gain but eagerly. ³ Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away.



What is “sordid gain”? What is fair motivation for taking on the role of shepherd?

7

How do Paul and Peter call others into shepherding?

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



GOD SHEPHERDS HIS SHEPHERDS

GOOD SHEPHERDING BEGINS WITH AS OUR .



BENEFITS OF THE LORD AS OUR SHEPHERD:

Psalm 23: green pastures, still waters, "I shall not want," oil, overflowing cup

John 10: "I came that they might have life abundantly."

Ezekiel 34: "I will feed them on the mountains of Israel... I will feed them with good pasture... In good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture."

contrast image:

They use the sheep to meet their own needs. They cannot say, "I lack nothing." They act as wolves or thieves, seeking to use, eat, take and destroy. They pursue shepherding for improper gain, seeking approval or status or power.

Psalm 23: darkest valley, rod and staff provide comfort, table in the presence of enemies

John 10: "I lay down my life for the sheep."

Ezekiel 34: "I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them..."

contrast image:

They flee in the face of danger. They exhibit "hired hand" mentality. Their own survival their focus, they are unwilling to lay their life down, and hence they allow the sheep to scatter.

With God as our shepherd we lack nothing.

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



BENEFITS OF THE LORD AS OUR SHEPHERD:

Psalm 23: restores soul, guides me in right paths for his name's sake, comfort of the rod and staff; prepares a table

John 10: "sheep follow him because they know his voice," "I know my own and my own know me"

Ezekiel 34: "I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down," "I will seek the lost, bring back the strayed, bind up the injured": tender care

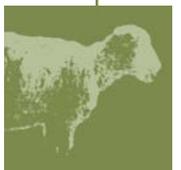
contrast image:

They treat the sheep "with force and harshness". They really are strangers to the sheep, with no real knowledge of the sheep, no foresight or insight, and so give no warnings or encouragements. They shed no tears (unlike the good shepherd Paul).

Caring for Jesus' sheep is how we live out our love for him and how we follow him as his disciples.

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD

LOVE JESUS = HIS SHEEP = YOUR LIFE = JESUS



DESCRIPTION OF A SHEPHERD	WHAT IS THE ISSUE? WHAT COULD BE DONE? ABUNDANCE, SECURITY, INTIMACY?
---------------------------	---

1 Kathy spoke to Irene, a Sunday-school helper, about becoming a lead teacher. Irene was hesitant, partly on the basis of time commitment and partly due to a lack of confidence that she could do a good job. Kathy said, "We really need you, Irene."

2 You find yourself annoyed with and critical of the people who are in the small group you lead. Sometimes you are able to hold your tongue, but increasingly your impatience has come through in the way you've spoken to them as a group and individually.

3 Over time you have noticed that Ken, your partner in the children's program at church, has a problem keeping commitments he has made. This is more obvious to you than to others, because it has affected you consistently. More than once you have thought about mentioning it to Ken, but each time you have held back.

4 James, a pastor who began his ministry at a small church of 80, had cared deeply for his elderly flock. But over time he realized that caring wearied him and he tired of hearing only complaints. He left the pastorate to sell insurance.

5 Cindy is a member of Luke's small group. Cindy opens up to Luke about her uncertainty about God's work in her life. As Luke takes initiative with Cindy to help her understand and feel God's presence, he begins to have feelings for her. Soon he asks her to dinner. She is confused but flattered by his attention.

6 Ellen, an enthusiastic leader of her small group when things were going well, suddenly experienced a loss of motivation when conflict began to crop up within the group. Eventually she decided she wasn't a good fit for small group leader.

7 On Friday night of a weekend retreat, I am excited and ready to care for members of my small group who have come. By Saturday evening, I want to shut down, not get into any deep conversations, finish cleanup quickly and go home. I show little interest in knowing how the weekend went for folks.





DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

THIEF

Views sheep as morsels to satisfy own appetite. Perhaps carries on the charade of being a shepherd, but never looks very much like a shepherd, and never exerts self to do anything other than feed off the sheep. (See wolf.) Evidence: sheep feel unsafe, threatened. Attrition mounts.

WOLF

Doesn't pose as shepherd but simply picks off a vulnerable sheep. The bad shepherd lets this happen. For example, predatory romantic interest on the part of an older male in the group of younger women. Even when the wolf is unsuccessful, the actions of the wolf scatter the sheep. Evidence: wise sheep avoid this character.

