



SHEPHERDING MINISTRY TRAINING

Shepherding Foundations

CLASS DESCRIPTION

Whether you've been a shepherd for years, you're a new shepherd coming on board, or you're simply curious about what shepherding means, this training is for you! You'll learn more about our ministry, examine your own heart, and be equipped to know, feed, lead, and protect the sheep under your care.

PROVIDED BOOKS

- *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* by Paul David Tripp
- *God's Promises for Every Day* by Jack Countryman & A. Gill
- *Heaven* (Booklet version) by Randy Alcorn

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

Links to each book can be found on the back of this syllabus.

- *The Shepherd Leader* by Timothy Whitmer (Lesson 1)
- *Suffering* by Paul David Tripp (Lesson 3)
- *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* by Tim Keller (Lesson 3)
- *Side by Side* by Edward T Welch (Lesson 4)
- *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy* by Mark Vroegop (Lesson 4)
- *Forgive* by Tim Keller (Lesson 5)
- *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn (Lesson 6)
- *A Grief Observed* by CS Lewis (Lesson 6)
- *Therefore I Have Hope* by Cameron Cole (Lesson 6)

CLASS OUTLINE

WEEK	TOPIC	PRE-READING	FURTHER READING
1	Roles, Responsibilities, & Resources	View Covenant's Shepherding Hub (click here)	<i>The Shepherd Leader</i> , Timothy Whitmer (click here)
2	Heart Check	<i>Instruments</i> , ch. 1, 3, 4, & 5	
3	A Theology of Suffering	"Before Your Suffering Comes," John Piper (click here)	<i>Suffering</i> , Paul David Tripp (click here); <i>Walking with God through Pain and Suffering</i> , Tim Keller (click here)
4	Listening Well, Using Scripture, & Incorporating Prayer	<i>Instruments</i> , ch. 2, 7, 8, 9, & 10; "Life in the Minor Key," Chris Voorhees (click here); "Using Scripture" handout (click here); Incorporating Prayer handout (click here)	<i>Side by Side</i> , Edward Welch (click here); <i>Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy</i> , Mark Vroegop (click here)
5	Speaking the Truth in Love, Confidentiality, & Boundaries	<i>Instruments</i> , ch. 11, 12 & 13; "The Goal Is Love," Trent Casto (click here)	<i>Forgive</i> , Tim Keller (click here)
6	Hospitals, Death, & Grief	<i>Heaven</i> booklet; "Hope For Broken Hearts," Trent Casto (click here); "Longing For Our Heavenly Home," Trent Casto (click here)	<i>Heaven</i> (full book), Randy Alcorn (click here); <i>A Grief Observed</i> , CS Lewis (click here); <i>Therefore I Have Hope</i> , Cameron Cole (click here)

To view video recordings of this class, visit
COVENANTNAPLES.COM/SHEPHERDING
 or scan the QR code below.



SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

WORKBOOK

ONLINE EDITION
Fall 2026

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

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SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS WORKBOOK

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WORKBOOK OVERVIEW

Shepherding Foundations

“We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”

— Psalm 100:3

USING THIS WORKBOOK

Welcome to Shepherding Foundations!

This workbook is intended to help you take notes and follow along throughout the course.

Please *don't* fill in the blanks ahead of time. Your instructor will provide the “answer” for each blank as you come to it during the lecture.

CLASS RECORDINGS

This course is recorded so that you can catch up if you miss a lesson or review lessons as needed.

To view the recordings, visit COVENANTNAPLES.COM/SHEPHERDING or scan the QR code below:



If you are watching the recordings independently, we would highly recommend printing out a copy of this workbook to follow along.

HOMWORK AND READINGS

You'll notice that each lesson starts with a “[Before This Lesson](#)” section. This will let you know what homework you should complete *before* listening to the lecture.

Similarly, each lesson ends with a “[Looking Ahead](#)” section. This will tell you what homework you should complete before listening to the *next* lecture.

Some of the homework will be completed in your provided books (*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* by Paul David Tripp, *God's Promises for Every Day* by Jack Countryman and A. Gill, and *Heaven* [booklet] by Randy Alcorn), but some of the homework will involve listening to sermons or reading online articles. Each of the online assignments can be opened from your electronic syllabus. See the box at the bottom of this page for directions to access it.

Finally, each lesson also includes a “[Recommended Books for Further Reading](#)” section. This provides a short list of books that explore that lesson's topic in more depth. We would highly recommend that you read all the recommended books over time, but they have been matched to each lesson to help you prioritize what is most relevant to you and your sheep.



For an electronic version of our syllabus that includes links to all the online homework, scan the QR code below or visit

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SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

WORKBOOK

LESSON 1

Roles, Responsibilities, & Resources

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

LESSON 1

Roles, Responsibilities, & Resources

“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

— 1 Peter 5:1-4

BEFORE THIS LESSON

Review the class syllabus.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will understand who they are, what they do, how they do it, and what resources are available to help them do it.

I. The Central Hub

This is an online collection of training and resources for shepherds. It's where you'll find support like:

- A detailed description of each role in the Shepherding Ministry
- FAQs, best practices, and other support materials for shepherds
- Recordings of this class and of previous Shepherding Ministry training sessions
- Links to resources at Covenant Church and in the wider community



To get to the Hub on any computer, phone, or tablet, type
COVENANTNAPLES.COM/SHEPHERDING
into your browser's address bar or scan the QR code.

II. The Covenant Church App

This church-wide app also includes special features for shepherds. It's where you'll find tools like:

- Easy access to the Central Hub
- Your group roster
- Contact information for all your sheep



To download the app on an iPhone, search the App Store for
“COVENANT NAPLES”
or scan this QR code



To download the app on an Android, search the Google Play Store for
“COVENANT NAPLES”
or scan this QR code

LOOKING AHEAD

Reading for next week:

- Chapters 1, 3, 4, & 5 of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*



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RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

