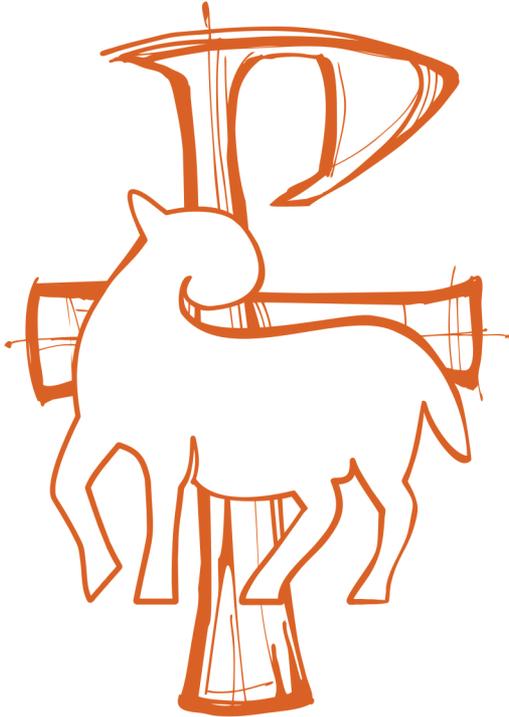


Shepherds of God's Sheep



"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood". Acts 20:28

SHEPHERDING FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW

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TITLE: SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S SHEEP

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Project Shepherds

Book 2

SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S SHEEP

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SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S SHEEP

PREFACE

Welcome to the discipleship / leadership series. These little booklets were designed to give basic information concerning various topics about our Christian faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and to foster a clearer understanding of discipleship and servant leadership. These booklets can be used as a discussion tool for personal study, family devotion, youth meetings or in cell groups. Our hope is that this information will stir the readers and encourage them to go deeper into personal research and study.

Our desire is that these booklets will be a blessing to the reader and a tool that can be shared with others as a gift of encouragement.

Please feel free to mail or e-mail us for more copies or to just write to us with any feedback concerning the content of these studies. We hope you enjoy this offering of knowledge and experience. We pray that Christ will draw you into an ever deeper personal relationship with Himself as you study.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S SHEEP

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This booklet comes from a heart of concern for those who lead and care for God's sheep. Christ came as a shepherd to a people who were hurt, scattered and under bondage. He also came as a sacrificial lamb so that the curse of sin and judgment could be removed from our lives. God's sheep are at the center of His heart and He knows them all by name. He has a personal relationship with each one and loves them dearly. We as shepherds need to see God's sheep through His eyes. He has a divine plan for each one. Each of His sheep is a treasured vessel and a gift. While on earth, we are to nurture and care for them in such a way that they will bring more sheep into the fold.

My hope is that you will gain some insights from this booklet and that it will help you to guide and minister to the sheep that God has entrusted to you. We need to remember that one day, we will be held accountable like the three servants who had to give an account for talents entrusted to them by their master (Matthew 25:14-30).

James Paul Humphries

SHEPHERDS OF GOD'S SHEEP

INTRODUCTION

There have been hundreds of books written about shepherds, pastors, leadership, overseers, bishops, managers etc., so why another? These books give you all kinds of principles and practical tools to help the flock that God has put in our charge. They give much wisdom and insight into the ministries that God calls us to do; but something seems to be missing. I have traveled to many parts of the world and have met thousands of pastors/shepherds. You look into their eyes, which are the windows of their hearts, and you see forlornness, anxiety, worry, stress and confusion about what to do. For some there is hopelessness, doubt that God had ever called them into ministry.

Over the years, I have seen many truths in the Bible concerning what it means to be God's shepherd. This has caused me to look at things differently and I tell people that the ministry that God has given me is "foundation inspector". I go into churches and other Christian organizations and take time to check out the foundation, determining how it is lined up with the Chief Cornerstone. Many of these ministries were clearly called by God, but the things that they have constructed are no longer on Christ's foundation. Paul saw this happening with the Galatian Church. He tells us that they started well, but turned to following another Gospel. He asked how they had been bewitched, who came in amongst them and changed their direction that was so firmly established (Gal. 1:6-9).

I know that buildings have a purpose. Each structure will look different. Likewise, this is what makes the disciple of Christ so unique. Still, the foundation of Christ never changes and we have to be completely aligned with His will and purpose for our lives. Challenges, storms and even persecution do lie ahead. When

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we are on a sure foundation, we as shepherds can have peace that passes all understanding and be able to stand in the worst storm and say, like the hymnists, "it is well with my soul".

