

we are
HIS PEOPLE,
THE SHEEP OF
His pasture
– PSALM100:3



The Shepherd's Guide 2022



Content's

THIS IS WHO WE ARE

Our Vision

We are a loving family dependent on the Holy Spirit, committed to the Word, growing in grace, reaching out in mercy.

Intro

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

Welcome Letter 4

Section 1:

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SHEPHERDING: PASTOR TRENT'S SERMONS

Shepherding Perspective 6
Shepherding in the Household of God 8
Being Shepherded in the Household of God.. 14

Section 2:

THE OVERVIEW AND GOALS OF SHEPHERDING

Overview of Shepherding Ministry20
The Role of the Shepherd:
Learnings from Psalm 2324
Goals of Shepherding Ministry26

Section 3:

THE TAPESTRY OF SHEPHERDING

The first thread of shepherding: Care 30
The second thread: The Rhythm 32
Church Discipline: A Fray in the Tapestry 34
Competing Design in Church Discipline 36
CCN Restoration Commission Procedures....42



THIS IS WHAT WE DO

Our Mission

We will develop and deploy fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ to disciple our family, community and world.



Section 4:

THE STRUCTURE AND TOOLS OF SHEPHERDING

- Covenant Staff Organization Chart..... 50
- Shepherding Committee Structure 51
- Shepherding Team Leaders..... 52
- Worship, Grow, Serve & Go Ministries: Rosters 53
- Contact Forms..... 54
- Care Ministries: Rosters 58
- Shepherding Contact Notes..... 59

Section 5:

RESOURCES FOR SHEPHERDING

- Resource Matrix..... 62
- List of Key Books on Shepherding 63
- Responses to Frequently Asked Questions..... 64
- Hospital/Nursing Home Visitation..... 66
- Materials from Shepherding Training Sessions..... 69
- Domestic Abuse Policy..... 71
- One Way Communications..... 80
- How tos: Sample agenda, Conversation Starters,
Suggested phone & email scripts 82
- 2022 Shepherding Meeting Calendar..... 90



Welcome!

We welcome you to the Shepherding Ministry.

We value and affirm your willingness to be part of this “community” which embraces our Vision at Covenant of being “A loving family, dependent on the Holy Spirit, committed to the Word, growing in grace and reaching out in mercy.”

Our focus is to engage, equip and care for our members in a way that will help them to live out our Mission as a church “to develop and deploy fully devoted followers of Christ to disciple our family, community and world.”

Our approach is to build our shepherding ministry around caring and encouraging

our members to live in the “Rhythm of Discipleship.”

We are providing this Shepherding Guide to support you in your shepherding role. The guide has an emphasis on the Word of God as the foundation tool to help us align, integrate and grow as one church serving many generations.

Shepherding is a high calling that is done out of love for Christ and His people, in community, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. May our Lord Jesus encourage you as you care for His flock.

The guide contains five sections:

- 1 - **The Philosophy of Shepherding:** The Biblical “why” of Shepherding
- 2 - **The Overview and Goals of Shepherding:** Ministry expectations
- 3 - **The Tapestry of Shepherding:** The two threads - care and the rhythm of discipleship
- 4 - **The Tools of Shepherding:** Organization contacts and aids available at CCN
- 5 - **Resources for Shepherding:** a “Go-to” collection of training materials.



Welcome and Introduction



So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

1 Peter 5:1-4

Section 1:

Philosophy of Shepherding: The Biblical “why” of Shepherding

As you will see in the sermons to follow, our “why” for shepherding is grounded in God’s desire for His church to have shepherds. This desire is communicated explicitly in God’s word. Shepherds are not only to care for and comfort the church, but also to watch over and protect the church. Ultimately, our elders are responsible to give an account for each person that God has entrusted to them. With this in mind, they have enlisted the help of deacons, lay shepherds and small group leaders to accomplish this important task. This is a high calling, and we want to ensure that we are shepherding our people well.





Because the preached word is so central to everything we do here at Covenant, we are asking you take some time and read these two formative sermons on shepherding delivered by Pastor Trent. They will provide an in-depth understanding of our philosophy of shepherding.

Shepherding in the Household of God

1 Peter:5:1-4 | October 6, 2019

Pastor Trent Casto

Simon Peter wrote the verses we just read. You remember Peter. The one who said he loved Jesus more than anyone else, and even if everyone fell away, he never would. Well, he did. Three times he denied Jesus in shame and fear. Jesus was crucified, dead, buried and rose again. But perhaps believing himself to be disqualified from ministry, Peter went back to fishing. And Jesus came and found this lost sheep and made him breakfast. This is what happened next.

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’”

(John 21:15–17)

Three times Peter denied Jesus and three times Jesus asks Peter to affirm his love once again. And if it is true that Peter does love Jesus, how does Jesus ask Peter to express it? By shepherding Jesus’ sheep. Peter got the message. And now he’s passing that message along to the elders who receive this letter. Do you love Jesus? Shepherd the flock. For you who are elders, that’s your calling in the church. For you who are parents, that’s your calling in the home. And much of what I’m going to say to shepherds in the church is applicable to shepherds in the home.

Shepherding is not an afterthought in the household of God. It’s not a second-tier priority after evangelism and discipleship. When Jesus asked Peter if he loved him three times, and Peter said yes, Jesus didn’t tell him to go move overseas and preach the gospel. He told him to tend and feed his sheep. Yes, some are called to go and pursue the lost sheep in other countries and cultures and we’re all about that as a church. But I want to highlight and elevate for you the central role of shepherding the flock that is among you. As surely as we are a missions church, we aspire to be a shepherding church. The elders have been working at this for some time and we are ready to launch a new shepherding emphasis at Covenant. It’s not a new program; it’s a new way of leading and doing church. That’s why we’re taking a detour from 1 Timothy for two weeks to talk about the ministry of shepherding in the church. Today our focus is going to be on the responsibility of elders and those men and women they appoint to help them shepherd the flock. Then next week we’ll look at the responsibility of the sheep to be shepherded.

I. THE ELEVATION OF SHEPHERDING.

Peter writes to a church that is facing persecution and suffering on account of their identification with Jesus. Consequently, there would've been some temptation for the leaders to lie low or neglect the flock in order to protect themselves. But this simply will not do. So Peter exhorts them as we read in verses 1-2:

“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you...”