- *The Shepherd Leader* by Timothy Whitmer

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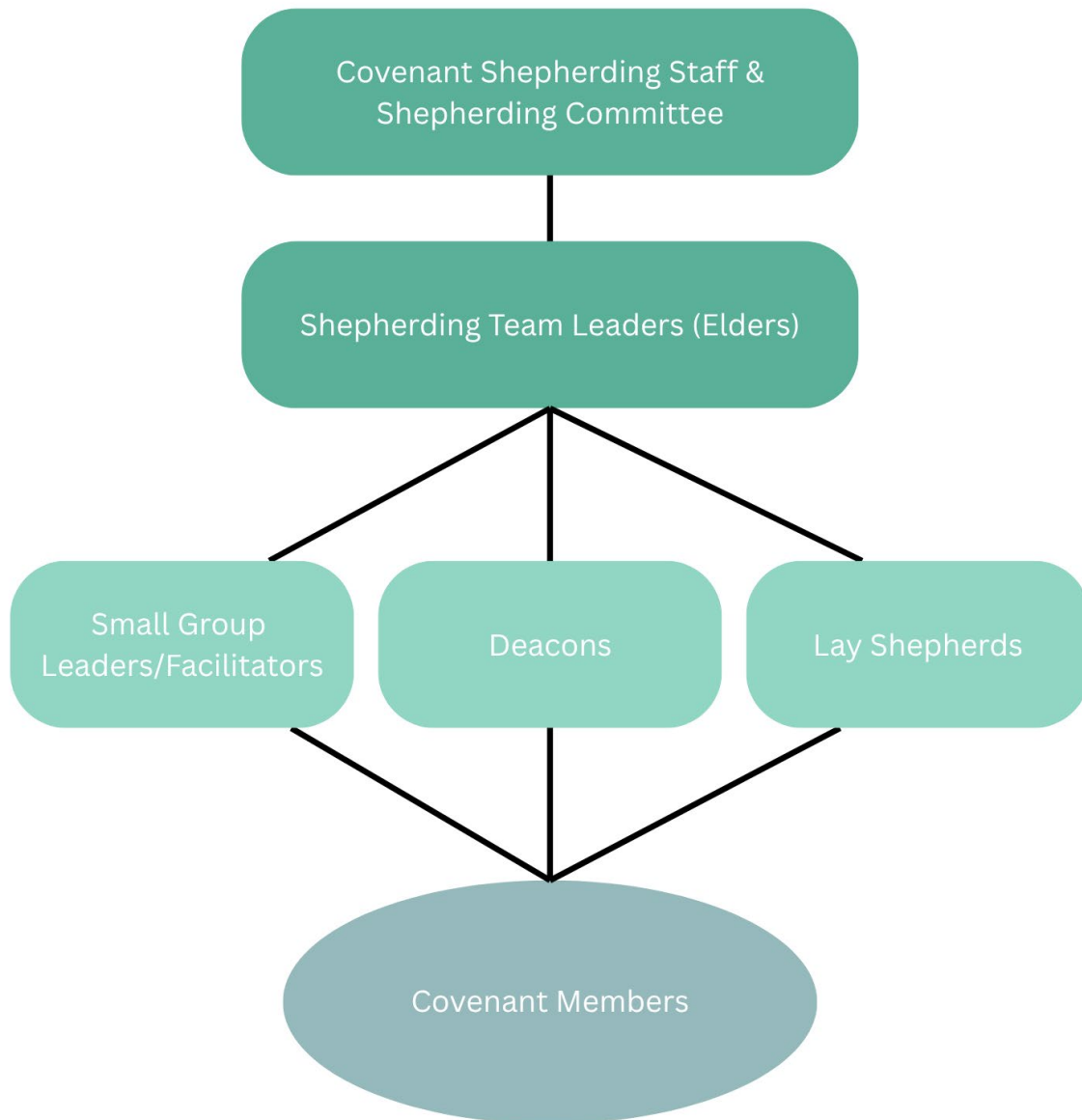
WORKBOOK

LESSON 1 HANDOUTS

Ministry Organization Chart *Member Care Flowchart*

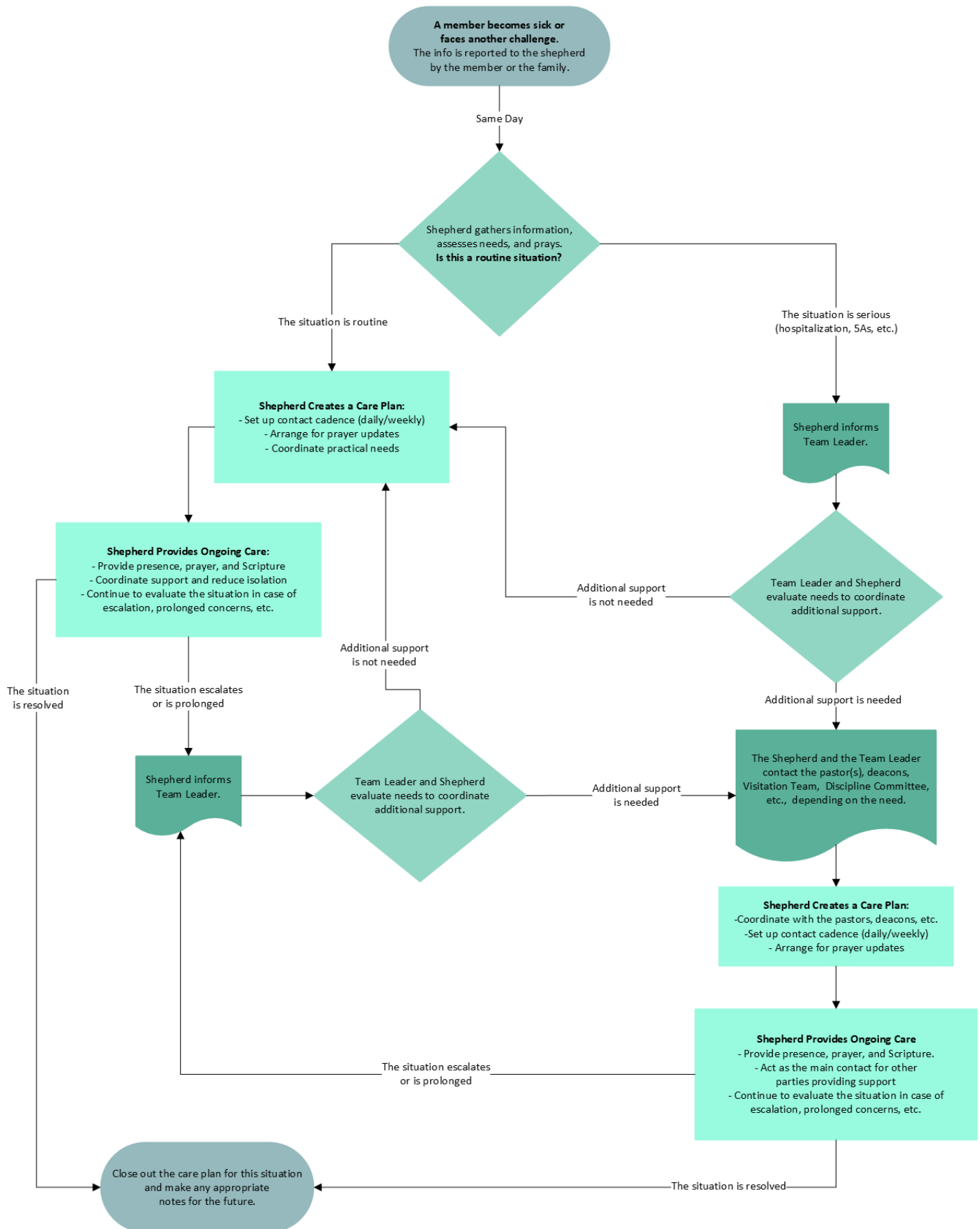
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Shepherding Ministry Org Chart



Each **member of Covenant** is directly connected to either a **Small Group Leader/Facilitator**, a **Deacon**, or a **Lay Shepherd**. Each Small Group Leader/Facilitator, Deacon, and Lay Shepherd is directly connected to a **Shepherding Team Leader**, who is an elder. Covenant's **Shepherding staff and the Shepherding Committee** work closely with the Team Leaders to provide direction for the ministry.

Member Care Flowchart



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WORKBOOK

LESSON 2

Heart Check

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

LESSON 2

Heart Check

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

— Ephesians 2:8–10

BEFORE THIS LESSON

Read chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5 of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will evaluate their own heart through the lens of the Gospel and the heart of the Savior. God is the curegiver; we are the caregiver. Be grounded in the Gospel.

