

“Peter, in addressing the **elders** (*presbyterous*; cf. Acts 11:30; 20:17), also used a word that identified himself as one who held the same office (*sympresbyteros*, “fellow-presbyter”). As an elder, Peter was speaking from experience. However, Peter’s authority came from the fact that he was an apostle (1 Peter 1:1) and **a witness** (*martyrs*; cf. Acts 3:15; 10:39) **of Christ’s sufferings**. Peter also referred to himself as **one who ... will share** (*koinōnos*; cf. 1 Peter 4:13) **in the glory to be revealed**. Peter had just made the point that those who share in Christ’s sufferings will also share in His glory (4:13). Peter further identified with his readers by referring to his own suffering for Christ’s sake (Acts 5:40).”¹

As we evaluate the directives given by Peter to the scattered saints in the book of 1 Peter, we get insight as to how an Elder (also called a Pastor - Ephesians 4:11) is to operate:

I. An Elder/Pastor is to shepherd the flock of God. (v1-v2)

What does this mean?

- A. To rule over/govern a set of people who have been put under one’s care by God, but who ultimately belong to God.
- B. To watch over/protect a set of people who have been put under one’s care by God, but who ultimately belong to God.
- C. To guide in a God-honoring direction a set of people who have been put under one’s care by God, but who ultimately belong to God.
- D. To help a set of people who have been put under one’s care by God, but who ultimately belong to God.

II. An Elder/Pastor is to shepherd, exercising oversight of the flock of God. (v1-v2)

What does this mean?

- A. To provide the spiritual nourishment that the body of Christ needs to grow to spiritual maturity in Christ
- B. To carefully consider all circumstances and possible consequences pertaining to the spiritual development of the members of the body
- C. To be attentive to the well-being of the members of the body
- D. To warn the members of the body of their external enemies and the internal enemies to their well-being

¹ Roger M. Raymer, “1 Peter,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 855.

III. An Elder/Pastor is to provide oversight without compulsion. (v2)

What does that mean?

- A. To provide oversight without feeling “forced to do it” by some outside sources
- B. To provide oversight without having a heart that “does not want to do it”
- C. To provide oversight, but not doing it out of mere obligation simply because “someone needs to do it”
- D. To provide oversight, but not doing it merely because “you guess you ought to do it”

IV. An Elder/Pastor is to provide oversight willingly as God designed. (v2)

What does that mean?

- A. To provide oversight to the Members of the Body because one has a burning desire to do so
- B. To provide oversight to the Members of the Body intentionally with a deliberate focus to do so
- C. To provide oversight to the Members of the Body not as a last resort, but as a first resolve
- D. To provide oversight to the Members of the Body according to the standards established by God

Summary: An Elder/Pastor is to take care of the flock allotted to his charge according to the standards of God with a willing heart. However, he must have people who are willing to follow his directives and guidance with a willing heart, as those directives and guidance line up to the standards of God (Hebrews 13:7, 17). Here are some questions you must consider:

- What Elder/Pastor is responsible for keeping watch over your soul right now?
- Is he aware that he is to keep watch over your soul right now?
- Was there an official agreement and are you both abiding by the terms?
- What influences you to follow the leadership of this particular Elder/Pastor?
- At what level do you follow the leadership of this particular Elder/Pastor?
- Are you allowing him to shepherd and oversee you as described and commanded by Scripture?
- Are you influenced to be devoted to God and His will according to the Elder’s/Pastor’s leadership? Why or why not?

What Influences You To Follow A Shepherd?

(As people followed Jesus, so you will follow the shepherds He has sent to watch over His people)

Level One: Influenced by Resentment in your Heart for the Shepherd

You follow because there is a grudge in your heart. You want to ruin or create credibility issues to short-circuit the advancement of the Kingdom Agenda through the ministry of the shepherd. You ask questions in public, in hopes that it would call into question the credibility of the shepherd. You seek to influence people to cause a rebellion against the leadership of the shepherd. Because you have no level of commitment to the ministry other than how you can delegitimize it, you are a detriment to the ministry. (*The Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew 22:15-46*)

Level Two: Influenced by your Righteousness, Riches and Repeated Issues of this Life Apart from the Shepherd

You come listen to the shepherd but you have your own way of living that you think is right. Therefore, you pick up of few things here and there from the shepherd, but mainly you have created your own path of change and righteousness and service to others. The cares, riches, and worries of this life are much more important to you than the biblical governance and biblical guidance of the shepherd. As a result, you don't follow through on your character development into the image of Christ or connection to others in the body of Christ because your life is too busy for that. Because you are guided by your own standards, you are shocked and resistant to the standards presented by God through the shepherd. Consequently, you are deceiving yourself about your Christianity and your commitment to follow the biblical governance and biblical guidance of the shepherd. As a result, there is no true commitment to following the shepherd as he follows Christ because you are committed to yourself and your agenda above Christ and His agenda. The shepherd does not really know you nor can he give an account of you, because you are hardly around. (*The Self-Righteous in Matthew 7:22-23 / Those who heard the word but could not bring it to fruition because of the cares, riches, and worries of this life in Luke 8:4-21 / The Rich Young Ruler in Matthew 19:16-26*)

Level Three: Influenced by the Residuals in this Life you can Gain from the Shepherd

You follow because of the temporal things you have gained from the shepherd as well at what you hope to gain from the shepherd – e.g rapport, results (according to what is deemed good to you not necessarily according to what glorifies God), regard, respect, or rewards. When those things no longer happen or you do not think you are going to get what you want, you no longer follow. Because you have no level of commitment to the ministry other than what you can gain from it in earthly terms, you can easily walk away. (*People pursuing Jesus for physical bread in John 6:22-66*)

Level Four: Influenced by the Reality of the Word of God Spoken to you from the Shepherd

You follow because you hear God's Word and it is drawing you into awareness of truth and brokenness over your sin in various aspects of your lives as you listen to the Word of God. Because God is drawing you to Himself through the ministry of this shepherd, you follow. You are not interested in walking away but learning more from God. You are devoted to God and the ministry He has established through this shepherd. You are devoted to serving and to being served through the ministry God has established through this shepherd. *(The 11 of the 12 Disciples who stayed with Jesus in John 6:66-71)*

Level Five: Influenced by the Refinement of Your Life by God through the Biblical Directives and Biblical Guidance from the Shepherd

You follow because you hear God's Word and you find that you have moved from awareness of truth, to brokenness over your sin in various aspects of your lives, to change into Christ-like character in various aspects of your lives. You have been helped through the biblical directives and biblical guidance of the shepherd, resulting in burdens being born, needs being met, character being developed, and skills being developed. God is transforming your life through the ministry of the shepherd you follow. You are not interested in walking away but in experiencing more of the life transformation of God through the ministry. You are devoted to God and the ministry He has established through this shepherd. You are devoted to serving and to being served through the ministry God has established through this shepherd. *(The 11 of the 12 Disciples who stayed with Jesus in John 6:66-71)*