First, I want to look at the way Peter raises the level of shepherding by describing himself as he does:

1. HE IS A FELLOW ELDER.

Peter is an apostle. He was one of the hand-picked followers of Jesus to be eyewitnesses of his life, death, and resurrection. Peter spent years with Jesus. Peter wrote some of the New Testament. But he doesn't appeal to that in his exhortation to shepherd. Rather, he exhorts the church as a fellow elder, as one who was called by Jesus to shepherd the flock. He knows the trials, he knows the difficulties, he knows the frustrations and the sufferings of this ministry and yet he says, “shepherd the flock.” He is making them (and us) aware of their commission as elders, that we are now called to fulfill part of the role the apostles once played: to shepherd the church.

2. HE IS A FELLOW WITNESS TO JESUS' SUFFERINGS.

Some think he's talking about being an eyewitness of Jesus sufferings. And he did witness most of them, though he fled before the crucifixion. But it seems that he uses 'witness' in the sense of one who gives verbal testimony to something. Namely, he witnesses to others of what Jesus suffered through his life and death on behalf of his flock. In light of Jesus' sufferings, he can exhort his fellow elders to follow also in Jesus' steps. Those who give witness to Jesus' sufferings, should prepare to share in those sufferings.

3. HE IS A FELLOW SHARER IN THE GLORY.

Peter's understanding of suffering is always followed by the expectation of glory, even as it was in Jesus' ministry. He writes earlier in 1 Peter 4:13

“But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”

Those who share in the suffering of Christ as witnesses, will also share in his glory when it is revealed at his return. That's true not only of Peter and the apostles, but it's true of the elders. And it's not only true of the elders, it's true of all of those who are part of the people of God. As an apostle, Peter is placing himself beside the church's elders, not above them. All are elders, all are witnesses to Jesus, and all are waiting to share in Jesus' glory. But he is not condescending to their level; rather he is elevating the elders to his level.¹ To be an elder is to share in the work of the apostles.

So with these words, Peter is setting us up for the command he's about to give. He speaks as one of us, as a fellow elder who understands the challenge of leading in a household, of leading in the household of God. He speaks as one who regularly witnesses to the sufferings of Christ for the salvation of his people, a suffering into which we are called to follow him. And finally he speaks as one who is certain that to whatever degree we are identified with Christ in his suffering, so we will share in his glory. And with that, he delivers:

II. THE IMPERATIVE OF SHEPHERDING.

The clear command here that governs everything in this passage is found in verse 2,

“shepherd the flock of God that is among you...”

The verb is literally “Pastor the flock of God.” All elders are called to be pastors. In our church, we call 'pastors' those of us who are paid to do this work exclusively and we call 'elders' those who do this work while supporting themselves through another vocation. But all of us are called to pastor the people. Likewise, moms and dads,

you're called to pastor the flock in your home. This activity of shepherding involves a number of key activities and shepherding actual sheep is a very helpful metaphor. A shepherd must:

1. Know the Sheep. That's as true in the church as it is in the pasture. All members at Covenant and their children are the sheep we're committed to shepherding. Regular attenders are dearly loved, but it is to members we have made vows of shepherding, and it is for those members that we will one day give an account to God. We would love to have you regular attenders join the church formally so that we may give you the same level of ministry. As you know, our church has grown steadily over the years and we have many more sheep than we do shepherds. Yet, the sheep must be known to be shepherded. So we are launching an expanded effort at shepherding here at Covenant. We don't presently have enough elders to shepherd the whole flock directly and so we are utilizing lay shepherds, deacons, and small group leaders to assist us in this work. All of them are under the oversight of an elder, and all of you have access to an elder. But we believe for the sheep to be known and cared for, we needed more help for the elders. Your shepherd wants to get to know you, pray for you, serve you, help you along the road to maturity. They're planning to have significant contact with you multiple times through the year so they can be of best service to you and your family. We want to shepherd the sheep in good times and bad. Help them know you. We'll talk more about that next week.

2. Lead the Sheep. Shepherds lead sheep. It's well-known that sheep aren't driven. You drive cattle, but you lead sheep. And that means going first. Shepherds must lead the sheep to green pastures and make them lie down beside quiet waters. This requires having a vision of where we're heading, and living life closely enough to you to be able to follow. The elders have already laid down the path through the mission, vision, and Rhythm of Discipleship. Now we desire the elders and other shepherds of Covenant to walk alongside you. To encourage you, and to model for you what it looks like to Worship, Grow, Serve

and Go. We believe that a person who is living that kind of Rhythm in response to the gospel of Jesus Christ is going to grow to maturity and that's our aim. We want to present every single one of you mature in Christ. Shepherds, if we're going to lead in this way it must be clear to all your flock that you know Christ and are growing.

3. Feed the Sheep. Shepherds specifically are called to feed the sheep and the food the sheep need is the Word of God. And so we do that on Sunday mornings, and there are many other opportunities given during the week for you to be fed. But shepherds must also be able to take the Word and apply it to the lives of individuals and families and help them grow through trials and challenges. Parents, the feeding of the sheep here at church is not a substitute for you feeding the sheep at home. We've got resources available to help you do that and would love to talk to anyone looking for guidance here.

4. Protect the Sheep. There are many dangers facing sheep, but two of the primary ones are going astray and wolves. The elders' job in the church is do everything in our power to keep sheep from going astray from Christ and the gospel, from leaving the fellowship of believers. Our plan is to develop a shepherding ministry in such a way that if you're not here for a few weeks in a row, you'll get a call from one of us checking in to see if everything is alright. Wolves are those who would prey on the sheep, whether through false teaching or trying to fleece you out of money or dupe you into something foolish and harmful. Shepherds must be alert to bring people back when they go astray and to defend them against the wolves. This and more are what Peter is talking about when he says: "shepherd the flock of God that is among you..." At Covenant, our elders rule the church and have to make governance type of decisions. In many churches that's all elders do. But that's not the heart of our elders. Running a church isn't the heart of an elder. The heart of an elder is to shepherd the flock and they make those types of decisions as part of their shepherding care for you. And we need more of that kind of man.

We saw in 1 Timothy 3:1

"...If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble TASK."

God is looking for men who want to do the work of a shepherd, and not just bear the title of elder. He wants men who are burning with passion to shepherd the people of God. That's what we're looking for in our shepherds: men with a burning passion for the people of God, to see the flock thrive, grow, and mature in Christ. Their hearts beat with love for the church just as the Father's heart beats with love for the church. It's a noble task because it's the task closest to the Father's heart. And that burning desire to shepherd the flock starts with being diligent to shepherd your own family as we saw last week. Those of you who aspire to church leadership, and you should, need to practice this type of shepherding in your homes. Whether you're married or a single mom or dad, these are the tasks that fall to you as leaders of your homes, and those who demonstrate these tendencies are to be identified as potential church leaders. E.M. Bounds wrote: "The church is looking for better methods, but God is looking for better men."