HIRED HAND

Looks like a shepherd until danger appears. May be good at providing green pasture, but flees in the face of a wolf. Has a "nine-to-five" mentality. Evidence: can't be bothered when he or she is off work.

HARSH RULER

A bad shepherd who ignores the weaker members of the flock, or those who are unpopular, slow, handicapped, or unattractive in some way. Evidence: impatience with or disdain for people who are not conforming to the ideal of strong, successful model sheep.

We begin as shepherds but can wind up as hired hands.

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



SHEEP EATER

A leader who gets needs met inappropriately from the sheep or from his/her leadership role.

1. *Emotional needs:* Using the leadership role to meet one's own emotional needs for friendship. Ingratiating; acting in some way as to require or demand a reciprocity of friendship from those being led. Shepherding springs here from a neediness for intimacy, not an abundance found in God.
2. *Organizational needs:* Abuse of the leadership role to induce members of the flock to fulfill organizational roles because of the pressing need. Pressing people into service or even leadership with concerns and agendas beyond what is best for them.
3. *Social needs:* The leader's concern is to look like a good leader, or an attractive or successful person, and is willing to manipulate people to get them to do what will make him or her look successful.
4. *Romance.* The leader sees the sheep as romantic prospects or objects. Even for married leaders it is an issue: inappropriate dependency and attention from attractive followers is ego-satisfying.

SILENT SHEPHERD

One who perceived needs in the flock but failed to act or speak. Cannot say, as Paul did, "I am innocent of the blood of all of you because everything I got from God I gave to you" (Acts 20:26-27). Evidence: gossip-prone but conflict-avoidant.

A sheep eater looks at a sheep and sees mutton.

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



POWER-HUNGRY SHEPHERD

Interested in leadership only for the improper rewards of being a shepherd (1 Peter 5:2-3): recognition, privilege, money, approval, romance, or power. Evidence: resentment of other leaders, impatience with the flock, prayerlessness, domination and control.

PROFESSIONAL

One who is in the shepherding line of work for the money or some other extrinsic gain. Often began as a shepherd with amateur status, but over time decided to go pro. Evidence: some work of shepherding is now beneath him or her. (See hired hand.)

AMATEUR

From the latin, *amator* = lover. One whose motivation as a shepherd is intrinsic, founded in love for God and for the sheep, God's flock. Evidence: love, not manipulation, fear, impatience, or superiority.

Amateur shepherds see themselves also as sheep.

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



ANSWERS AND RESOURCES

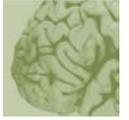


PAGE 8

GOOD SHEPHERDING BEGINS WITH **GOD** AS OUR **SHEPHERD** .

Abundance, thief/bandit

Security, hired hand



PAGE 9

Intimacy, stranger

LOVE JESUS = **FEED** HIS SHEEP = **LAY DOWN** YOUR LIFE = **FOLLOW** JESUS



PAGE 10

1

Willing to use someone rather than show first concern for them (abundance).

Perhaps she is afraid of having the burden of Sunday school fall on herself (security).

James felt he had few resources himself for the ministry (abundance).

James tired of putting his heart out for people. He fled the flock (security).

4

2

You don't know the sheep well enough to have compassion and patience. You have begun to see the sheep as impediments to the group's progress, forgetting their growth is the reason for the group in the first place (intimacy).

Luke looks at Cindy and sees only a person who can meet his social needs (abundance).

Luke equates the intimacy of his offer of friendship to Cindy as prologue to romance (intimacy).

5

3

You have fled the "danger" of a confrontation with Ken. You probably have only seen in Ken a partner for your (kids) ministry, rather than one who also is a beneficiary of God's work through you in that ministry. So, you haven't cared enough for him or looked for his growth (security).

Ellen fled the responsibility of shepherding in the face of conflict (security).

Ellen fears intimacy herself, having no confidence that conflict can end well (abundance).

6

7

I am drained of energy by the retreat. Not trusting that my own needs can be met by God in the context of caring for others, I fail to take advantage of the opportunity to be a shepherd at a key time during the weekend. If I rally for a few more hours, I can rest when I return home (abundance, intimacy)

THE LEADER AS SHEPHERD



FURTHER RESOURCES

The Making of a Leader, ChuaWee Hian. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press. 1987

A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23, Philip Keller. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 1970

Scriptures taken from New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, © U.S. Council of Churches. Used by permission.

LEADING EDGE® ©InterVarsity Christian Fellowship 2003

