

Management and Planning

Detailed Outline *Part 1 of 4*

Introduction: Shepherding Sheep Demands Good Management Skills.

A. Philip Keller on Shepherding

Philip Keller has written several books on shepherding. In fact, he was a shepherd for over 35 years. If you have not read any of his books, I highly recommend them, particularly if you are unfamiliar with sheep or the agricultural world. Some of his books are: *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, *A Shepherd Looks at the Good Shepherd* and *A Shepherd Looks at the Lamb of God*. These books will help you understand the biblical concept of sheep and shepherding.

1. In one of his books, Keller says this.

God is an orderly God. He has made us creatures who can organize and manage in the most amazing ways. – Philip Keller

2. Part of bearing the divine image or the *imago dei* is that we are able to plan ahead and organize and manage. We have to organize and manage our time, money, responsibilities, and often groups of people.

B. Illustration

I saw a documentary on ship building. Some of these ships are floating cities. In building a ship, they must organize millions of parts, large and small, into one ship. And they have to manage over ten thousand people from engineers to welders. It is amazing that people can construct these ships and organize all the details involved.

C. Acts 20:28

In Acts 20:28, the Holy Spirit of God has called all elders to shepherd the flock of God. Part of that is leading, managing, and organizing.

1. If you are a real shepherd, you must manage land, water, disease, and the flock. You must be able to identify predators and protect the flock from them. You must be able to plan ahead and provide for the flock's needs. Good shepherding demands good management.
2. In the local church, we must manage money, facilities, peoples' gifts, programs, and meetings; solve problems; and establish a vision.
 - a) Many churches are poorly managed. Gifts are squandered, money is lost, things don't operate smoothly, and people are frustrated as a result.
 - b) Another example of a lack of management is to look at various countries in the world where the leadership mismanages the country. As a result, most of the people live in terrible conditions.

3. God has made us as his creation to be able to manage and order life. The better we are at this, the better we will be at our job of leading his flock.
4. One of the biggest complaints I hear about elders from people is that they don't lead well. They don't plan well, they don't look ahead, and they don't have much vision. The same problems reoccur, gifts are squandered, and the people get frustrated. Often, people will leave and go to a church that they feel is better managed, their gifts will be used, and problems will be solved.

Let us look now at ways to improve our personal management and management of the flock.

I. Be Diligent (Wholehearted, Zealous)

A. Romans 12:8

In Romans 12:8, Paul lists a series of spiritual gifts and in that list he mentions leadership as a spiritual gift. He says,

"... The one who leads, with zeal . . ." (Rom. 12:8 ESV)

1. The word "zeal" has the idea of full commitment, putting yourself into what you do, and doing a good job. So often we lead but do so halfheartedly or minimally. We must lead with energy and conscientiousness.
2. In the same context Paul writes in Romans 12:11:

"Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord." (Rom. 12:11)

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men." (Col. 3:23)

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might." (Ecc. 9:10a)

B. Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*

Many years ago, one of the great Puritan writers, Richard Baxter, wrote a book, *The Reformed Pastor*. He saw so much mismanagement, laziness, and lack of spiritual energy and care for the flock. He wrote this book to encourage pastors to lead wholeheartedly and with zeal.

C. One of the great enemies of leadership is passivity.

We are not to be minimal, halfhearted leaders. I beg you to be wholehearted in your leadership.

II. Be Faithful in Little Things

Little things matter. Jesus made this principle clear:

"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much." (Luke 16:10)

We start by being faithful in little responsibilities and assignments, and then the Lord will give us greater assignments. The same is true in a secular job. If you prove that you are responsible and effective in the small things, you will be given greater things to do.

A. Show Up

1. Someone has said 95% of life is showing up.
2. Illustration: Some of our high school leaders plan events and the helpers don't show up. The leaders are left with a group of kids and not enough helpers. Showing up is a part of our commitment to one another.
3. We need to be where we need to be. If you are due at an elders' meeting, be there! It causes problems in a church and among people when someone has a responsibility and they don't show up.