These are the kind of men and women we're looking for to shepherd the flock, those with a heart for God, His Word, His flock, and those who are astray.

III. THE ADVERBS OF SHEPHERDING.

After giving this very clear command, Peter then lists a series of adverbs that very helpfully show us what the shepherding should and should not look like. When he calls us to shepherd, he makes clear the right and wrong ways to go about it:

1. Not under compulsion...but willingly (v.2).

Shepherds do this work in the church and home not from external compulsion but from internal compulsion. We are compelled by love for Christ and people to care for the flock entrusted to us. There is an important distinction between love and duty. C.S. Lewis writes, "A perfect man would never act from a sense of duty; he'd always want the right thing more than the wrong one. Duty is only a substitute for love (of God and other people) like a crutch which is a substitute for a

leg. Most of us need the crutch at times; but of course it is idiotic to use the crutch when our own legs (our own loves, tastes, habits, etc) can do the journey on their own."² Sometimes we must rely on duty, but we were made to be driven by love for God and people! And this willingness to suffer in the service of others was modeled by our Lord Jesus Christ who willingly laid down his life to serve us and save us. When you're gripped again and again by his sacrificial love, you'll find sacrificial love more frequently compels you into the same kinds of selfless service. You won't have to be compelled to love God's people, but you actually will love them and do the actions of love as he does!

2. Not greedily...but eagerly (v.2). We don't do this for what we get out of it, but rather eagerly because of what we've already been given. If your motivation to shepherd is primarily what you can gain from it - status, honor, recognition, or money - you're not going to be very good shepherds. The Bible calls that kind of shepherd a 'hireling' and you can recognize them because they're unwilling to sacrifice for the sheep. They'll only do things when they can see what's in it for them. But love is sacrificial. Shepherding is sacrificial. We do what's right and what is good for the sheep even if it costs us personally.

3. Not domineering...but by example (v.3).

One man has written, "A spiritual leader is the kind of person God-hungry people want to be like."³ That's a shepherd. The Pharisees were not shepherds. They were known for laying heavy burdens on people that they themselves didn't even attempt to live by or walk with people through. Paul and Peter were shepherds. Paul said,

"Be imitators of me..."

(1 Corinthians 11:1)

All followers of Jesus should be living their lives in such a way that they can say to their kids, "Imitate me" or to their employees "Imitate me" or to their friends, "Imitate me." If we can't say that, we're not to remain content. We're to repent, believe the gospel, and walk in obedience. That's what a shepherd does. Ask yourself: if everyone

was as generous as I am, would the needs of the poor be greater or less? If everyone shared the gospel like I do, would there be more followers of Jesus or fewer? If everyone talked about others like I do, would there be more or less criticism, backbiting, and negativity? If everyone prayed like I do, would we see a greater or less move of God in our day? Of course, all this kind of leadership starts in the home, and those who shepherd in the home should approach their task in the same kind of way. So, shepherds, as you go about this work are you doing it willingly, eagerly, and as examples?

IV. THE REWARD OF SHEPHERDING.

While suffering is to be expected and we go into this ministry to lay down our lives in service, it's not without its rewards. He writes in verse 4,

"And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

Three things to see here about the reward:

1. What it is: the unfading crown of glory. For most of us, on the surface that doesn't sound particularly motivating. But it's intended to motivate so let me help you get a better sense of it. The crown is a metaphor of course, but the glory is real. I don't know about you, but I'm a glory junkie. There is no better glory today than sports glory. I absolutely love to watch the end of a major sports championship. Whether it's a tennis grand slam or the Super Bowl, I love to watch when the competition ends and the crowd goes wild and the confetti goes flying and the victor drops to the ground to take in the moment. I love that moment! It captures my heart. It makes me cry, even when I don't like the winner! But it's just that. It's a moment. And everyone who has experienced it will say it's the greatest feeling ever, but it fades. Martina Navratilova, no stranger to tennis glory says, "The moment of glory is much too short to live for that and nothing else." She's absolutely right. But that's what's stunning about the promise here for faithful shepherds. The glory that is coming will be far greater than that glorious moment any athlete experienced. And

it won't end. Ever. It won't fade. You will bask in the glow of this glory forever. We might change Martina's words to say,

"The unfading nature of the glory coming for us is far too amazing to even consider living for anything else!"

That's what awaits you!

2. When to Expect it: not now. The glory is not now. Give your life to shepherd the sheep not because you'll be celebrated now or rewarded now, but because love for him compels you. There are rewards as we care for God's flock today, no doubt. But even when it's not rewarding, we still have a motivation far greater. When it's difficult, when people are treating you like a servant, when your ears feel like the trash can into which everyone's garbage goes...remember the glory is not now. It's coming.

3. Who bestows it: the chief shepherd. In a large flock there were often more than one shepherd required to keep track of all the sheep. In such a case, one of the shepherds was the chief. So it is with God's flock spread all over the world. He raises up shepherds in every single church, but then over them all is the Chief Shepherd Jesus Christ. It is him we serve as undershepherds, and it is his sheep we're tending in the home and church. And he hasn't left us alone for this work. He is with us, even shepherding us as we seek to shepherd others.

So my fellow shepherds, do you think the Lord is unable to reward your service? Do you think he is miserly and tight-fisted and unwilling to pour out great gifts upon those who serve him with their whole heart? Do you think there's anything you can lose or give up in this world that he is unable to make up to you a thousand times greater? What's too precious to be given up in the service of his sheep? Think how he loves his sheep! He purchased them with his blood. He calls them his bride. He is not a cold-hearted husband! He is passionate for his bride. He loves her with everything in him, he shed his blood for

her. If you lay down your life for her, if you give up free time and activities to love her members, if you engage in messy situations in order to help her be whole, will he fail to look on that service with delight and gratitude? To be clear, because we 'care for his bride' that does not mean he owes us anything. We actually owe that to him and far more. He doesn't owe us anything. There's no quid pro quo here. But he has promised by his grace to reward those especially who labor in shepherding his flock.

So that's what we're aiming to do at Covenant. In obedience to the Scriptures and out of love for Christ and the church, we're going to

shepherd the sheep. I exhort you elders, you lay shepherds, small group leaders, and deacons who are assisting the elders, and you parents in the home: shepherd the sheep. Know them, lead them, feed them, protect them. Not because you have to, but because you want to. Not because of what you will get, but because of what you've been given. Not primarily by what you say, but by how you live. And no matter what it may cost you in this world, the reward of glory that Jesus is bringing with him will be worth far more than anything you lose in this world. Jesus beckons: do you love me? Then shepherd my sheep.

