

Shepherd

Leaders are essential. Every football team needs coaches, every business needs managers, every school needs administrators, and every flock of God needs shepherds.

In Bible times, the shepherd often lived with his sheep. At night, he would lead them into a barricaded area with one opening, and that's where the shepherd would lie down. You've heard the expression "over my dead body." That is how it was for a shepherd. If wolves or robbers were going to come inside and harm the sheep, it would have to be over his dead body.



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A good shepherd provides for the needs of his sheep. He nurtures them, leads them, protects them, comforts them, and helps them to prosper (Psalm 23:1-6). He is a trustworthy leader who the sheep willingly follow (John 10:27).

I want to share a brief excerpt with you from the book *"They Smell Like Sheep."* It helps to demonstrate just how close of a relationship shepherds had with their sheep: "When a tiny lamb was born into the wilderness world, the shepherd took the trembling newborn into his hands, warming it and caressing it. Among the first sensations felt by the shivering lamb was the tender hands of the shepherd. The gentle voice of the shepherd was one of the first sounds to awaken the lamb's delicate eardrums... Each sheep came to rely on the shepherd and to know his voice and his alone. They followed him and no one else. Of course, the lambs understood clearly who was in charge. Occasionally, the shepherd might tap an unruly lamb on the ear with a shepherd's crook. But this was a love tap, embraced in an enfolding circle of relationship. The shepherd smelled like sheep" (pp. 19-20).

Sheep need shepherds. Not just sick sheep, or new sheep, or not-so-smart sheep. All sheep. That includes scholarly sheep, seasoned sheep, and sophisticated sheep. All sheep. We need to be cared for and watched after. We need to be led, fed, admonished, and encouraged. Moreover, even shepherds need shepherding, which may be a reason why there is always a plurality in scripture. Shepherds should mentor each other, teach each other, and hold each other accountable.