B. Be on Time

1. This sounds like a small thing, but it is extremely important.
 - a) It frustrates people when you are late.
 - b) You may not realize it, but your character is on the line—your reputation.
2. Illustration: My dad used to always say to me growing up, "A man is no better than his word." If you promise someone to be at their home at 6 p.m. to take them to church, but you don't show up or your show up late, your character is on the line and your reputation as a person of his word has just been marred. So, be a person of your word. A man is no better than his word.

C. Follow Through

1. There is nothing more important than for an elder to follow through with what he has said he will do.
 - a) If you are a leader and you don't follow through with your responsibilities and things you promised to do, this will frustrate people. It will hurt your leadership and the entire eldership.
 - b) Illustration: In our own church, a family was in a grave situation. They wanted an elder to come to their home during a difficult time. One of the elders said he would do it but never showed up. He brought discredit to the whole eldership.
 - c) I want to encourage you to take your duties and your promises seriously. It is for the Lord and His people that you are doing this! Take it seriously!
2. I think of Paul speaking to the Corinthians. They had promised to give some money but they had procrastinated. So Paul writes to them.

"So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have." (2 Cor. 8:11)

In other words, Paul is telling the Corinthian believers, "You made a promise, and you have the desire to do this. But you have to follow through." The Corinthians had a problem that many of us have. We want to do things, but we don't follow through. Your follow-through must match your desire!

3. Proverbs reminds us:

"In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty." (Prov. 14:23)

- a) Don't be a big talker or just make big promises. Be a person of your word. Your character and reputation, as well as that of the entire eldership, is on the line. If you are not a person of your word, it won't take the people long to realize that you are not a person who follows through. They will not trust you. When they need something done, people will go to a person whom they know will get the job done.
- b) Illustration: One of the elders who started our church was a very conscientious leader. He would write everything down. You knew that if Herb Banks said something would get done, you could rest your mind because it would get done. I cannot remember a single time in almost 40 years that he fell through with his responsibility.
- c) Illustration: I visited a friend who had an oak tree in his backyard. The tree was almost 5 feet in diameter. I asked my friend, "Aren't you afraid that the tree will fall down on your house?" My friend replied, "Oh no, it has deep roots." We must be leaders with deep roots and people of our word.

Management and Planning

Detailed Outline *Part 2 of 4*

III. Be Organized

God made us to manage life and to be organized and self-disciplined creatures. May I remind you, one of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. We are not to be scatterbrained and waste time, money, and our gifts. We are to be stewards of these things. We must improve in our self-control.

This is especially important today because we live in the age of distractions. There are so many distractions now that didn't even exist 25 years ago. Movies, smartphones, TV, sports, internet—the ways people can get at you are endless.

People are overcommitted, overburdened, and overworked. This is strongly impacting our churches and our spiritual lives. It is your responsibility to get ahold of your life. Take control of technology and the time pressures you have. You need to be ruthless about this. If not, you will have no time for spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and mastering the Word of God.

Let's look at how we manage our time and be good stewards of the gifts God has given us.

A. Organize Your Life and Stay with It

1. This is not a once-in-a-lifetime activity; throughout life, we are constantly to be organizing and rearranging our schedule and workload. You must step back and look at what you are doing and evaluate whether you are overcommitted or too busy.
2. God has given us 24 hours in a day, and we are responsible to manage that time. God has given us work to do in those hours. We must organize and manage that work.
3. Disorganized and undisciplined people are unhappy people. They never have anything done and can never really relax or rest because they are so far behind in everything.
4. The person who brings order to their life is the happy person because they are the person who gets things done.
5. There is an old saying: "If you want something done, give it to a busy person." Some people have little to do, but you give them a job and they never get it done. But a person who has an orderly lifestyle will get things done.
6. You have to build a mental concept of constantly bringing order and organization to your busy life. This is something you will need to do all of your life.

B. Use a Daily Planner or a Computer Program

1. We must manage time and the work that God has given us. You need something to help you plan your time.
 - a) I like an old-school planner. It works for me.
 - b) You may want to use your smartphone or your computer.

