



House of New Beginnings

ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

“Under Watchful Eyes: Leading and Being Led in Love”

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: Hebrews 13:17-25

We often think of leadership as direction-giving or decision-making—but the kind of leadership described at the end of Hebrews is something deeper. It's rooted in *watchfulness*—not surveillance, but sacrificial love. It's about keeping watch over souls and standing in the gap for others. But Hebrews doesn't stop with how leaders lead. It challenges how we respond: Are we a joy to shepherd? Are we praying, trusting, growing together?

This final passage in Hebrews doesn't feel like a closing remark—it feels like a charge. It's not just about congregational structure or pastoral roles; it's about relationships marked by love, trust, humility, and shared purpose. When leadership and followership are shaped by Messiah's love, the community becomes a place of healing, maturity, and kingdom movement.

1. Love That Leads and Doesn't Control (Heb. 13:17)

“Obey your leaders and submit to them,” the passage begins—not as a demand for control, but a plea for unity. The Greek word used here speaks more to yielding than blind obedience. It's a picture of trust. Why? Because these leaders aren't serving themselves; they are keeping watch over souls. They're not building platforms—they're shouldering responsibility, losing sleep, and standing before God on behalf of others. True leadership in the Body is not about control—it's about care.

And the call to follow is rooted in love as well. The author urges us to make their work joyful, not burdensome. Why? Because when leadership becomes a groan rather than a joy, *everyone loses*. The community suffers. When love guides both leadership and followership, there's flourishing. We need leaders who lead like Yeshua—and we need followers who respond in love and trust, not resistance or fear. It's mutual. It's relational. And it's powerful when done right.

2.

3. LOVE THAT COVERS THROUGH PRAYER (Heb. 13:18-19)

After encouraging the community to trust their leaders, the writer shifts to something deeply personal: “Pray for us.” This isn't theoretical. These leaders are weary, vulnerable, and under pressure. They aren't asking for admiration—they're asking for intercession. Their strength comes not from titles, but from grace—and your prayers *matter* in releasing that grace. Spiritual leadership is warfare, and prayer is how the Body covers one another in love.

Notice the tone here. It's humble and transparent: “We have a clear conscience... we want to do what is right.” These leaders aren't perfect—but they are walking in integrity. And the request is simple: *Pray that we can be restored to you quickly*. The community's prayers are seen as part of the restoration process. That's love in action—lifting each other up,

especially those called to lead. When leaders are covered in prayer, the whole community thrives.

3. LOVE THAT MATURES US IN THE WILL OF GOD (Heb. 13:20-25)

The final blessing in Hebrews is breathtaking: “*Now may the God of shalom... make you complete in every good thing to do His will.*” This is love on a cosmic scale. God isn’t just looking for obedience—He’s shaping your *whole life* to reflect His heart. He’s forming you to walk in His will with joy and power. The Great Shepherd, who was raised from the dead through the blood of the eternal covenant, is still shepherding you now—making you whole.

But this work of completion doesn’t happen in isolation. As the author closes with greetings and updates, we’re reminded: faith is lived *together*. We don’t mature alone—we mature in the company of others who lead us, challenge us, love us, and walk with us. Love is what holds it all together. And grace is what carries us to the finish.

CONCLUSION:

Hebrews ends with a call to community rooted in love. We are under the watchful eyes of leaders who care—and the even greater watchful eyes of the Shepherd who never sleeps. But the question is: *Are you leading and being led in love?* Are you resisting leadership, or walking with humility? Are you covering others in prayer, or leaving them uncovered in their battles? Are you allowing the Shepherd to complete what He started in you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think it means to “make their work a joy, not a burden” in v. 17?
2. Why is prayer such a vital way we love and support our leaders?
3. How does knowing Yeshua is our Great Shepherd affect how we relate to spiritual leaders?
4. What kind of resistance can make leadership difficult—and how do we guard against it?
5. How can we help create a community marked by mutual love, grace, and spiritual growth?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us loving leaders who watch over our souls. Forgive us when we’ve resisted instead of trusted, when we’ve withheld prayer instead of interceding. Make us a community that is marked by Your love—a love that leads with humility, follows with trust, and prays with power. Complete what You’ve started in us, so that we may walk in Your will and bring You joy. Yeshua, Shepherd of our souls, lead us into Your perfect peace.

In Your name we pray, amen.