SESSION OUTLINE — PART 1: INTRODUCTIONS & THE GOSPEL

I. Who are you? Share your story in 3 minutes

II. What is the Gospel?

A. What is the Gospel in 10 sentences?

B. Review the “For a Brief Period of Time” handout with your instructor.

SESSION OUTLINE — PART 2: THE HEART CHECK & CONCLUSION

I. The Heart Check

Complete the self-evaluation form included at the end of this lesson.

II. Good News: The Capture of Our Heart. How do you respond to these statements?

1. God will not rest until our hearts are completely His.
2. Christ empowers us to say no to our idolatrous hearts.
3. He offers Himself, the Redeemer, the only real source of lasting change.

III. Everyone has a story.

Complete the handout included at the end of this lesson.

IV. Conclusion

What is your takeaway from today?

LOOKING AHEAD

Reading for next week:

- “Before Your Suffering Comes,” John Piper



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WORKBOOK

LESSON 2 HANDOUTS

Self-Evaluation Form Everyone Has a Story For a Brief Period of Time

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

Self-Evaluation

For each of the five characteristics of a caregiver, mark on the scale where you believe you are right now. Then write under each scale one way you may need to grow in that particular characteristic.

1. Compassionate

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

I am reluctant to help people who are suffering.

I am entirely willing to help people who are suffering.

One way I can grow in compassion is:

2. Full of Faith

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

I'm not sure what I believe.

I have unshakeable faith in Jesus.

One way I can grow in faith is:

3. Skilled

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

I believe I have very few caregiving skills at this time.

I believe I am completely competent at caregiving.

One way I can grow in caregiving skills is:

4. Trustworthy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

*I doubt I could be a reliable
support for my sheep.*

*I am fully confident I can be a
reliable support for my sheep.*

One way I can grow as a trustworthy shepherd is:

5. Christ-Centered

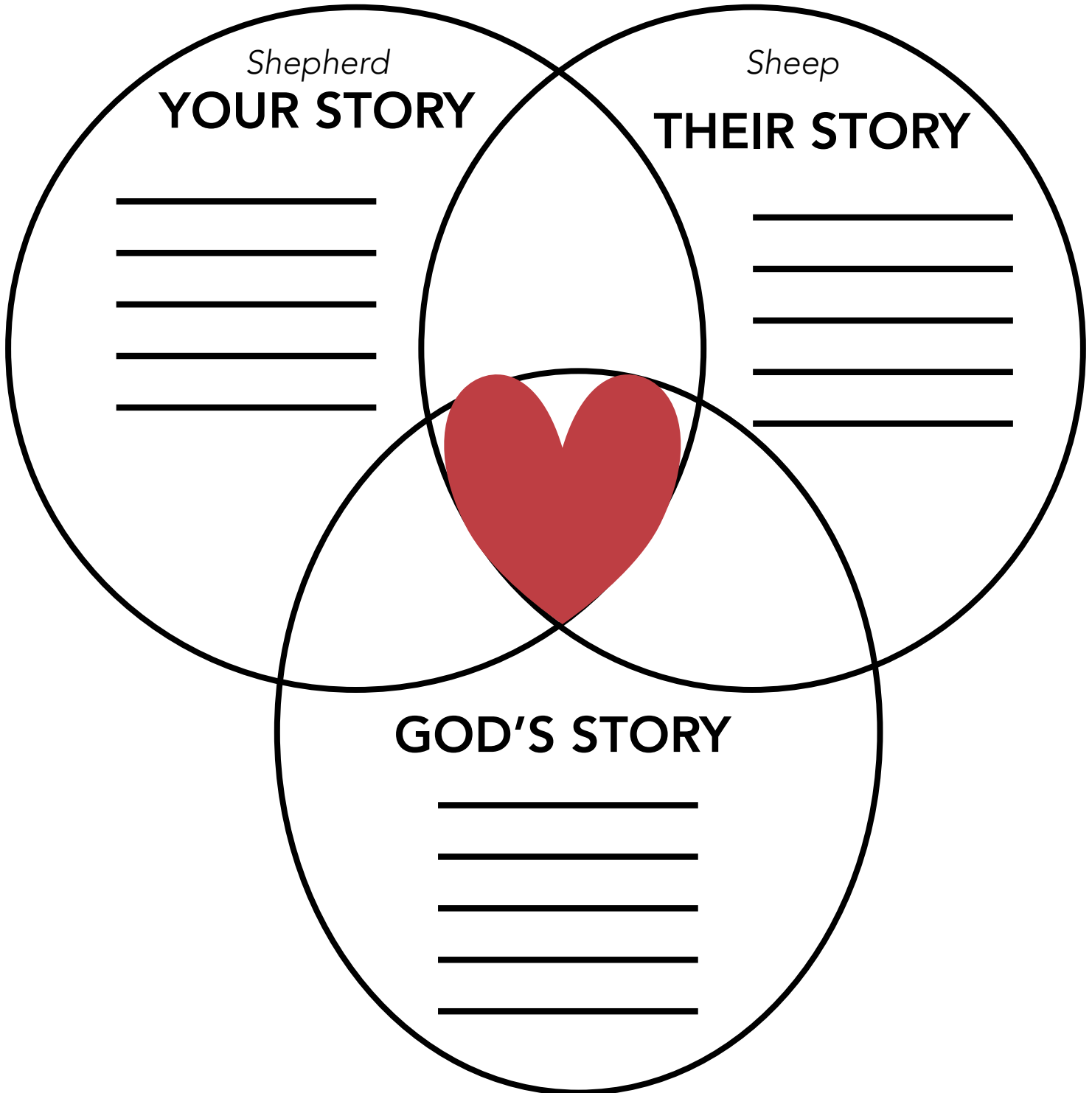
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

*I rarely see Christ as
the center of what I do.*

*I always see Christ as
the center of what I do.*

One way I can grow as a Christ-centered shepherd is:

Everyone Has a Story



For a Brief Period of Time

For a brief period of time when _____ created the world, _____ people walked through a _____ world in _____ union with _____.

The environment was lush and rich, with a menagerie of animals that inhabited the air, land, and sea. Every physical and spiritual _____ was fully met. There were no unfed stomachs or _____ to be feared. The Gardens were _____ of weeds and thorns.

Man and woman, Adam and _____, lived in perfect union with each other. There was no unhealthy _____, no power _____, no vengeance or recrimination. There were no secret plots or harsh _____, no _____, guilt, shame, or rebellion against authority. There was understanding, communication, and _____.

There was no struggle with identity, anxiety, depression, or addiction. There was no painful personal history to overcome. There was no fear of what might happen next, no mixed motives, no struggle with inordinate desire. There was no temptation _____.

With God, too, there was a _____ union. People loved, worshiped, and obeyed as they were _____ to do. In the cool of the day they actually walked with God in the Garden, enjoying perfect fellowship with their Maker. They were God's resident managers, placed there to govern what he had made, and they did their job well. God had no reason to confront them, and they had nothing to _____. All was right, day after day. Life was better than anything we can imagine from our sin-scarred vantage point.

But sadly, it didn't last long. In the most significant _____ ever committed, man and woman stepped outside of God's ordained plan. In a second it all came crashing down. All of the amazing beauty of that world was deeply and _____ scarred.

