

WORD PICTURES OF THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH - The Flock of God

The Shepherds Responsibilities

In John 21:15–19 Jesus tells Peter: “Feed my lambs,” “Tend my sheep,” “Feed my sheep.” Peter was to be a shepherd of Jesus’ sheep. What would be the main emphasis of Peter, or any shepherd of Jesus’ flock? Would it not be to teach the sheep to hear, to know and to follow the voice of the supreme Shepherd.

John 10:27 (ESV)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

In 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter instructs the elders on their primary responsibility toward the “flock of God.”

The action of oversight is to be carried out with an appropriate attitude:

1 Peter 5:1–4 (ESV). 2 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; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Of all the ways Jesus could have described His relationship to His followers, why did He choose the shepherd and sheep analogy?

Let’s compare a few of the ways that we are like sheep.

1. Sheep are totally dependent upon the shepherd for their survival.

2. Sheep are easily distracted.

Isaiah speaks of all people as wandering sheep and the need for Jesus to die for them (Isaiah 53:6).

Peter speaks of believers who have lost their way, but were drawn back into the “fold” (1 Peter 2:25).

Jesus depicts the wandering sheep and the need for a shepherd to bring them back (Matthew 18:12).

3. Sheep are of great value to their shepherd (Matthew 18:12–13).

4. Sheep need protection (Matthew 9:36).

In Acts 20:28–30 Paul refers to the church as the flock. He cautions the elders/shepherds to be on careful guard against “fierce wolves,” who would seek to lead the members of the church away from the pure gospel of salvation through Christ and Christ alone.

5. Sheep are not meant to carry burdens (Psalm 55:22).

6. Sheep know how to distinguish between the shepherd’s voice and other conflicting voices. (John 10:2–5)

7. Sheep will settle for less when they could have more (Psalm 23:1-2).