Sermon Discussion Questions:

1. Prior to today, how important would you have said shepherding is in the life of the church? How has your view changed, if at all?
2. In some way or another, everyone in the household of God should be aspiring to help shepherd Jesus' sheep. If a Christian doesn't aspire to shepherd people, what might be some of the reasons? How can those be addressed?
3. If you've been a part of a church where the elders know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep and protect the sheep in Biblical ways, share about your experience. If you haven't been a part of that kind of church, how does it sound to you?
4. If you're a parent, how does understanding your call to parenting as a call to shepherding affect the way you will be engaged in your children's lives? If your children are grown, how does the task of shepherding change over the years?
5. Take some time to pray for the shepherds at Covenant, and that, by God's grace, we will faithfully care for God's church. Pray also for parents to faithfully shepherd those in their households in accordance with God's Word.

Daniel M. Doriani, 1 Peter, Reformed Expository Commentary, 204-205.

C.S. Lewis, Letters of C.S. Lewis, July 18, 1957, as quoted in David Helm, 1 & 2 Peter and Jude, 161-162.

Lynn Anderson, They Smell Like Sheep, vol.2, 8.

Being Shepherded in the Household of God

Hebrews 13:17 | October 13, 2019

Pastor Trent Casto

Obedience and submission are not terms that are well-regarded in this particular cultural moment. In fact, these terms have not really ever been much appreciated by Americans. Remember, we are the country that was founded on what I believe was the most successful rebellion against authority the world has ever seen! One of our earliest flags that continues to be popular today shows a picture of a very threatening-looking rattlesnake with the foreboding words underneath: "Don't tread on me." The strong implication is, if you mess with me and impinge on my right to independence, it's a mistake you won't make a second time. My home state's motto: "*Montani semper liberi*" means "Mountaineers are always free" which could be understood to be a declaration that nobody tells us what to do. And my favorite state motto comes from the very unassuming but surprisingly feisty state of New Hampshire which declares: "Live free or die!" Again, the implication is that to submit to any kind of rule or reign that would threaten my independence or total freedom to do what I want, when I want, how I want is a fate worse than death itself. Many of you grew up in the culture of the 50's, 60's, and 70's where questioning authority and rebelling against authority were the height of being cool, and not much has changed in that regard for those who've grown up since then.

Compounding the problem is that all of us who are Protestant are identified as being from that branch of Christendom that protested the abuses of the Roman Catholic church. While the early Protestant reformers did not try to leave the Roman Catholic church, they were eventually booted out for their refusal (rightly so) to get in line with the authority of the pope. Unfortunately, the effect of that has been that while we got rid of one pope, now everyone is his own pope and does what is right in his own eyes. Institutional trust is at an all-time low. To be talking about submission in a day of clergy abuse scandals, power abuse scandals, and domineering megalomaniacs who lord it over the people sounds like it's a bit tone deaf.

But as uncomfortable as we may be with the language of submission and obedience to earthly and fallible leaders, the Scriptures are not. We've seen that clearly in 1 Timothy, we saw it last week in 1 Peter, and we see it again here in Hebrews 13:17:

"Obey your leaders and submit to them..."

Now, while ungodly authority should not be submitted to, the American church has largely rejected the idea of submitting to authority at all. But a bunch of independent Christians who answer to no one but God was most certainly not God's design for the church. For the reasons I've already mentioned, these may be some of the most neglected words in all the New Testament. And yet the text is absolutely clear: we neglect these words and the submission they espouse to our own harm and detriment. As surely as we saw last week that it is the responsibility of the shepherds to shepherd, so it is the responsibility of the sheep to be shepherded and to make the shepherd's job a pleasure and not a pain. As we launch into our new shepherding initiative and are asking the elders, along with our lay shepherds, small group leaders and deacons to step up their efforts to shepherd you, so we are also calling on you, the sheep, to submit to and obey your shepherds.

Here's the message in a nutshell:

God has graciously given us leaders in the church that we are to obey and submit to for the good of all.

So the application of this passage is plain as day: "Obey your leaders and submit to them." And what I want to do in this sermon is answer the questions: Who are we to obey and submit to? What does it mean to obey and submit? When do we obey and submit? Why do we obey and submit? And How do we obey and submit?

I. Whom must Christians Obey and Submit to?

The text tells us plainly in verse 17,

"Obey your leaders and submit to them..."

It is to the leaders of the church that we owe obedience and submission. To be clear, the word for "leaders" is plural. The New Testament does not envision a situation in which one man rules the church and everyone obeys him. That is a recipe for the abuse of power and we can point to countless examples. The Bible recognizes the proclivity for absolute power to corrupt absolutely and the vision of church leadership is not one man with all the power surrounded by yes men, but rather a plurality of godly men who are mutually accountable and submissive to one another. A church with one very strong leader can do a lot of great things and get them done very quickly, but it can just as quickly get into a lot of trouble when the leader goes off track. We are Presbyterian because we believe the biblical model is a government of elders.

Now we know elsewhere that there are other people we must obey and submit to: wives submit to husbands (Col 3:18), children obey parents (Col 3:20), all of us are called to be subject to the governing authorities (Rom 13:1), and all of us are to obey God (Acts 5:29).

Submission and obedience are things every Christian has to learn.

Not only must all learn to submit to the leadership of the church, but the leaders of the church must learn to submit to one another. All of us together

must learn to submit to Christ. Learning to yield our wills to the will of another is inescapable in the Christian life, and therefore humility is a non-negotiable virtue in the Christian life. But the particular emphasis here is on the obedience and submission we owe to our leaders in the church.

We've seen over the past three weeks, and we'll see again next week, that there is a God-ordained leadership in the church. Not only is it God-ordained, but leadership in the church is God-given. We read in Ephesians 4:11-13,

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,"

God gave us leaders in the church in order to help ensure that we all grow to maturity in Christ.

Those leaders have been given authority to care for God's sheep in the household of God and those leaders are the elders and deacons of the church. As husbands and fathers are to exercise their authority in the household, not selfishly but for the good of his family, so the elders are called to exercise their authority for the good of the people. This is what we're talking about when we talk about shepherding: elders using their authority to know the sheep, lead the sheep, feed the sheep, and protect the sheep until we're all mature in Christ.

One of the most important reasons why every Christian needs to be a part of a local church is the need for shepherding. We value getting together with friends and reading the Bible and praying together and highly encourage it. That's discipleship for sure, but it's not the complete New Testament picture of life in the household of God. The biblical vision of the household of God is sheep under the loving care of shepherds who are formally recognized in that role on the basis of the qualifications laid out in the Bible.