In an instant, fear, guilt, and shame became standard human experiences. People who once lived in perfect _____ now accused, deceived, and fought for control. Weeds and disease became daily concerns. People began to _____ what was evil and do what was wrong. Rather than submit to _____, they lived as their own _____. The world that once sang the song of perfection now _____ under the weight of the Fall.

_____ altered every thought, desire, word, and deed. It created a world of double mindedness and mixed motives, self-worship and self-absorption. People desired to be served, but they hated serving. They craved control and nurtured delusions of self-sufficiency. They forgot their creator but worshiped his _____. Rather than loving people and using things to express it, people loved _____ and used people to get them. Humanity's second generation even committed murder. They began to lie, cheat, hide, and deny. People suffered at the hands of others, from momentary thoughtlessness to unspeakable acts of physical and sexual abuse. For the first time, people wept from _____ within and _____ without.

God knew his world would be ravaged by sin. He was _____ for it to stay this way and he had a _____. It would unfold over thousands of years. It would mean harnessing the forces of nature and controlling the course of human history, but he could do it. From the moment of the Fall, for generation after generation, he controlled _____ so that someday he could fix what had been so horribly damaged. Into this world, at just the right moment, he sent his one and only Son.

The initial announcement of this _____ is so brief that it would be easy to overlook. It comes at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, just a few sentences in one little verse. Yet it was a fitting summary of Jesus' reason for coming.

[Mark records Jesus' words this way: "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. _____ and believe the good news!]"¹

¹ Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, pgs 1-3, P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 2002

SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

WORKBOOK

LESSON 3

A Theology of Suffering

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

LESSON 3

A Theology of Suffering

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness, and let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

— James 1:2–4

BEFORE THIS LESSON

Read “Before Your Suffering Comes” by John Piper



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LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will learn a basic theology of suffering to aid in ministering to their sheep.

SESSION OUTLINE — SUFFERING: DEFINITION

I. Suffering: Definition

A. How would *you* define suffering?

B. Definition: Feeling the effects of _____.

C. Why is suffering worth our consideration? “Doubts in the mind can go along with pain in the heart.” - Keller

D. It is a question of Discipleship.

E. It is a witness to others.

II. Biblical Suffering

A. Suffering because of _____.

1. Biblical examples of suffering for sin:

- a. David
- b. Ananias and Sapphira
- c. Lot's wife
- d. Jonah
- e. Moses

2. The Biblical answer: _____ (Daniel 9)

3. In shepherding, this idea of personal sin is _____ the situation.

B. Suffering as a _____.

1. Scriptural examples:

- a. Romans 5:3-4: Suffering _____ endurance, character, hope.
- b. James 1:1-4: Suffering _____ steadfastness.
- c. 2 Peter 1:5-7: Suffering is a process of _____ into looking more like _____.

2. How do shepherds _____ this process?

- a. How are you _____?
- b. Point out their refinement: help the sheep see their personal growth.

Shepherds point out _____ by asking questions.

C. Suffering as _____.

1. The answer is Jesus promised _____.

This promise is an _____ to the sufferer.

2. Some people claim persecution when in fact, they are _____, proud people trying to act in a way to glorify themselves.

3. Ask _____ questions to help the sheep self-diagnose.

D. Suffering as a _____ — Job

1. This is the most _____ suffering.

2. Job was:

a. Not receiving _____ for particular sin.

b. It was not _____; Job was a righteous man.

c. Job was not being _____.

3. What do we do in these situations, for instance a _____ disaster like Hurricane Ian.

a. Confess your _____ on God.

b. See that God is still _____ even though the world is _____ and full of evil.

c. The proper response is _____.

III. Suffering Survey

A. Suffering reveals our hearts toward the Gospel.

1. Share an attribute of God and why it matters in suffering.

B. Suffering needs a theology that is personal.

1. _____ bring something to suffering.
2. You're wired to _____ it.
3. Confessional theology runs up against our personal theology.
 - a. _____ will give us our Confessional Theology as long as he can have our _____ theology.
 - b. Explain what this means to you.

C. Suffering is not _____, it's _____.

D. In suffering, bad theology _____ your trouble.

1. Prosperity gospel (health and wealth)

a. "I am suffering because

_____."

b. Proper response: Scripture connects _____ and _____ to the good things God wants for us. — James 1

2. Doubt and Judgment. “God, you are

_____.”

3. Good Doubt

E. Suffering faithfully requires a thorough theology of the story of redemption.

1. Everything is radically broken.

2. The cross _____ changes how we look at suffering. “God cares about your soul, not about your comfort.”

IV. Skills Practice

Spend some time discussing how to address the question “How could a good God allow me to go through _____?”

LOOKING AHEAD

Reading for next week:

- Chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, & 10 of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
- "Life in the Minor Key," Chris Voorhees
- "Using Scripture" handout
- "Incorporating Prayer" handout



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RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

- *Suffering* by Paul David Tripp
- *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* by Tim Keller

SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

WORKBOOK

LESSON 4

*Listening Well,
Using Scripture,
& Incorporating Prayer*

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

LESSON 4

Listening Well

“Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

— **Jeremiah 29:12–13**

“You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak...”

— **James 1:19a**

BEFORE THIS LESSON

Read chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, & 10 of *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, watch “Life in the Minor Key” by Chris Voorhees, and read the “Using Scripture” and “Incorporating Prayer” handouts



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LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will look for opportunities to ask questions that move beyond casual relationships and provide insight as to where ministry is needed.

SESSION OUTLINE — LISTENING WELL

I. Practical Basics of Listening

A. (S) _____

B. (O) _____

C. (L) _____

D. (A) _____

E. (R) _____

II. Teach – Think of different open-ended questions for the following:

A. Marriage/Divorce: _____

B. Job Loss: _____

C. Death: _____

D. Chronic Illness: _____

E. Murder: _____

F. Loss of Child: _____

III. Survey and Focus Questions –

- A. Survey questions _____ the various areas of a person's life and look at the person as a _____.
- B. Focus questions look _____ into one area of a person's life.

IV. The Analogy of the Doorknob

- A. In conversation, a shepherd will attempt to _____ the heart of the sheep.
- B. This is done through trying to _____ various doors to the _____.
- C. Some doors will _____. Some doors will _____
_____. And, some doors take _____ and
_____.

V. The Safe House – Review the handout with your instructor

A. God's Truth: Image-Bearers

1. Patience

B. Love them with a pursuing love of them as image-bearers.

C. One Wall: Listening

D. Another Wall: Sympathy (Hebrews 4:15)

E. The Roof: Confidentiality

F. The Door: Trust

VI. The Mud Hole – Review the handout with your instructor

LESSON 4

Using Scripture

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

— 2 Timothy 3:16–17

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Using Scripture, the shepherd will learn how to become an instrument in the Redeemer’s hands.

SESSION OUTLINE — USING SCRIPTURE

I. Introduction

- A. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. Who are the people God uses and what are their qualifications?
- B. Who is it God uses?
- C. What tools has He given to accomplish His purposes?

II. Scripture

- A. God's Word is a _____ tool of _____.
- B. The Bible makes a poor _____.

