



Shorter Study

■ **Open the session with prayer**

■ **Read together 1 Peter 5:1-4**

- We will more fully explore why a significant metaphor for church eldership is linked to “shepherding” later in this session, but first, why are God’s people considered to be “sheep”? (see Isaiah 40:11 & Zechariah 9:16).
- According to 1 Peter 5:2, what does it mean to shepherd “not under compulsion, but willingly”? Have you ever wrestled with motives for eldership that verge on a sense of compulsion rather than willingness? How can one move towards whole-hearted willingness?
- Why is Peter’s solution to “not domineering over those in your charge”, the call to instead be “examples to the flock” (v.3)? What are the dangers of a domineering elder as opposed to an elder that lives as a good example to the church?

■ **Watch the video entitled “Session 1: What is Eldership?”**

Session Outline:

1. God established leaders for his people throughout the history of God’s people. They were often referred to as “shepherds”.
2. These “shepherds” had a calling to do certain things, for example, to “feed”, “heal”, “bring back the straying”, “find the lost” (Ezekiel 34).
3. Christ is the “Good Shepherd” and elders are his “under-shepherds” (1 Peter 5).

Reflection Questions:

1. What is so significant about the leaders of God’s people being called “shepherds”?
2. How does remembering that eldership is an “under-shepherding” of God’s people help us in maintaining the right perspective on church leadership?
3. Do you love your church? What makes you say that?
4. Do you feel like you have “good character” in such a way that you can be an example of how to live a Christian life?
5. Have you been affirmed? Go around the room and try to affirm specific things you have personally seen or experienced of your brothers that you believe qualifies them for eldership.

■ **Close in prayer**



Longer Study

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Theological Questions:

1. What is so significant about the leaders of God’s people being called “shepherds”?
2. Ezekiel 34 gives us the amazing prophecy of the Messianic Shepherd who was both God and a descendant of David. Jesus himself declares that he is this Shepherd in John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...” What does the nature of being “under-shepherds of Christ” mean when it comes to “laying down our life for the sheep?” Was this sacrificial act of love restricted to Christ’s unique ministry or is there an example that has been set?
3. How does remembering that eldership is an “under-shepherding” of God’s people help us in maintaining the right perspective on church leadership?