In this booklet I want to review the foundation of what being a shepherd is and challenge the reader to ask the question, where does your foundation lie? Shepherds have had a great impact both positively and negatively on the history of this world. What we do will directly influence the world and the Kingdom of God. The line between the two – the world and the Kingdom – is very small and unfortunately, many shepherds try to keep a foot on both sides of the line.

We also forget we will all stand alone before God on judgment day, without family, church, or other people to blame. God will ask "What did you do with all that I gave, both in possessions and people? How did you use your talents, finance, education, gifts for the sheep that I entrusted to you?" It is time to stop being so fearful of man and turn back to having a holy reverent fear of God Almighty.

The shepherd is called to serve others, to give his life for the sheep. Whether we are a pastor, minister or shepherd, we come under the headship of Jesus Christ. Shepherds are called to go forth and change people's lives, to becoming history makers. We can be the ones that God uses to ignite a spark in someone's life to change the direction of a home, a nation or the world. We are called to be carriers of precious seed, to be planted in the hearts that God has readied for His purpose.

If you are a shepherd called by God, do not take this ministry lightly. It comes by at great price. He will richly reward all those who have been faithful and have given their lives for

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others. God has a plan and purpose for your life that can only be completely fulfilled if you are in line with His foundation. Please take time to call out to God and ask Him to give you the wisdom and understanding of what you are called to do.

Disciples as Shepherds

The purpose for this chapter is to reflect on how God has called us, and what we are doing now in ministering to people that He has entrusted to us. This chapter reminds me of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, where the lord entrusted a certain amount of money to three different men while he was away. He returned to hear an account of what they did with it. The Bible says the lord gave to them according to their ability. It is the same today as a shepherd of God. In this chapter we want to explore our own lives and the things we have been building. What fruit is coming out of the ministry that Christ has given to us? We as shepherds will one day be held accountable for our words and actions and how we cared for God's sheep.

FOCUS AND TARGET FOR TEACHER & STUDENTS

TEACHER: As a teacher, the challenge you face is to teach fellow pastors the importance of understanding clearly what it means to be a shepherd in the church of Jesus Christ. We will have to encourage our students to hear what the Spirit is saying to them about their thoughts and actions toward God and the sheep. They also need to see that they too, are sheep under a Shepherd.

STUDENT: The student will understand the implications and importance of why the disciples of Christ need to be careful of how they shepherd the Lord's sheep. As

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shepherds, they need to see God's sheep as a treasure from heaven.

DEFINITION AND SYNONYMS

Understanding the meaning of words is the heart to understanding Scripture. Words are the bridge that can help us to understand more about ourselves and about God and His Word the Bible. Please take time to meditate and reflect on the broad and narrow view of each word as defined, along with its synonyms.

SHEPHERD a person who tends and rears sheep; a member of the clergy who provides spiritual care and guidance for a congregation; guide or direct in a particular direction. *Synonyms:* guide, conduct, usher, steer, herd, lead, escort, accompany, walk, show, see, attend, chaperone.

LEADER the person who leads or commands a group; a person followed by others. *Synonyms:* head, principal, boss, commander, captain, chairperson, director, overseer, administrator, pioneer, front runner, innovator, trailblazer, pathfinder, ground-breaker, leading light, guiding light, torch-bearer, pacemaker, originator, initiator, developer, discoverer, founder, architect.

SERVANTS: a person who performs duties for others; a devoted and helpful follower or supporter. *Synonyms:* helper, supporter, follower, attendant, helper.

SHEEP: a domesticated ruminant mammal with a thick woolly coat and (typically only in the male) curving horns; it is kept in flocks for its wool or meat, and is proverbial for its tendency to follow others in the flock; a person who is too

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easily influenced or led. *Synonyms:* ram, ewe, lamb

SCRIPTURE

For this chapter, study the following Scripture. It is the key to a good biblical foundation and it is the next step to help you as a disciple to mature in Christ. Consult your Bible and read it in its entirety. Take into account the author who wrote it, whom it was written to and the context in which it relates to the other verses and chapters around it.

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Acts 20:28

STUDY

This verse indicates that the shepherd should be careful how to lead the flock of God. He has entrusted us with many lives that will produce more sheep for God's glory if we look after and care for them properly.

We are to be careful of not only our own walk in the Lord; as well as the walk of those entrusted to us. The Holy Spirit has called us to oversee these people. He has entrusted us as stewards of these people. We are to remember that the flock which has been given to us has been purchased by Christ's own blood. Each one of these "sheep" has value because Christ paid their price with His life. His atoning blood was the price paid for the mercy which we have been shown. We are not called to do this alone but we have the power, wisdom and teaching of the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us.