There is no New Testament vision of sheep being disconnected from the care of actual shepherding elders. There is no such thing as biblical church apart from biblical Christians being in submission to biblical leadership.

II. **What does it mean to obey and submit?** The Greek words translated 'obey' and 'submit' mean 'obey' and 'submit'. In other words, this is not one of those cases where, if we get really deep into the history of the words, we can somehow escape the implications of what is being said! Nor should we even want to! To obey is to heed the instruction given by your pastors and elders from the Scriptures. To 'submit' simply looks like this: you have one opinion about something and your leadership has another opinion. Neither opinion is contrary to Scripture, just different. Submission means that you yield your will and your opinion to that of your shepherds. Wise shepherds will want to know your opinion and consider it carefully, but at the end of the day it's their responsibility to make a decision and your responsibility to submit to it. And submission is not merely an external action. It's entirely possible to 'submit' outwardly while inwardly seething with anger and spreading dissension and expressing how unhappy you are about it to everyone you know. That's not submission. Submission involves a posture of the heart, that in loving, trusting obedience you're going to follow your leaders. And that is true not only for the flock, it's true for the shepherds. There are times where decisions are made that might not be the first choice of all us elders. But when it is the will of the body to do one thing, and we've had the chance to share our views to no avail, then we too must learn submission and obedience.

Now as I alluded to before, the church is not the only place this happens. These words we translate 'honor', 'obey', 'submit' are all words that are also used in the home with a wife toward her husband or of children toward their parents. Most of us who are members of this church would agree that the Bible speaks clearly to the issue of husbands and wives and children in the home. Colossians 3:18-20 says,

"Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

Do you agree that this is a good thing in the home for this kind of order, obedience and submission to be present? Well, it is the very thing wives are called to in the home, that children are called to in the home, and everyone is called to in the church.

And husbands, where do you think your wives and children are supposed to learn what biblical submission looks like? They learn what it looks like from watching how you submit to the leadership you're under the authority of. And that includes us who serve as pastors and elders. We also must learn submission when we don't get our way. So husbands, including us who are elders, if every time we don't get our way or the leadership makes a decision we don't like we reject it, grouse about it, complain about it, and so on...what are we teaching our wives and children about submission?

I'm not saying submission or obedience are easy, not at all! It's feels like a death! But we're not the first who were called to this. You see, when we live in submission and obedience to the rightly constituted authorities over us, we're actually following right in the steps of our shepherd Jesus. He came not to do his will, but the will of the Father and he continually had to yield his will in submission to the Father even as he did in the Garden of Gethsemane when he said,

"...not my will, but yours, be done."
(Luke 22:42)

Submission is not a sign of weakness, but incredible strength and dependence on God.

Now, the fact that all of us who have vowed submission to the church must actually follow Jesus' example and submit and obey the decisions of our leadership so far as they don't conflict with God's Word, there are some serious implications we need to consider:

1. Big decisions in the church need to be made by the body of God-ordained, congregation-

elected elders. Leadership can be provided by pastors, staff, and individual elders, but the collective body must make those decisions that may prove difficult for the congregation to submit to or obey.

2. We cannot be hasty in the laying on of hands. We must be absolutely diligent to only lay the hands of ordination on those men who are truly qualified and called to serve as elders. Men should be tested, they should be trained, they should be equipped. And we do have a process for doing that for both our elders and our deacons.

3. The elders must be committed to prayer and making sure every decision we make is in accordance with the Scripture, for the glory of God and in the best interests of the flock. Because once we make a decision, the people are bound by the Word of God and their membership vows to submit to that decision. That is a very big deal, and we ought not take it lightly.

4. To disregard the authority of the local church that you have vowed commitment to is not only to disregard your local shepherds, but to disregard the Chief Shepherd. And this is sin. Paul tells Titus, another local pastor like Timothy:

"Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you."
(Titus 2:15)

The flock will sometimes be tempted to disregard the leadership of the elders, and the elders are not to let that happen because it is ultimately the honor of the Lord that is at stake. And here's a word to us elders: we might personally not care that we are disregarded. But it is not up to us to decide that the Lord can be disregarded. And when we allow our leadership to be disregarded, it is ultimately the Lord that is disregarded.

III. **When do we obey and submit?** In short, we obey and submit anytime obedience and submission do not require us to act or believe contrary to God's Word. No one has the authority to ask you to sin. Nor do we have the authority to bind your conscience anywhere it is not bound by Scripture. But we are to obey and submit when our will and the will of our leaders are in conflict

in matters of doctrine, the order of the church, and the exercise of discipline. Yet, it's very rare at this point in history for a person who has an issue with a church to actually submit to their leaders. Rather, if we are confronted by our leadership or don't like what our leaders are doing, we simply go our own way to a new church and miss an incredible opportunity to grow.

Now, is there ever a time to leave? Yes there is. When submitting to leadership would require us to go contrary to God's Word, we must obey God rather than men. That is true when it comes to the extent of our allegiance to our earthly rulers. That is true when it comes to the extent of our obedience to authority in the home. And it's also true in the church. Here's the danger though: when we're upset about something, it can feel like this is a matter of obedience to God, when in fact we're simply not getting our own way. And when that happens, and we then disregard our leaders, we actually are sinning.

I made a number of vows when I became the senior pastor here, and so did all our pastors, elders, and deacons: "Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?" Likewise, you who have joined the church have made this vow: "Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the church...?" Let me ask you, what are vows for? Are they for the easy days? Vows are not for the easy days, when you're getting along and not having issues. The vows are there for the hard days when you think it would be easier to quit. Likewise, in the church, your membership vows are not for the easy days when you agree with the leadership of the church. The vows are for the hard days, when you disagree and it feels like it would be easier to quit. On those days, our vows bind us to our commitment.

IV. **Why do we obey and submit?** The author of Hebrews lists several reasons as to why:

1. Your leaders are looking out for your spiritual welfare. He says in verse 17,

"...for they are keeping watch over your souls..."

This phrase literally refers to staying up at night and losing sleep over your spiritual well-being.

Your wealth advisor may or may not stay up at night or rise early in the morning to look after your financial well-being. Your attorney may lie awake thinking about your legal well-being, or they may not. Nevertheless, you generally listen to their counsel and follow their advice. Well, we are keeping watch with early mornings and late nights for your spiritual well-being. We're invested in you, we love you, we want you to thrive spiritually. And yes, we sometimes lose sleep over you and wake up thinking about you because we love you. Why would you disregard the spiritual guidance of people who only want the best for you?