III. Using Scripture in Shepherding Ministry

- A. There are _____ to use Scripture in a caregiving relationship.
- B. Negative Use
 - 1. _____ - _____ Scripture use is often _____ or _____ in its approach.

2. Without the perspective of the _____ ,
Scripture is used for _____ as it becomes
more about what you want and not what God has _____ .

C. Positive Use

1. _____ - _____ Scripture use connects the
_____ of the sheep with the heart of the _____ .
2. Use passages that _____ what the entire Bible is about.

LESSON 4

Incorporating Prayer

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

— 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Using prayer, the shepherd will learn how to become an instrument in the Redeemer’s hands.

OPENING

Your prayer life is the anchor of your relationship to your sheep. The deeper your love for the Word, the deeper your prayers will be. Pray continually; it’s an ongoing conversation. We neglect the power and intimacy of prayer. Set aside time to sit quietly and listen to God in prayer. Practice listening to God.

SESSION OUTLINE — INCORPORATING PRAYER

I. What is prayer?

- A. Prayer is a _____ communication with the living God, a sacrifice of praise.
- B. Occurs only with the prior activity of the _____ in Jesus, the Intercessor's name.

II. Pre-prayed and Prepared

- A. Listening to God is the _____ .
- B. The language of _____ shapes the language of _____.

III. Power of Lament

- A. Lament is a _____ in _____ that leads to _____.
- B. Lament is the _____ of a people who know the _____.
- C. God _____ lament.

IV. Dangers in Lament

- A. Laments are almost never without _____.
- B. _____ and _____ in the absence of lament
_____ a sufferer's response.

V. Pattern of Lament: Psalm 13

- A. Turn
- B. Complain
- C. Ask
- D. Trust

LOOKING AHEAD

Reading for next week:

- Chapters 11, 12 & 13 of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*
- "The Goal Is Love," Trent Casto



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RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

- *Side by Side* by Edward Welch
- *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy* by Mark Vroegop

SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

WORKBOOK

LESSON 4 HANDOUTS

The Safe House
The Mud Hole
The Psalms

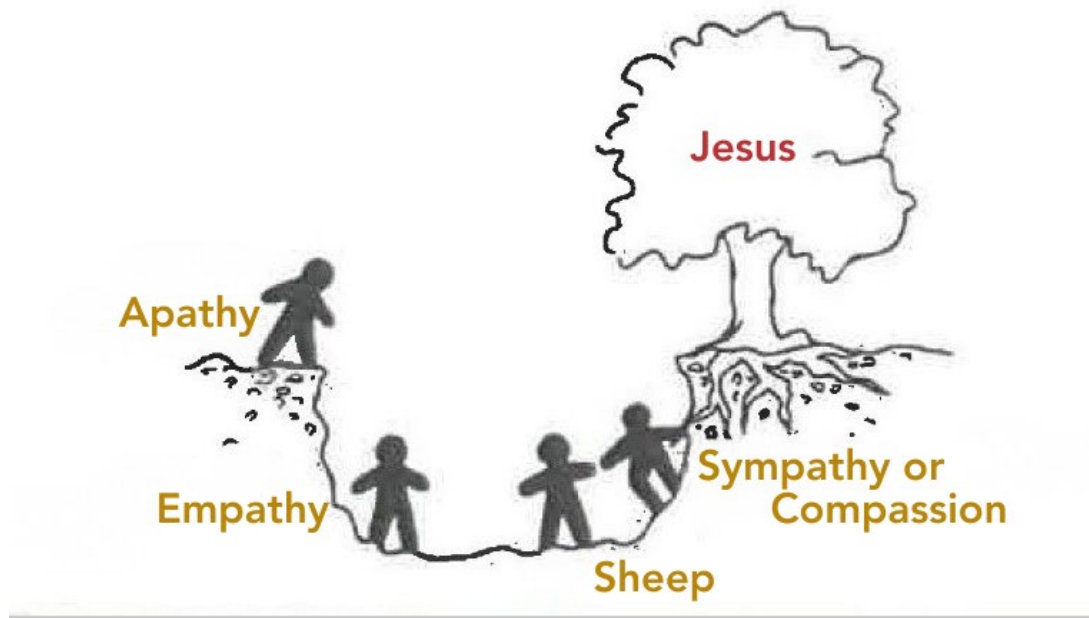
Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

The Safe House



Love them with a pursuing love of them as image-bearers.

The Mud Hole



Apathy

Apathy is feeling concern for someone else without becoming involved in his or her life

Modern Empathy (Overidentification)

Modern empathy means taking on the sheep's feelings and characteristics to the point that the shepherd is just as overwhelmed as the sheep is.

Definition of Sympathy

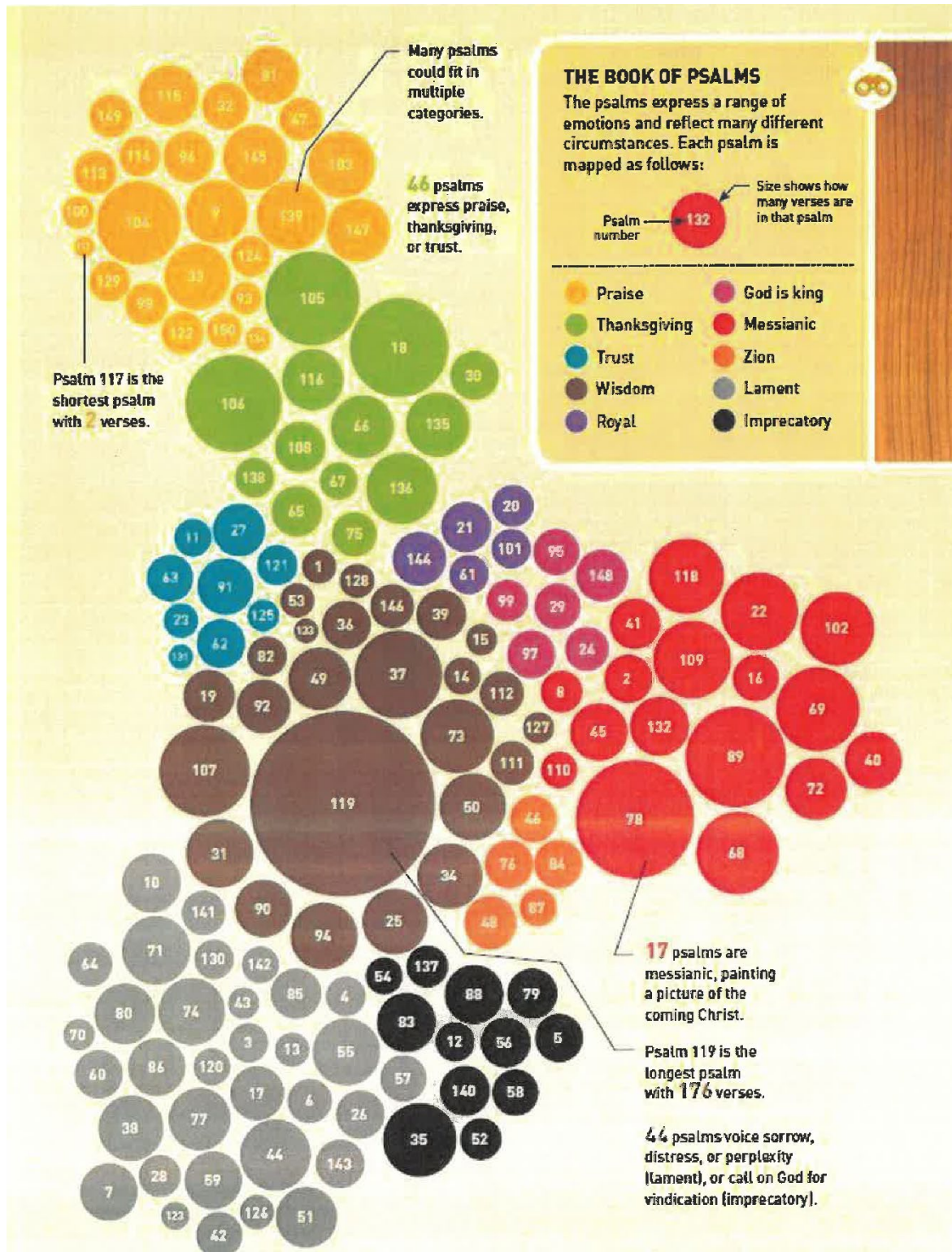
Sympathy is feeling another's problems as if they were your own without actually taking them on yourself.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." –Hebrews 4:15

