

An Exposition of the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter

# “GOD’S PLAN FOR EFFECTIVE SHEPHERDS”

## *1 Peter 5:1-5*

**Theme:** Spiritual leadership can be accomplished only when provided in the atmosphere of humility.



## I. The Prospect of Ministry Inspires Them –

### **5:1, 4**

#### A. The Principles of Hope – **v. 1**

1. Peter has addressed the needs of the Christian facing persecution for their faith.
2. Now he turns and provides some admonishment in light of what they are facing: *“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you ...”*
3. He *“exhorts”* [παρακαλέω] them “to join him” – lit. “to call to one’s side” or to “urge strongly, to implore” them to faithful service *“... as your fellow elder”* - [ συμπρεσβύτερος]
4. This appeal is based on three realities:
  - a) Their **Calling** – *“... as your fellow elder”* [πρεσβύτερος] – older or elder
  - b) Their **Conversion** – *“... witness of the sufferings of Christ”*
  - c) Their **Confidence** – *“... and a partaker of the glory that is to be revealed.”* (lit. “the about to be revealed glory ...”)
5. Peter identifies these characteristics as the basis for his command to *“shepherd the flock of God ...”*.

#### B. The Promise of Honor – **v. 4**

1. Further inspiration is provided through the reference to the reward Christ personally gives to faithful shepherds – *“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*
2. This is the consummation of the motivation of the servant of Christ – cp. **Matthew 25:23**.

## II. The Passion for Ministry Identifies Them – 5:2-3

#### A. The Duties of Ministry – **v. 2**

1. *“Shepherd [ποιμαίνω] the flock of God among you ...”* – involves the elements of feeding, protecting, guiding, tending, examining, etc ...
  - a) *“shepherd” [ποιμαίνω]* – the aorist tense imperative conveys the sense of *urgency* in the execution of the duty
  - b) *“flock” [ποίμνιον]* – a diminutive form of the singular signifying the endearing position that the small portion of God’s people entrusted to you ought to have in your view of them.
2. *“Exercising oversight” [ἐπισκοπέω]* – accepting responsibility for the care of the flock - carefully and lovingly watching (“scope” + “upon”) the whole conduct of those under their “charge” and administering caution, encouragement, advice, comfort, rebuke and exhortation as they are required.

## B. The Disposition of the Minister – **vv. 2b-3**

1. Eagerness to serve – desiring to fulfill God’s will – cp. **1 Timothy 3:1**
  - a) It must not be *“under compulsion” [ἀναγκαστῶς]* *“... but voluntarily” [ἐκουσίως]* or willingly - *“... according to [the will of] God”* – cp. **Philemon 14**; this can also be understood to refer to God’s example of serve of His own volition.
  - b) It must not be *“for sordid gain” [αἰσχροκερδῶς]* or “avarice or dishonest financial gain,” *“... but with eagerness” [προθύμως]* freely – cp. **1 Timothy 6:9-10**
2. Humility in Service –
  - a) This is achieved by remembering that the elder is not the Chief Shepherd but only the stewards of the “flock” –
    - (1) *“... nor yet as lording it over ...” [κατακυριεύω]* – subdue, rule, or gain dominion over – cp. **Matthew 20:25**
    - (2) *“... those allotted to your charge ...” [κλήρος]* - the portion or “share” of the congregation for whom you are called to “exercise oversight”
  - b) Instead, their strength of leadership is to come from possessing influence among the people – *“... but proving to be examples to the flock”*
    - (1) *“examples” [τύπος]* – lit. “type” – the pattern of proper service (cp. to a “type” + “writer” which makes a mark on the paper as a result of a blow or pressure).
    - (2) Spiritual leaders are to be both a copy of the Chief Shepherd as well as a means by which *“those allotted to your charge”* are able to become more like Christ.

## III. The Protocol of Ministry Influences Them – **5:5**

## A. The Proper Attitude Toward Ministers

1. Peter here preserves the authority of the elders by instructing the people to submit – yield to the instructions of those watching over their souls – *“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders ...”* - cp. **Hebrews 13:17**
2. A common trait for younger men is the thought that they are able to do what needs to be done in leadership – either as well as the older men can do it, or even better.
3. The emphasis here is that there ought to be a voluntary yielding to the influence of older men [ὑποτάσσω] – to subordinate or in extra-biblical literature to “add a document at the end of another document” – to attach or append.
4. This suggests that they are to properly revere the position of the elders – and not to attempt to usurp or interrupt the leadership that they are providing

## B. The Proper Attire for Ministry

1. Peter then addresses all of them together – young and old – *“and all of you, clothe yourselves”* [ἐγκομβόμαι] – “tie on an apron”
2. Believers are to “tie” onto themselves *“humility”* as the garment of ministry – [ταπεινοφροσύνη] – “lowliness of mind” or “self-abasement” and describes the attitude of one who willingly serves, even in the lowliest of tasks.
3. God calls on all - members and leaders to act humbly toward one another – cp. **Philippians 2:3**.
4. The reason is provided – *“For God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble”* – a quote from the LXX version of **Proverbs 3:34**.
5. When spiritual leaders refuse to exercise control, domination, intimidation, and “position-based” leadership and prefer rather to influence the congregation through Spirit-generated humility and the example of godliness as they point others toward Christ, God gives them grace and enables their fruitful ministry.