2. I carry my planner with me wherever I go. When I get assignments, make appointments, or have phone calls, I write them all down right away in my planner so I don't forget.
3. Illustration: I do this with prayer requests too, and I've told people about this. One Sunday, I was speaking to a young lady at the door of the church. She gave me a prayer request, but I didn't have my planner to write it down. She stood there for a moment, and then she asked me, "Well, aren't you going to write it down? You say you will forget it if you don't." So I went and found a place to write it down. I take people's prayer requests very seriously and write them down so I don't forget.
4. Whatever method you choose, you need to have some system for keeping track of your appointments, responsibilities, prayer requests, and other things.

C. Plan Your Day and Week

Let me give you some suggestions that could be life-changing for you.

1. Every day, spend 5 minutes at the beginning or the end of the day and look over your day, or if you do this at night, the next day.
 - a) Even if you write responsibilities down or keep track of them in your smartphone or computer, if you don't look at them, it will be pointless.
 - b) By going over your day, you will know what you have going on and your availability if things come up.
2. Once a week, with your spouse and family, look over your calendar for the week and even the upcoming months. This only take minutes to do, but it will save you hours and much frustration.
 - a) My wife and I do this almost weekly, and we have to in order to block out time for each other and for our family. If not, our days and weeks get filled with activities. We have to take control of all the requests and responsibilities that come to us, and we do this by coordinating our calendars.
 - b) We also do this so we can block out time for rest and recreation, which we will discuss more later.
3. If you are a very busy person, you may need to plan for the year or for the next year. If you don't have a schedule in mind, you can over-book or double-book yourself. You must take control of the load of work that you have.
4. You can even pray about your day as you look over your schedule, asking the Lord to give you wisdom and diligence in how you use your time.

D. Create a Checklist

1. Again, you might want to use your smartphone or computer for this. I like to use paper and pen because that is most effective for me.
2. I keep a checklist of jobs people give me. When I get a job done, I cross it off. If I don't get something done, at least I know so I can do it later or delegate it to someone else.

3. I read recently in a magazine that people who keep lists and check things off as they do them preserve their memory better than those who do not. It is a good thing to keep an orderly mind and life and to keep track of things with lists. It also helps you relax because you can see your duties listed before you.

E. Ask for Advice from Those Who Are Organized

1. I remember as a young student, I was struggling with self-discipline and organization. I was feeling overwhelmed, so I went to see the principal of our school. He was a very godly and very busy man. It was amazing the amount of work he could accomplish. I asked him to tell me his secrets of organizing his day and his workload. Although he had so much work to do, he was a joyful and effective man and still had time for his family and for God.
2. If you find someone who is well-organized and can accomplish a lot, ask them to share their secrets with you so that you can improve in your organization and your effectiveness.

Management and Planning

Detailed Outline *Part 3 of 4*

IV. Be Organized (cont.)

F. Organize Your Desk or Workplace

1. You need to have a main workplace and keep that space clean and organized. If it is a mess, you won't know where things are.
2. Illustration: A business man who was losing his business asked me to come to his house to help him get organized. When I entered his house, I noticed that the dining room table was filled with over 2 feet of papers, all in a giant pile. I asked, what is that? He said, "That is my business." No wonder he had so many problems with his business. I tried to help him get organized.
3. Have other shelves or tables or filing cabinets where you keep your papers. Know where your things are.
4. Clear off your workspace on Friday so that it is ready for the beginning of the next week.
5. Doing these things will help bring order and discipline to your life. God wants that for you.
 - a) Can you imagine the Lord Jesus being disorderly or late? Imagine if he missed the Sermon on the Mount because he forgot or he overslept!
 - b) Thankfully, God doesn't work that way. He built an orderly universe, and he keeps it that way. Sin is what brought chaos and mismanagement into the world. God doesn't want that for us.

G. Work with Files

1. You can use your computer or old-fashioned file folders.
2. Whatever you choose, you need a system for keeping quotes, illustrations, articles, books you read, sermon notes and all the information you will gather. You need a way to organize all this information.
3. If you don't, it will overwhelm you and you will simply end up throwing things out.
4. Find an easy process that you can use to organize information and know where to find it when you need it.