2. Your leaders are accountable for your soul. He writes in verse 17,

"...as those who will have to give an account..."

One day, I'll give an account and your pastors and elders and deacons will give an account to the Chief Shepherd for you. I do not want to hear the words God delivered to the shepherds of Israel in Ezekiel 34:4,

"The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them."

Please remember your leaders in prayer, because there will be a day when we will stand before God and we will give an account for how we have or have not faithfully shepherded this flock, every single one of you, and that is a tremendous burden, even as it is a tremendous privilege to serve you and minister.

3. Your leaders' task is challenging enough without you being difficult. That's the final piece here, he says at the end of verse 17,

"...Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."

In other words, don't make shepherding you become a miserable task. And that is a scriptural command. We must shepherd you either way, the easy way or the hard way. But when you cooperate with the shepherding ministry, it

makes our task a joy and that gives us energy and enthusiasm to do this work with vigor. And we need vigor because there's a lot of work! The number one frustration of shepherds today is the unresponsiveness of those they're trying to shepherd. You might get a call or an email from your shepherd asking how he can pray for you, if there are any needs we can help with, or just to check-in on your well-being. You would be blown away if you knew how many of those outreaches go unanswered completely. When you respond, it gives us joy. You don't want to be one of those people that make your shepherds sigh or groan. I'm not saying you shouldn't have difficulties or struggles, not at all! That's why we're here! What wears your shepherds down is not the hard work, but hard hearts. An unwillingness to forgive when you must, an unwillingness to repent of sin when you must, an unwillingness to be reconciled to another believer when you must.

The greatest gift you can give your shepherds, and the chief shepherd, is an eagerness to believe and obey God's Word.

Notice what he adds here, that it is of no advantage to you or anyone else when you are difficult to shepherd. It is good, godly, and in your best interest to make shepherding you a pleasure. So, as we relaunch our shepherding ministry, you have a part to play in this, a biblical responsibility. Let your shepherds do this with joy, and that starts with being responsive to their efforts to reach you and care for you and pray for you. And as the relationship develops, they may challenge you along the lines of Scripture, encouraging you to live the Worship, Grow, Serve, Go Rhythm of Discipleship. Don't run from that but embrace it as coming from those who love you, who are committed to your maturity in Christ, and will have to give an account for your soul!

V. **How do we obey and submit?** This is difficult, and I'm under no illusions that it's not. None of us want to obey and submit in the home or in the church because it feels weak, it feels wimpy, it feels like losing. It feels like surrendering our

freedom. It feels like losing control and it may feel humbling. So where do we find the power to do this? The gospel.

1. Remember that you are dearly loved and bought with a price. You are not your own, but belong entirely to the Lord your God. He loved you with an everlasting love and he instituted the church and shepherds to care for your spiritual well-being. When you submit to authority on earth as a Christian, you are submitting to His authority in heaven.

2. God's intention is to use our humble submission and obedience to make us like Jesus. When it feels like death to lay down our will, to go another's way, or to joyfully accept a direction we wouldn't have chosen, know that the Good Shepherd sees you. He knows. And he delights to see you walking in his steps, who for your salvation said "Not my will, but yours, be done." As we collectively practice this humble obedience and submission according to the Scriptures, we can be sure that we will all grow up into maturity in Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is church membership so important? If you're not a member of a local church (Covenant or some other), what is keeping you from making such a commitment and what should you do about it?
2. How does knowing that submission and obedience are the calling of every Christian help you obey and submit to the authorities in your life (such as parents, a husband, elders of the church)?
3. Why is it so important to only ordain to church leadership those men who have proven character and godliness?
4. How do you feel about the fact that the elders must give an account for your soul? What does it do to your understanding of a shepherding ministry in the church?
5. If you are a member of Covenant and currently have a shepherd assigned to you, are you making it a joy for them to shepherd you? Whatever your response to that question, how might you make it an even greater joy for your shepherd to keep watch over your soul?

Section 2:

The Overview and goals of Shepherding: Ministry expectations

This is an overview of the shepherd's role and expectations supported by a list of the key goals to ensure that the ministry is developing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

In 2018 Senior Pastor Dr. Trent Casto established the overall objective for the CCN Shepherding Ministry:

Those being shepherded know and trust their shepherd well enough to reach out to them for spiritual help and guidance or in times of crisis or concern. For the shepherd, the desire is to see their member in a healthy relationship with Jesus and living out the Rhythm of Discipleship.



An Overview of the Shepherding Ministry

To guide the implementation of the Shepherding Ministry, the Session created a Shepherding Policy that provides a broad framework for how the ministry will function:

Being shepherded is one of the privileges of membership at CCN. While CCN ministers to non-members, the goal of this ministry is to shepherd all of our members.

Each member will be assigned to a shepherd: either an elder, deacon, Lay Shepherd or small group leader under the oversight of a teaching or ruling elder.

The desired outcome is for each member to develop a trusting relationship with their shepherd that begins as soon as they join CCN.

To coordinate and support the shepherding process shepherds will be organized into shepherding teams. The number of teams will be based on the size of the church. Each team will be led by a pastor or elder selected by the senior pastor. The Deacons will be considered a Shepherding team under the leadership of the Congregational Life Pastor. Shepherding teams will meet regularly throughout the year to pray for their "flocks" and encourage one another.

The ministry will be guided by a Shepherding Committee under the direction of the Session. It is made up of three elders and two female lay shepherds with the Congregational Life Pastor as a nonvoting member.

The Role of the Shepherd: Learnings from Psalm 23

Hear how James Montgomery Boice talks about shepherds in ancient days: “In Israel ... a shepherd’s work was considered the lowest of all works. If a family needed a shepherd, it was always the youngest son, like David, who got this unpleasant assignment. Shepherds had to live with the sheep twenty-four hours a day, and the task of caring for them was unending. Day and night, summer and winter, in fair weather and foul, they labored to nourish, guide, and protect the sheep. Who in his right mind would choose to be a shepherd?”

Well, the great God of the universe chose to be a shepherd. He came to be with his people 24 hours a day, summer and winter, and not only to be with them but to lay down his life for them. Not only is Christ the model for our shepherding but he is our God and our King, our Savior and Redeemer.

Shepherding is not the most glamorous calling. There are many moments of frustration at the lack of response from your flock. They may not return your phone calls, texts, or emails. Or they may express their dislike for the way you go about shepherding. You may have to have a tough conversation of accountability with one of your members. Needless to say, it is a high calling with at times the lowest of responses.

So, while shepherding may not be a glamorous calling, it is a high calling! It is a role that supports believers at Covenant as they seek to Worship, Grow, Serve and Go, thus pursuing being fully devoted followers of Christ.



Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Covenant shepherding begins with the simple truth that the Lord is the Chief Shepherd. This is both humbling and relieving. Humbling because you are not in control. Relieving because the Lord provides for His people to the point where they are content and will not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

The provision and goodness of the Lord as our shepherd allows His people to rest in green pastures. We can rest because our needs are provided for as evidenced by the green pastures. A growing sheep will find green pasture at Covenant as they participate in the rhythm of discipleship. As shepherds, our role is to make sure the pastures are green. What causes the grass to brown? False teaching, sin, discord, division, or spiritual apathy.

He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.

The still waters, like the green pastures, allow the sheep to safely refresh and be restored. The image of Christ as the living water where no one goes thirsty is close in mind. Again, this quenching of our spiritual thirst by the Good Shepherd restores our soul. Shepherds want to ensure that the member is being led to these still waters and that their soul is being restored. If a sheep is not having restoration in their soul, it is the shepherd's role to encourage and lead them to the still waters through prayer, scripture reading, fellowship, or small groups.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

This verse reminds shepherds that encouragement toward righteousness is never about personal satisfaction but always God's glory. Shepherds discourage members from pursuing the path of self-righteousness or inward reliance which leads to pride or despair.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

In the darkest of days, God's people do not need to fear evil. A shepherd will walk alongside a member through even those darkest of days. This verse doesn't tell shepherds to try and remove them from the valley but to walk with them, reminding them of God's presence and strength through the valley of the shadow of death. A shepherd encourages them to hold onto the truth of scripture that death and brokenness is a mere shadow. This also gives the shepherd hope as they walk with them faithfully but are not consumed by the valley.



Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

A rod and a staff were used by shepherds to ensure their sheep stayed safe and didn't wander. Accountability is not a fun process, but in the end we are reminded that it is for the people's comfort. Life inside the pasture was exceedingly more comfortable than life in the wilderness. God has given us His word to help keep us accountable by showing us what an abundant spiritual life looks like. At times, our people will need the nudging of the rod and the hook of the staff to keep them from straying into the wilderness. Always remember this is for God's glory and their good.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

This is a foreshadowing of the communion table. The good shepherd, in the face of the enemy, allows His people to be nourished and safe. Communion is a sacrament and a reminder of God's goodness in Christ to His people and that He prepares a table that spiritually nourishes His people. Because of this importance, we want to exhort our people to come to the Lord's table. This means reminding members of the need to participate in corporate worship and involvement in the life of the church.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Oil was used medicinally to treat dry skin in the blazing desert. When a traveler would arrive at a home, they were greeted with oil and wine. This became the sign of a friend and a safe place to be healed from the journey and protected. As shepherds, the sheep need to know that there is oil waiting for them when they turn to you. This metaphorically means that you are a safe place to promote healing and soothing that comes from the Lord. Practically, if any of your sheep are in need of healing, the pastors and elders are called to anoint the sick with oil and to pray in faith for healing. The shepherd is to encourage the member to spend time with the Lord and His word so they are filled with the joy of their salvation and His presence such that their cup overflows. This enables them to live out the Gospel and have a positive spiritual impact on their family, church, community, and world.

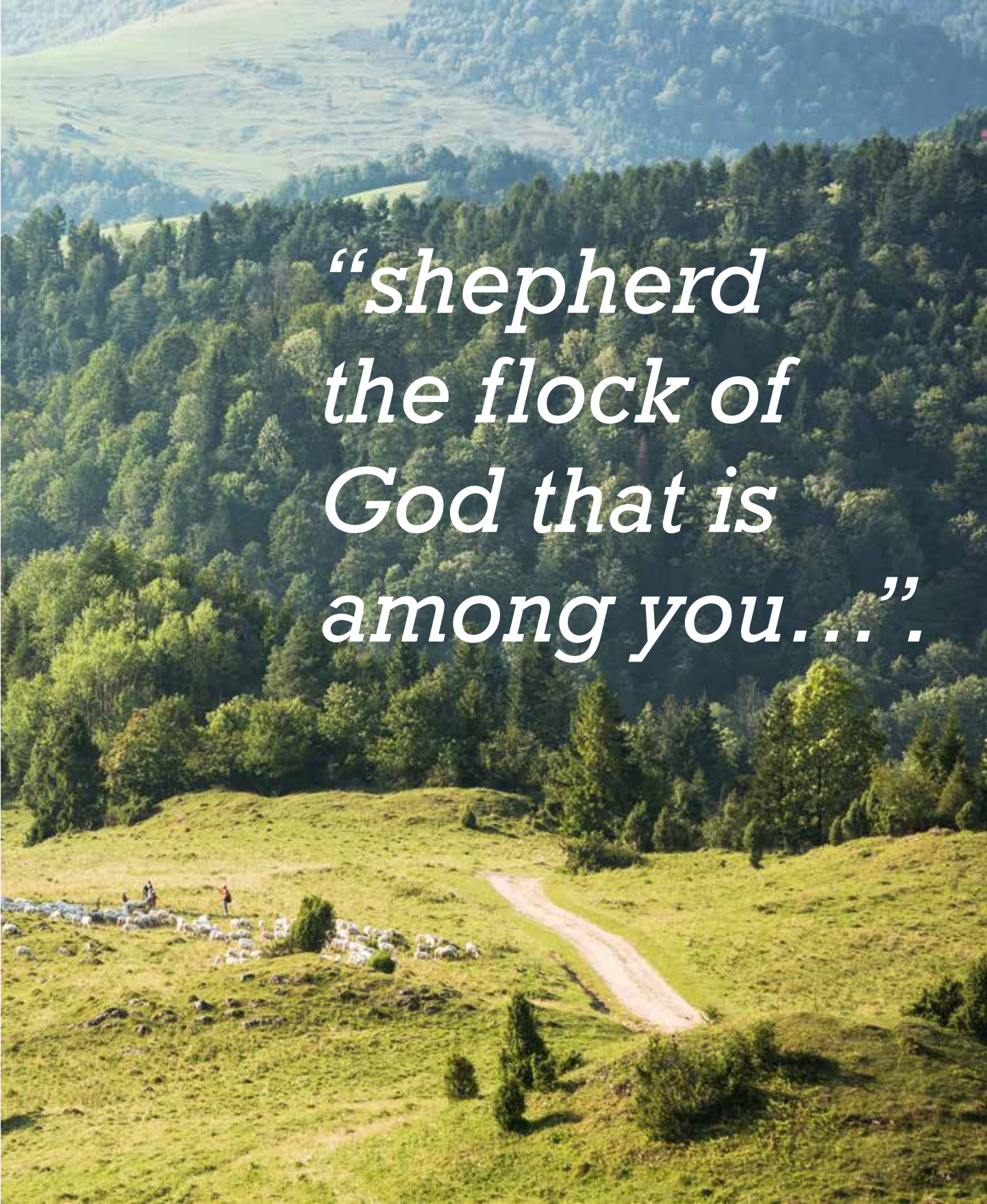
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

While day-to-day contact can feel tedious and unrewarding, a shepherd has an eternal perspective in mind. They are doing an earthly work with an eternal view. The shepherd that is shaped from an eternal perspective will be able to gracefully be present in the here and now without becoming discouraged, cynical, or apathetic. Each interaction from an eternity-minded shepherd has the house of God in view.