The True Identity of the Tree

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed." –1 Peter 2:24

The Psalms



SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

WORKBOOK

LESSON 5

*Speaking the Truth in Love,
Confidentiality,
& Boundaries*

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

LESSON 5

Speaking the Truth in Love

...Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

— 2 Samuel 12:7

BEFORE THIS LESSON

Read chapters 11, 12, & 13 of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* and watch "The Goal Is Love" by Trent Casto



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LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will learn a Gospel-oriented manner of confrontation (rebuke) in their communications.

SESSION OUTLINE — SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

I. Speak in Love

- A. Love for God is the only _____ for a ministry of _____ speaking.
- B. _____ is rooted in the Second Great Commandment, which calls us to “_____ your neighbor as yourself.”
- C. Confrontation is our _____ in every relationship.
- D. Failing to confront shows a lack of _____ love.
- E. Confrontation does not force a person to deal with you, but places him _____.

II. Start With Your Own Heart: Pitfalls of an _____ heart (a heart _____).

- A. You may turn _____ of ministry into _____ of anger.
- B. You may _____ what is not personal.
- C. You may be _____ in your approach.
- D. You may _____ your _____ with God’s will.
- E. You may _____ for quick solutions that do not address the _____.

III. Goals of Biblical Rebuke

- A. Be an instrument of _____.

B. Be an agent of _____.

IV. How God Changes Us

A. Confession

1. True confession flows out of _____ and results in a deeper, fuller _____ of God.
2. As we call others to _____, we need to also confess the sins of our own hearts.

B. Commitment

1. Commitment is the first step of the 'put on' phase of _____.
2. People's commitments should be _____ - _____

C. Change

1. Change is the _____ of confrontation.
2. Change focuses on "_____."

LESSON 5

Confidentiality & Boundaries

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

— Proverbs 12:18

Bear one another's burdens...All must carry their own loads.

— Galatians 6:2-5

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will learn the definition, rules, and value of confidentiality.

The shepherd will learn how to identify, recognize, and know the consequences of boundaries.

SESSION OUTLINE — CONFIDENTIALITY & BOUNDARIES

I. The Power of Words

- A. How does the Bible talk about the power of God's words?

- B. "Death and Life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits." Proverbs 18:21

- C. The sheep experiences _____ / _____ by putting their innermost feelings into _____, shared with the shepherd and God.

- D. The shepherd's role is to help them with _____ to experience healing and hope with words from God's _____.

- E. Because the sheep is sharing their innermost thoughts, _____ is crucial.

II. Confidentiality

- A. Conversations with and information about your sheep should be kept generally confidential

B. Three exceptions, times when you must break confidentiality.

1. _____ behavior
2. _____ behavior
3. _____
4. Refer back to the “Handling the 5As” training on the Shepherding Central Hub for direction on how to approach situations that involve Abuse, Adultery, Abandonment, Addiction, or Abnormal behavior:



III. Burdens and Loads

- A. Scriptures call each of us to _____ the crushing weight of the _____ that come into others' lives, but not to take _____ for their daily _____.
- B. A burden (Greek) is exceedingly _____ or _____.
- C. A load (Greek) is the _____ or _____ a person carries, like a backpack.

IV. Boundaries for Shepherds and Sheep

A. Shepherd's Boundaries:

1. Clarifying responsibility: Review the handout with your instructor.
2. What's within our personal boundaries of responsibility?
3. Shepherds should not try to take over the sheep's life.
4. Know your limits

LOOKING AHEAD

Reading for next week:

- *Heaven* (booklet version) by Randy Alcorn
- “Hope for Broken Hearts,” Trent Casto
- “Longing for Our Heavenly Home,” Trent Casto



For an electronic version of our syllabus that includes links to all the online homework, scan the QR code or visit
COVENANTNAPLES.COM/SHEPHERDING

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

- *Forgive* by Tim Keller

SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

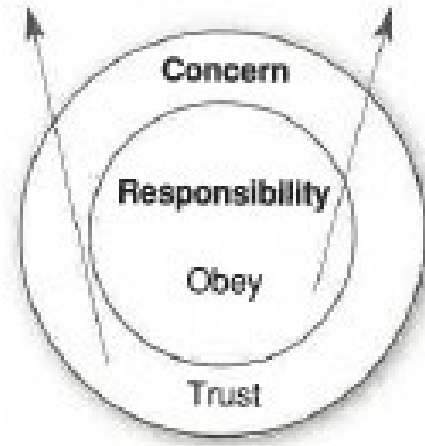
WORKBOOK

LESSON 5 HANDOUTS

Clarifying Responsibility

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

Clarifying Responsibility¹



Things that are concerns in my life but are not my responsibility.
These things I must entrust to God:

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Things that are my God-ordained responsibility and, therefore,
cannot be given to anyone else.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

¹2002. Paul David Tripp. *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing

SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

WORKBOOK

LESSON 6

Hospitals, Death, & Grief

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

LESSON 6

Hospitals

“I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

— Psalm 121:1-2

BEFORE THIS LESSON

Read the booklet version of *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn and listen to “Hope for Broken Hearts” and “Longing for Our Heavenly Home” by Trent Casto.



For an electronic version of our syllabus that includes links to all the online homework, scan the QR code below or visit

[COVENANTNAPLES.COM/SHEPHERDING](https://covenantnaples.com/shepherding)

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will be equipped for a hospital visitation.

SESSION OUTLINE — HOSPITALS

I. Hospital Visit Overview

- A. As a shepherd, you will at some point be called upon to do a hospital visit. For some this may be easy, because your gifts are more geared that way. For others, visitation is scary, because you may be unsure of what to do or how to respond.
- B. There are many different reasons for visiting the hospital or nursing home. You may be there to share in the joy of a baby's birth, or you may be there at someone's death. You may encounter a wide range of emotions from elation to depression, even anger.
- C. Emergencies will always require an immediate response. These emergencies usually include someone near death and/or a serious accident or complication.
 - 1. If you're unable to make the visit, contact someone else (such as your Team Leader or another member of the Small Group) to make the immediate visit.
 - a. If you don't know anyone else who can make the immediate visit, contact the Shepherding Pastor.
 - 2. Regardless of who makes the initial visit, make sure that your Team Leader is informed of the situation.

