

Routine Shepherding

Detailed Outline

Part 1 of 4

I. Introduction

A. Two illustrations

1. Once I went to visit a pig farmer out in the country. He and his wife regularly attended our church. I was new to the church and trying to get around to visit everyone. He and his wife sat with me at the kitchen table, and I asked all the perfunctory questions about what it's like to be a hog farmer, how long have you done it, where are your children going to college, etc. After about 15 minutes or so he got up and went to a desk and pulled out his checkbook. He came back and sat down and began writing out a check to the church. Then he said, "I suppose this is why you came."
2. Another time I visited an older woman. Her response: "Oh, I don't need a visit. There are other people that need it more than I do." Again, something was wrong.
3. Different people have different ideas and different expectations about pastoral visitation. Most of the time, it is negative.

B. In times past, visitation was the way a pastor or elder got to know his people.

1. He would visit in their home, balance a teacup on his knee, and talk about the family pictures on the fireplace mantle.
2. The parishioner would squeeze yawns out between his teeth, pastor would give a short devotional, pray and then leave.
3. That seems old school to us today.

C. I often hear people say, "*The elders don't seem to care about me. I missed church for a month straight and no one knew I was gone.*"

D. The forms may change, but the needs are same.

II. Elders Need to Know the People in Order to Care for Them, to Even Know *How* to Care for Them.

A. Modern ways for knowing your congregation vary.

1. Congregational surveys are helpful.
2. Conference experts tell you what people are thinking and feeling can be helpful.
3. You can learn about Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y (same as Millennials), Generation Nexts, Net Generation, Echo Boomers.
4. You can learn the characteristics, values, and trends of people in these groups.

B. Nothing replaces spending time, listening to people, hearing not just their words but also their hearts.

1. People are not statistics; most resist being treated as the national average. They feel boxed in. People are individuals.
2. However true the sociologists are, each person is unique and very self-aware. They need to be known and to know that someone cares for them as an individual.
3. This can only happen if you are physically in their presence, spending time with them.
4. There is something about body life that requires the physical presence of each other.
5. Disembodied relationships are missing something huge.
6. Facebook fellowship replaces face-to-face, flesh-and-blood connecting.
7. Twitter touches are not as touching as a handshake or a hug.
8. LinkedIn is a poor substitute for being loved into the fellowship of believers.
9. In person, we can see, hear, and sense much more actively what the real people we minister to are thinking, feeling and experiencing—we can learn this much better in person than in any other way.

C. Do you need to be a sociologist to know the needs of people? NO!

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III. An Understanding of “Personal, Pastoral Shepherding” (PPS)

A. PPS is connecting with a person in the love of Christ with the goal of encouraging him in his spiritual walk with the Lord.

1. Three kinds of pastoral care
 - a) “Routine” or “well sheep” caring provides support and is preventative.
 - b) “Critical” or “acute” care has to do with those times when people go through critical events or situations, like sickness and death.
 - c) “Passages of life” care: baptisms, marriages, funerals
2. Shepherding, of course, is a metaphor for pastoral ministry.
 - a) Genuine pastoral ministry, like shepherding, happens when the elder knows the people in the congregation.
 - b) Through knowing them he can then care for them in ways that really do make a difference.
 - c) Shepherding happens when the shepherd knows the sheep.
 - d) Jesus, our Master and ultimate example, said,
“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” (John 10:27 ESV)
 - e) Elders, in order to be effective shepherds, must work to “know” the congregation and allow the congregation to “know” the elders.
3. A shepherd knows his sheep by spending time with them.
 - a) This can most effectively be accomplished through personal, pastoral visitation.
 - b) We are warned in Ezek. 34:5-10 and Zech. 11:15-17 against neglecting this important ministry.
 - c) Personal, pastoral shepherding begins, in the best-case scenario, before any critical needs arise, in building relationships through spending time with people in personal, pastoral shepherding.

B. Personal, pastoral shepherding demonstrates:

1. People are valuable to us.
2. We are aware of their needs.
3. We care for them.

C. Personal, pastoral shepherding involves:

1. The spiritual person - you
2. Divine empowerment – the Holy Spirit
3. Godly wisdom – the Word of God

D. Personal, pastoral shepherding takes place at specific times in specific places.

1. An elder meets a person, with the intentional focus on that person's spiritual life.
 - a) It is a spiritual event where God uses you, the shepherd/leader/elder, to minister God's grace to a person.
 - 1) It is not just a feeling.
 - 2) It must be intentional but it is not necessarily scripted.
 - b) If it is not intentional then it will be inconsistent (miss some people) and uneven (have coffee with a person, but not visit them in hospital).
2. It must be rooted in the love of God and motivated by his grace.
 - a) Routine phone calling or emailing merely to induce people to attend more meetings or to enlist workers doesn't cut it as a valid spiritual objective.
3. In education circles, there is what is called a lesson plan.
 - a) Plan out ahead of time what you want to cover in the day's lessons.
 - b) In pastoral events, you develop a plan for connecting, then for specific personal pastoral events you plan out the kinds of things you will do or say.
 - c) You don't always know what the need is, but most needs do fall into one of a few groupings.