H. When You Work, Work!

1. So many people say that they are working, but they are actually doing other things. An elder I know told me that he "putters" on the computer.
2. If you want to take time off and putter, that's fine. But don't do that while you are working.
 - a) If you are in the workplace, you owe it to your boss to give work your full attention.

- b) Studies have shown that billions of dollars are wasted in the workplace, ten minutes here and there, chatting at the water fountain. When you sit at your desk or you are on the job wherever it is, work when you work!
 - c) It is not right to waste your employer's time, or even more importantly, God's time. As the Bible says, we work with God's eye on us. He does see what we are doing.
3. When you are not on the job, you can do other things. Do not waste your time when you are supposed to be working.
 4. We all work differently. For myself, I know that I work best in the morning. Therefore, I block out 6 a.m. to noon for working. I don't take phone calls unless it is an emergency. I have informed people about this too, so they don't try to contact me. Then, from lunch on, my time is open to do other things.

I. Seize Small Units of Time

If you get this principle, it will help you to have time to relax and do other things in life!

1. Throughout the day, there are many short 10–15 minute periods of time that can either be wasted or used profitably. Here are some examples:
 - a) After you get home from work, before dinner
 - b) After you eat lunch, before you go back to work
 - c) Before you go to bed at night
 - d) While you are waiting throughout the day
2. Seize these units of time. Don't spend them staring into space. Use them to:
 - a) Make phone calls
 - b) Read Scripture
 - c) Read a book
 - d) Do other small tasks

These small amounts of time add up at the end of a day.

"Most time is wasted, not in hours, but in minutes. A bucket with a small hole in the bottom gets as empty as a bucket that is deliberately kicked over." – Paul J. Meyer

3. If you lose money, you can make it up again. If you lose time, you can never get it back. God has given you time. Use it for his glory, for his people, and for your own growth.

Management and Planning

Detailed Outline

Part 4 of 4

V. Be Organized (cont.)

J. Don't Procrastinate

1. Procrastinators frustrate people and cause fights in churches.
2. Procrastination can be sin.
 - a) When you don't do your work or follow through because you procrastinate, you need to deal with this problem. Get down on your knees and deal with it before God!
 - b) Often procrastination is connected to an undisciplined life, ruled by emotions.
3. If you are a shepherd of God's people and you are a procrastinator, you are a troublemaker and I can guarantee you that the people in your church and your fellow elders will get frustrated with you.
4. If you are a procrastinator, pray about it every day. Ask for grace and strength and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is self-control. When you procrastinate on the divine duties that you are given, confess that to the Lord because it is a serious matter.
5. Learn to do the hardest jobs or the jobs you don't want to do first. Get them done immediately. Some of you shouldn't even leave your elders' meeting until you've gotten some of those tasks or phone calls done.
6. Make a conscious effort to follow through when someone gives you a job. Don't put people off. Decide not to procrastinate. Set up a schedule. Have your spouse or a friend help you. If you keep procrastinating, you will squander much of the talent and gifts that God has given you and you will not grow.

K. Don't Be a Slave to the Phone

1. Illustration: Once when I was at the gym, I met a lawyer. I like to ask people about their professions and what they learn from it. I asked him what his greatest problem and frustration was. He said, "I don't have a minute of peace. My phone is ringing all the time. People expect me to get back them immediately. It is a constant intrusion into my life."
2. Learn to control the phone, or it will control you.
 - a) You have an answering machine—use it! It is not wrong to turn off your phone sometimes too.
 - b) My wife and I turn our phones off while we are eating dinner or we're with our family. There is nothing so important that we always have to have our phones on.

3. Control people's access to you.
 - a) It is not good for you for people to be able to contact you at any time they wish.
 - b) It is not good for your marriage or for your children, either. You should turn your phone off sometimes.
 - c) Let people know that you will get back to them, but it may not be immediately, unless it is a crisis or emergency.