3. In the meantime, call the hospital, speak to the family member(s), and pray with them (if appropriate) over the phone.

II. The Emergency Room

- A. If there's been an emergency, you will want to go to the Emergency Room first.
- B. Even if you're not able to see the patient, typically a family member will be present. Who else is present and the seriousness of the emergency will dictate the extent of your involvement.
- C. If the family member is alone, stay with them initially or contact someone else who can be with them. When a family member is alone in the emergency room, they may need someone else's help to think through issues and/or make decisions.

III. The Patient's Room

- A. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after entering a patient's room.
- B. Before entering the room, always knock first.
- C. Introduce yourself as you enter. If you know the person, you may still need to introduce yourself, because they may be drugged or asleep.
- D. Introduce yourself to others who may be in the room.
- E. Position yourself so you can maintain eye contact with the patient.

- F. Don't sit or lean on the bed. Besides getting in the person's space, more importantly, it might be quite uncomfortable and even physically painful for them.
- G. Don't do all the talking. Allow them to talk if they choose.
- H. If medical personnel enter the room, offer to leave.
- I. Offer to read Scripture and lead in prayer.
- J. If you pray with them and you want to hold their hand, ask their permission first.
- K. Don't stay too long (5 – 15 minutes is enough), unless you know them better and your friendship may dictate a longer visit.

IV. Selected Scripture for Visitation

A. Old Testament:

- 1. Numbers 6:24-26
- 2. Deuteronomy 33:27
- 3. Psalms 23, 100, and 121
- 4. Isaiah 40:28-31
- 5. Jeremiah 17:7-8, 14

B. New Testament:

- 1. Matthew 11:28-30
- 2. Romans 8:28-30
- 3. Romans 8:38, 39
- 4. John 14:1-17
- 5. 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, 16-18
- 6. Philippians 4:4-7
- 7. Revelation 21:1-5

V. Other Issues in Visitation – Review the handout with your instructor

LESSON 6

Death

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

— Psalm 23:4

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will understand the dying process.

OPENING

Death is never merely a medical event. For the Christian, death is an enemy that Christ has defeated, and it is also the final step before being with the Lord. As shepherds, our role is not to diagnose, prescribe, or take over medical care. Our calling is to be a calm, prayerful, compassionate presence with the dying person and their family.

SESSION OUTLINE — DEATH

I. What May Happen Physically

A. As the body begins to shut down, families may notice changes that can feel alarming but are often part of the normal dying process.

B. A dying person may

1. Eat and drink less, or stop eating and drinking altogether.
2. Sleep more and become harder to wake.
3. Become weaker and less able to speak or move.
4. Have cool hands or feet, changes in skin color, or swelling.
5. Have changes in breathing, including pauses, rattling sounds, or irregular breaths.
6. Become confused, restless, or speak as though they are seeing people or places others cannot see.
7. Have less urine output or changes in bowel function.

These signs do not always mean the person is being neglected or that the family is doing something wrong. Often, they mean the body is slowly letting go.

II. What Shepherds Should Remember

- A. Shepherds are not medical professionals. Do not give medical instructions about food, fluids, medication, breathing, or pain control. Encourage the family to speak with hospice, nurses, physicians, or palliative care providers.
- B. Your ministry is to
 - 1. Be present
 - 2. Pray with and for the family
 - 3. Read Scripture
 - 4. Listen without trying to fix everything
 - 5. Help reduce panic
 - 6. Encourage the family to ask medical professionals their questions
 - 7. Remind them of the hope of Christ
- C. A helpful phrase to remember: “We are here to comfort, pray, support, and point people to Christ — not to replace hospice or medical care.”

III. How to Comfort the Family

- A. Families often feel guilt, fear, confusion, and grief before death actually occurs. They may wonder if they are doing enough. They may feel guilty when their loved one stops eating or drinking. They may panic when breathing changes. They may not know what to say.
- B. Shepherds can gently remind them:

1. “You are not alone.”
2. “It is okay to ask hospice or the nurse what is happening.”
3. “Eating less is often part of the dying process.”
4. “It is okay to sit quietly. You do not have to have perfect words.”
5. “It is not faithless to feel afraid.”
6. “The Lord is near to His people, even here.”

C. Do not shame grief. Do not rush people to be “okay.” Christian hope does not remove sorrow; it gives sorrow somewhere to go: “We do not grieve as others do who have no hope.” – 1 Thessalonians 4:13

IV. How to Minister to the Dying Person

A. Even when a person is weak, sleepy, or unable to respond, speak gently and lovingly. Do not assume they cannot hear. Keep your words simple, calm, and full of grace.

B. You may

1. Read Psalm 23, John 11:25–26, Romans 8:38–39, 2 Corinthians 4:16–18, or Revelation 21:1–5
2. Pray briefly and tenderly
3. Remind them of Christ’s promises.
4. Encourage confession, forgiveness, reconciliation, and assurance when appropriate.

5. Sing or quietly read a favorite hymn

6. Sit in silence without feeling the need to fill the room.

C. Here is an example of a simple prayer: “Lord Jesus, be near to your servant.

Comfort them with your presence. Strengthen this family. Give peace where there is fear, hope where there is sorrow, and faith to trust you in this valley. Thank you that nothing can separate your people from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.”

V. Biblical Hope at the End of Life

A. For the believer, death is real, painful, and grievous — but it is not ultimate. Christ has entered death and conquered it. The Christian’s hope is not vague comfort, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

B. “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” – John 11:25

C. As shepherds, we walk with people through the valley of the shadow of death, not with panic, not with empty optimism, but with the steady hope of the risen Christ.

Be present. Be gentle. Pray. Read Scripture.

Encourage medical support. Point them to Christ.

LESSON 6

Grief

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

— Matthew 5:4

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The shepherd will understand the grief process and be equipped with practical strategies based on our biblical hope in Christ.

OPENING

Grief is the natural response to loss. For Christians, grief is not a lack of faith. Scripture does not command us to avoid sorrow; it teaches us to grieve with hope. Shepherds should not rush people through grief, minimize their pain, or force them into quick answers. Our calling is to walk patiently with the grieving, bringing the presence, promises, and comfort of Christ.

SESSION OUTLINE — GRIEF

I. What Grief May Look Like

- A. Grief is not the same for every person. It does not move in a neat, predictable line. A grieving person may feel several emotions in the same day, or even in the same hour.
- B. A grieving person may experience:
 - 1. Sadness, crying, numbness, or shock.
 - 2. Anger, irritability, or confusion.
 - 3. Guilt over things said, unsaid, done, or left undone.
 - 4. Relief, especially after a long illness or suffering.
 - 5. Loneliness, fear, or anxiety about the future.
 - 6. Difficulty sleeping, eating, concentrating, or making decisions.
 - 7. A desire to talk often about the person who died.
 - 8. A desire to be quiet and withdraw for a time.
 - 9. Unexpected waves of grief triggered by dates, songs, smells, places, or memories.
- C. These responses do not necessarily mean something is wrong. Grief often comes in waves. A person may seem strong one day and overwhelmed the next.

