

5-Day Devotional: Healthy Shepherds, Healthy Sheep

Based on the sermon from 1 Peter 5:1-5, this devotional explores biblical church leadership and our role in the body of Christ. Each day focuses on a key aspect, encouraging reflection on how healthy shepherds (elders) guide God's flock toward Christlikeness.

Day 1: The Need for Biblical Leadership

Brief Devotional: In a world filled with leadership scandals—from politics to churches—we often see the destructive fallout of power abused. The sermon reminds us that the church is not meant to mimic worldly structures like a CEO-led pyramid but to function as a living organism with Christ as the head. True leadership counters our human tendency to idolize heroes, pointing us instead to Jesus as our ultimate King.

Passage to Read: 1 Peter 5:1-5

Quote from the Sermon: “The local church has sadly become a sign of toxic leadership rather than a beacon of hope to the world in need of the gospel!!”

Engaging Questions or Takeaways:

- How have you seen leadership failures impact a community or church? What does this reveal about our need for God-centered structures?
- Reflect on times you've looked to "heroes" instead of Christ. How can shifting focus to Him change your approach to following leaders?
- Takeaway: The church thrives when it rejects worldly power dynamics and embraces Christ as the true head.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, forgive us for idolizing human leaders and help us see Jesus as our ultimate Shepherd. Guide our churches away from toxic patterns and toward Your truth. Amen.

Day 2: The Identity of Elders

Brief Devotional: Peter addresses elders as fellow shepherds, using terms like "poimēn" (pastor/shepherd), "presbuteros" (elder), and "episkopos" (overseer) to describe the same office. These are not about age or hierarchy but about appointed roles to pastor, preach, and oversee the flock for its health and growth in Christ. Elders are plural, protecting against imbalance, and appointed by the Holy Spirit.

Passage to Read: Acts 14:21-23; Titus 1:5-9

Quote from the Sermon: “An elder (noun) of a local church is a person set aside for the pastoring (verb), preaching (verb) and the oversight (verb) of the body for it’s health and maturation to the Glory of Jesus Christ.”

Engaging Questions or Takeaways:

- What surprises you about the biblical terms for church leaders? How does viewing them as interchangeable challenge common church titles today?
- Why is plurality in eldership important for protecting the church?
- Takeaway: Elders are Spirit-appointed under-shepherds, not lone rulers, ensuring the church remains a healthy body under Christ.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for designing Your church with wise leadership structures. Raise up faithful elders who reflect Your heart, and help us honor their role in guiding us toward maturity in You. Amen.

Day 3: Qualifications for Elders

Brief Devotional: Biblical elders must embody Christlike character: above reproach, faithful in marriage, self-controlled, hospitable, able to teach, and more. These

aren't just for leaders but qualities all believers should aspire to. They emphasize humility, family leadership, and a seasoned faith, guarding against pride and ensuring the church is cared for like a well-managed household.

Passage to Read: 1 Timothy 3:1-7

Quote from the Sermon: “These qualifications... are designed to push people towards Christ likeness. One of my favorite theologians, Cole Batson, reminds me that all people should look at these qualifications and long to exemplify them... even if they are not an elder nor will ever be one.”

Engaging Questions or Takeaways:

- Which qualification stands out to you, and how can you pursue it in your own life, regardless of your role?
- Why does Scripture link family management to church care? What does this say about leadership's foundation?
- Takeaway: Elder qualifications promote humility and maturity, modeling Christ for the whole flock to follow.

Prayer: Gracious God, cultivate in me the qualities of a faithful servant—humility, self-control, and a heart for

others. Strengthen our church leaders to live above reproach, reflecting Your character. Amen.

Day 4: The Role and Disposition of Elders

Brief Devotional: Elders are called to shepherd God's flock willingly, eagerly, and humbly—not for gain or dominance, but as examples. Like Bedouin shepherds, they feed, protect, guide, and oversee for the sheep's growth. Peter models this by identifying as a “fellow elder,” urging joyful service that avoids compulsion or self-interest, focusing instead on relational impact over positional power.

Passage to Read: 1 Peter 5:2-3

Quote from the Sermon: “The disposition should not be for shameful gain... Some serve in order to be seen, Some serve in order to love. Some want to be more important than impactful.”

Engaging Questions or Takeaways:

- How does the shepherd analogy (feeding, protecting, guiding) apply to church leadership today? Where have you seen this in action?
- Reflect on Peter's humble approach—what does it teach about true leadership disposition?

- Takeaway: Joyful, example-setting shepherds prioritize love and protection, fostering a healthy church environment.

Prayer: Jesus, our Chief Shepherd, inspire our elders to serve with eagerness and humility, free from selfish motives. Help me support them through prayer and encouragement, mirroring Your servant heart. Amen.

Day 5: Motivation and Our Responsibility

Brief Devotional: Elders' ultimate motivation is the return of the Chief Shepherd and the unfading crown of glory—not earthly praise. We, as the flock, are called to submit humbly, clothing ourselves in humility as God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Healthy shepherds protect the gospel, safeguard people, and grow the bride of Christ, but all point to Jesus who never fails.

Passage to Read: 1 Peter 5:4-5; 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Quote from the Sermon: “The joy of an elder is to see you enter the gates of heaven being made perfect by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the work of the spirit through His word and His church.”

Engaging Questions or Takeaways:

- What motivates you in your service to God? How can focusing on Christ's return shift your perspective?
- How can submitting to godly leaders demonstrate humility in your life?
- Takeaway: Our shared humility honors God, ensuring healthy leadership that glorifies the eternal Shepherd.

Prayer: Eternal God, thank You for the promise of Christ's return and the crown that awaits. Motivate our elders with heavenly vision, and teach us to submit in humility, growing together as Your flock. Amen.