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IV. Objectives in a Personal, Pastoral Shepherding Event

A. Showing interest and concern

People sometimes simply need to know someone is interested in them.

Reminds them that they are not insignificant in your eyes or in God's eyes.

B. Encouraging a faithful response to their current situation

There is a constant pull away from faithfulness, toward fleshly responses to things.

C. Listening to suggestions and complaints

People just want to know their opinion is heard and respected.

People are encouraged when they can have a say.

D. Determining needs that require help

Often people will not ask for help.

E. Strengthening relationships

Most conflicts result from mistrust and miscommunication.

F. Assisting with problems (illness, family, grievance)

People may need wise counsel, advice, or insights.

G. Comforting by prayer and Scripture

Sometimes answers are not needed, but a consoling expression of the Holy Spirit through human flesh. This especially true for the elderly, the discouraged, and the troubled.

The goal is to help people walk closer with the Lord.

V. Kinds of Pastoral Events

A. One-minute shepherding

1. Sunday morning or other church functions
2. Spend one minute—focus on one individual. Only do it once, unless you feel so compelled by God that you must do it again.
3. Possible outcomes
 - a) Interest shown, encouragement given
 - b) Pray if needed, follow-up determined

4. Questions:

- a) How has God answered the prayer you asked for?
- b) How is your mother doing? I have been praying for her.
- c) How has the SS class you teach been going?
- d) You look discouraged; has it been a tough week?
- e) I haven't seen you in a while; is everything OK?
- f) Hey, what did you think of . . . ?
- g) I noticed last week when you went out of your way to help Joe. Thanks for the example of love; it really spoke to me.
- h) That was interesting what you said at the Lord's Supper last week. I've been thinking about it all week.

- 5. A short "pastoral" event on Sunday morning will go a long way to help people feel valued and spiritually encouraged.
- 6. Make a plan to do one-minute shepherding each week with different people.
- 7. Leave room for the Spirit to guide you to the person in need.

B. Meet for coffee

- 1. Sometimes it is easier to talk with a coffee mug in your hand.
- 2. Invitation/ice-breaker:
 - a) "Just wanted to follow up on a conversation we had."
 - b) "I like to get together occasionally to connect with the men of the church."

C. Attend their children's events

D. Email/snail mail shepherding

- 1. Be careful; this is not as personal.
- 2. Send a quick note to encourage or acknowledge.
- 3. Let people know you are thinking of them "offline."
- 4. "Judy: thanks so much for the delicious refreshments at small group last week."
- 5. "Just wanted to let you know the Lord brought you to mind, and so I was praying for you."
- 6. Illustration: I knew a brother who was a developer of condominiums, nursing homes, and senior residences. He had businesses around the world. He wrote me a handwritten note after I spoke in his church, relating something I said to a news article he clicked out and sent to me.

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VI. Kinds of Pastoral Events (cont.)

E. Hospitality

1. Commanded five times in Scripture (Rom. 12:13, 1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:8, Heb. 13:2, 1 Peter 4:9).
2. The Greek word is made up of two roots: *philos* and *xenos*. Hospitality means “brotherly love of strangers,” extending ourselves to others outside of our normal circle of friends and relatives. Bringing them into the circle.
 - a) Buy the coffee and leave a generous tip.
 - b) Invite them along for golf.
 - 1) It is no accident that many business executives play golf.
 - 2) Men often talk more freely when doing something.
 - c) Have them over for dinner or BBQ.
 - d) Take them and their family on an outing.
 - e) Illustration: When our kids were small, another family whose children were grown took our family out to a theme park.
 - f) Go out to dinner, dessert, use coupons, etc.
 - g) Consider some of the expense as the Lord’s work money.

F. Visit in their home

1. Why in their home?
 - a) Convenient, takes less time for them.
 - b) Some people are more comfortable on their own turf.
 - c) You can learn a lot about people when you see them in their environment.
 - d) You can visit with couples this way.
 - e) New attenders, sick/shut in—time considerations.
2. Caveat: Some people can’t get past the “formal church person visit” thing.
3. Length: Never plan to stay more than 30–60 minutes,
4. Spiritual conversation starters
 - a) “How can I pray for you?”
 - b) “At the chapel, we want to help meet people's spiritual needs. Do you see any way in which the we can do this better?”
 - c) “Tell me, have you had any questions about the messages on Sundays? Do they make sense? Do you find them helpful and relevant?”
 - d) “Where are you in your spiritual journey?”

VII. Develop a Plan

- A. Take out the church phone book and list out the family units.**
- B. Add on regular visitors, divide by number of elders.**
- C. Each elder determines in one year to have a personal, pastoral shepherding event at least once with everyone on his list.**
- D. It is OK to cross-shepherd, but let each other know.**
- E. Keep track so that no one is missed.**