II. What Shepherds Should Remember

- A. Shepherds are not called to fix grief. We are called to enter it with compassion, patience, prayer, and hope.
- B. Your ministry is to:
 - 1. Be present.
 - 2. Listen more than you speak.
 - 3. Pray gently and simply.
 - 4. Read Scripture with care.
 - 5. Allow tears and silence.
 - 6. Remember important dates.
 - 7. Help with practical needs when appropriate.
 - 8. Encourage connection with the church body.
 - 9. Watch for signs that additional pastoral, medical, or counseling help may be needed.
- C. Remember: “Grief is not something to solve quickly; it is sorrow to be carried faithfully in the presence of Christ.”

III. How to Comfort the Grieving

- A. The grieving often hear unhelpful words, even from well-meaning Christians.

Avoid phrases that minimize the loss or pressure the person to move on.

B. Avoid saying:

1. "At least they are in a better place."
2. "Everything happens for a reason."
3. "God needed another angel."
4. "You need to be strong."
5. "It is time to move on."
6. "I know exactly how you feel."

C. Instead, say simple, truthful, compassionate words:

1. "I am so sorry."
2. "I love you, and I am here."
3. "This is very painful."
4. "You do not have to grieve alone."
5. "It is okay to cry."
6. "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted."
7. "Would it be helpful to tell me about them?"
8. "Can I sit with you for a while?"

D. Sometimes the best comfort is quiet presence. You do not need perfect words.

Often, a calm Christian presence speaks loudly.

E. "Weep with those who weep." – Romans 12:15

IV. How to Minister Over Time

A. Grief often becomes harder after the funeral, when others return to normal life.

Shepherding care should continue beyond the first few days.

B. Consider following up:

1. A few days after the funeral.
2. Two to three weeks later.
3. Around the one-month mark.
4. On birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays.
5. Near the anniversary of the death.
6. When you notice withdrawal from worship or fellowship.

C. Helpful questions:

1. "How are you doing today?"
2. "What has been hardest this week?"
3. "What do you miss most about them?"
4. "Are there times of day that feel especially difficult?"
5. "Are you sleeping and eating?"
6. "How can the church support you right now?"
7. "Would you like me to pray, read Scripture, or just sit with you?"

D. Do not be afraid to mention the name of the person who died. Many grieving people are comforted when others remember and speak honestly about their loved one.

V. When to Seek Additional Help

- A. Grief is painful, but sometimes a person may need more support than a shepherd can provide. Encourage additional pastoral, counseling, medical, or crisis help when grief includes:
1. Talk of self-harm or not wanting to live.
 2. Threats to harm others.
 3. Ongoing inability to function in basic responsibilities.
 4. Heavy alcohol or drug use to cope.
 5. Severe isolation over time.
 6. Persistent hopelessness or despair.
 7. Hallucinations, extreme confusion, or dangerous behavior.
 8. Unresolved guilt that becomes spiritually crushing.
- B. If someone talks about harming themselves or someone else, do not leave them alone. Contact a pastor, elder, family member, emergency services, or appropriate crisis support immediately.

VI. Biblical Hope in Grief

- A. Christian hope does not erase grief. Jesus Himself wept at the grave of Lazarus. Death is an enemy. But for those who belong to Christ, death is a defeated enemy:
1. “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”

– Psalm 34:18

2. “We do not grieve as others do who have no hope.” – 1 Thessalonians 4:13

- B. The hope of the Christian is not that death is small, but that Christ is greater. The resurrection of Jesus means that sorrow does not get the final word. One day, every tear will be wiped away, death shall be no more, and all things will be made new.
- C. As shepherds, we do not rush grief. We enter it gently, pray faithfully, listen patiently, and point the grieving to the crucified and risen Christ.

**Be present. Listen well. Pray gently. Remember over
time. Watch carefully. Point them to Christ.**

LOOKING AHEAD

Congratulations on completing Shepherding Foundations! Going forward, you will join the rest of Covenant's shepherds at the bi-monthly Shepherding Meetings, which take place on the second Monday of every other month. (Check the Shepherding Central Hub for upcoming dates.)

You'll start with role-specific classes for either small group leaders or lay shepherds, depending on your chosen role(s). Once those classes are complete, you'll join a Shepherding Team for ongoing support and training.

Thank you for serving at Covenant!

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

- *Heaven* (full book) by Randy Alcorn
- *A Grief Observed* by CS Lewis
- *Therefore I Have Hope* by Cameron Cole

SHEPHERDING FOUNDATIONS

WORKBOOK

LESSON 6 HANDOUTS

Other Issues in Visitation

Covenant Church of Naples, PCA

Other Issues in Visitation¹

What if there is a "No Visitors" sign on the door?

If you get to the patient's room, and it says "no visitors," go to the nurses' station and ask if this applies to church representatives. Usually, it does not. Most of the time "no visitors" signs reflect the desire for the patient to have some rest. So, if you do visit, don't stay long.

What if the patient is asleep?

It's not always easy to know what to do here. Sometimes, depending on how well you know the person may dictate what you do. Here are some options:

1. You may go by the nurses' station and ask whether they can be awakened.
2. If a family member is there, ask whether you should come back.
3. Wake the person up by quietly calling the person's name.
4. Leave a note, letting them know the day and hour when you came by.

If there is an operation, should I come and be with the family?

This probably depends on how well you know the person and how much time you have. If you know them better, you can probably stay with them a more extended time. You will need to gauge that. If you don't know them well, then a brief visit is probably more warranted.

Can I visit someone in the ICU?

Visitors (besides family members) are usually restricted from visiting someone in ICU. However, pastors are typically allowed entrance. Check with the nurses' station and tell them you're a church representative. When visiting, don't make the visit too long. Also, you may want to go by the ICU Waiting Room and see if any family members are there.

Can I do an "anointing" at the hospital?

Absolutely. You will need to gather at least two other elders to come with you and pray over the person. If the patient doesn't ask for an anointing, just make sure you ask the patient first. If you're dealing with someone in a coma, for instance, ask the family if you can anoint the person, explaining to them what is involved.

What about praying and even doing anointings with non-Christian family members present?

This is a great time to minister to the entire family. Praying in the hospital is almost always "socially acceptable," so don't be afraid to take the initiative here.

What if I'm physically sick, even if it's a common cold?

Don't visit. Call the patient, if possible, and let them know your reason or leave a message at the nurses' station, letting the patient know you called.

What about ministering to those who are grieving and/or depressed?

Occasionally, you may be called upon to deal with grieving patients or family members. You may think the skill involved here is saying the "right thing." In many cases, you being there is enough. Don't feel under pressure to give some "magic" words. This is where wisdom is needed, because you don't want to quote Romans 8:28 immediately after someone has lost a child. The Scripture can ultimately bring us hope, but timing is necessary for certain truths and exhortations. The important thing is to be a comfort, while you allow people to grieve. If you comfort through words, you can offer to pray and read Scripture, but make sure you ask permission.

¹Like Sheep With A Shepherd; A Primer for Elders in the Church - Sixth edition; R. Schlichting, B. Carter, H. Hatcher & D. Blackgrave, Perimeter Church, Atlanta, GA

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