L. Plan for Rest, Exercise, and Family

1. The Lord wants you to plan for rest, exercise and family! He wants you to have a balanced life, not a cluttered, joyless, or frantic one.
2. Look at this wonderful verse from the Gospel of Mark.
 - a) One time, I was in a hotel room, frustrated from all the busyness. I was reading the Gospel of Mark, and I read this verse. It hit me like an arrow to the head.
 - b) After the Lord Jesus had sent the Twelve out to preach and they returned, listen to what he tells them:
"Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." (Mark 6:31a ESV)
 - c) Yes, the Lord wants his people to rest. Notice, he calls them to rest in a "desolate place"—a quiet place, away from the people and the work.
 - d) I do my best to take Saturday off and not to work. I give my time to my family and go hiking with them or do something to get away. I also like to get up very early and have a longer devotion time.
3. God wants you to rest and recuperate! You can't go full-force seven days a week. The Lord isn't trying to kill us. He wants to bless us. We are the ones trying to kill ourselves.
4. Take time off. Take time to rest and to exercise. It is the Lord's will that you do this. Fill up your tank so you can have a long-term ministry. I often tell our young elders, "We don't want you to be three-year elders. We want you to be forty-year elders. In order to do that, you have to pace yourself and get away and take a break."
5. It is not an easy thing to do in our world today. Phone calls, emails, text messages, and Facebook are always calling for our attention. Go to a quiet and lonely place. Go take a long walk where no one is around. Spend time in the Word of God. Talk to the Lord and meditate. These are healthy things for your soul.

M. Pray about Your Over-Busyness and Schedule

Since self-discipline is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, you can pray about this and ask the Lord to help you develop a more orderly and disciplined life.

N. Learn to Say No

1. How important this is! I want you to practice saying, “No!”
2. You are not the Messiah—you can’t do everything.
3. You need to keep your priorities straight in this high-speed, manic world we live in.
4. Put God first, then your family, and then your work and employment. Those are the things that you have to put first.
5. Here is a wonderful quotation from Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

I defy you to read the life of any saint that has ever adorned the life of the Church without seeing at once that the greatest characteristic in the life of that saint was discipline and order. Invariably it is the universal characteristic of all the outstanding men and women of God . . . Obviously it is something that is thoroughly scriptural and absolutely essential.
– Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression*

VI. Be a Delegator

1. Busy people have to learn to delegate and push things off to others.
2. We see this in Acts 6:1–7.
 - a) The apostles were too busy. They were ministering the Word and doing mercy ministries, and they finally said, “We can’t do all of this.”
 - b) So they appointed seven men to take all the mercy ministries off their hands: taking care of the widows, taking care of the needy members, and collecting and distributing the church funds.
 - c) This was so the apostles could concentrate on what was their primary commission: teaching the Word of God.
3. Elders need to remember they are cannot do everything. And they should not be doing everything! Good elders are delegating all the time.
4. Illustration: I heard of an eldership that spent 40 minutes discussing the right cleaners to hire to clean the church carpet. What a wasted elders’ meeting and terrible shepherding! They should have spent 30 seconds and delegated the job to someone else.
5. The elders prod, equip, protect, mobilize, approve, and lead, but all of God’s people are called to serve (Eph. 4:11,12). The work of the ministry is in everyone’s hands for the building up of the body.
6. Learn to be a delegator. When you delegate a task to someone:
 - a) Identify what needs to be done
 - b) Select the right people
 - c) Communicate to those people what is expected of them
 - d) Give them proper accountability of the job
 - e) Release them to do the job

7. You cannot do everything.

- a) If you try, you will be the most frustrated person around! You will feel miserable and be miserable for others to be around.
- b) Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4). In order to do this, you must learn to hand your jobs off to others.
- c) That means giving them the responsibility, even if they may not do it as well as you could. It will relieve you from doing it.

8. Appeal to the church for help.

- a) Set before them the vision of “every-member ministry” and every member bearing fruit and living a life of good works.
- b) Let them know ways they can serve and help.
- c) When you see someone gifted in a certain area, ask how you can encourage them to serve and give them ideas of ways they can serve.

Be a good delegator. Be an organized, orderly, self-disciplined leader. You will be a happy leader, and you will have happy sheep.