The Goals of the Shepherding Ministry:

- 1** Pray regularly for those you are shepherding.
- 2** Help new members become connected to the church. Ensure that every member knows you and feels connected to you as their shepherd. To have at least four meaningful individual contacts with each household per year.
- 3** Serve as a communication conduit to make sure members are informed about important churchwide issues and decisions.
- 4** To encourage each person to be a more fully devoted Christ follower practicing the “Rhythm of Discipleship”: Worship, Grow, Serve and Go. To understand the life situation and specific needs (spiritual, emotional, physical, and, financial) of each person assigned to you. To support individuals through difficult times. To help people identify additional resources, when requested, through the various ministries of the church.
- 5** To play an active part in the Shepherding Ministry by participating in training sessions and team meetings; and contributing to the ministry’s growth and effectiveness.

A scenic landscape photograph of a green valley. In the foreground, a dirt road winds through a grassy field. A flock of sheep is gathered near the road, with a few people standing nearby. The middle ground is filled with dense green trees, and the background shows rolling hills under a clear sky.

*“shepherd
the flock of
God that is
among you...”*

Section 3:

Tapestry of Shepherding

There are two primary aspects to shepherding that on the surface seem contradictory but when weaved together form a beautiful tapestry. These two threads of shepherding are care and the rhythm of discipleship. A faithful shepherd will ensure that those members in their flock are both cared for in all seasons of life while they are also living in the rhythm of discipleship. Let's take a look at both of these threads.



CARE



***Rejoice with those who rejoice;
weep with those who weep***
Romans 12:15

***¹⁵ For we do not have a
high priest who is unable
to sympathize with our
weaknesses, but one who in
every respect has been tempted
as we are, yet without sin.***

***¹⁶ Let us then with confidence
draw near to the throne of
grace, that we may receive
mercy and find grace to help
in time of need.***
Hebrews 4:15-16



The first thread of shepherding is care.

Here are the 7 Be's of care that will help you in your shepherding ministry. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but, rather, one which covers the basics of care. If you would like more training in any of these areas, please reach out to the Shepherding Committee.

1. Be Present

a. "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shutite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment to come to show him sympathy and comfort him."
Job 2:11

b. One of the most important things in care is your presence. In Job, his friends started out great by traveling from a far to come and sit with Job. In the New Testament, Paul longs to be with people who are hurting for various reasons. Oftentimes, your presence communicates care more effectively than even your words.

2. Be Authentic

a. "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." 1 Cor 2:1-5

b. In other words, trust the Lord and don't say things you don't really mean or be someone God didn't create you to be. People who are in need of care don't need the extra burden of trying to figure out if what you are saying is real or not. In the end, you are in danger of compounding the hurt making it more about you than what the Lord is doing in the person's heart.

c. There are times when you may even say the wrong thing to someone, but when it is communicated by a caring, pure, loving heart, it is like a balm to the soul.

3. Be Aware

a. "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1

b. People are unique. Every person rejoices uniquely and grieves uniquely. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to care. Therefore, it is extremely important to be aware of not only your own approach to care, but also to how it is being received.

c. Watch the person's body language and tone of voice. Are they shutting you out with continual one-word answers? Do they sound despondent? Look in their eyes. Does the person's body language and voice communicate the same thing you see in their eyes? This will communicate if the person is willing to engage more in the conversation. Sometimes people need to come up for a breath of air. In these moments it's OK to talk about things that seem surface level. No one can stay in the deep end emotionally for very long.

d. Consider your own body language. Lean forward. Look them in the eye when they are talking. Be aware of your own emotions and thoughts.

4. Be Quiet

a. "And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great." Job 2:13

b. In most circumstances you can't fix it. Most people are inclined to try and fix a problem right away when all someone really needs at the time is a good listener. Quietness communicates sympathy to the hurting one and your desire to know and let them express their thoughts and feelings. It also communicates a confidence in God's steadfastness.

5. Be Prayerful

a. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:6-7

b. Prayer prepares your heart for care. Prayer sustains you in the midst of care and guards you from burnout. Simply put, prayer reminds you that God is the One in control. It reminds you of your position of weakness and inability to ultimately solve another's problems. God is the cure giver; you are the caregiver. You will know that you are being an effective shepherd when you spend more time praying for the member outside of your conversation with them than when you are face to face.

c. Familiarize yourself with the different prayers in scripture. Reading prayers in scripture will show you the language of prayer. Psalms can be considered the prayer book of the Bible.

i. Adoration

1. Speaking God's attributes back to Him
2. "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Psalm 145:8

ii. Confession

1. Surrendering to God
2. "For I know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:3, 10

iii. Thanksgiving

1. Showing gratitude to God in all things
2. "I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds." Psalm 9:1

iv. Supplication

1. Humbly asking God to act
2. "Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace. Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth." Psalm 86:6,11

v. Lament

1. Crying out to God
2. "My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?'" Psalm 42:3

d. Arrow prayers

i. While most of the prayer happens before care, remember to have a prayerful disposition while engaging in care.

ii. When Nehemiah found himself in front of the King, wanting to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem, the king asked him, "What are you requesting?" In that very moment the text says, "So I prayed to the God of heaven." And then he proceeded to answer the King. These are arrow prayers. In the middle of care, it is as if you shoot an arrow of prayer to heaven asking for God's help in this specific moment.

6. Be Grounded

a. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither." Psalm 1:2-3

b. Your care will bring life to people when you plant yourself near the streams of living water by meditating on His word day and night. The Holy Spirit will use this time to connect the person's story with God's story, bringing an encouraging word. This will also have the effect of reminding you afresh where the power to heal resides.

c. Remember not to use the Bible as a tool to tear down the person but, rather bring an encouraging word to their soul. The aim should always be love, whether it is confronting a sin or comforting a grief.

d. Marinate on God's promises in scripture as they will help you from becoming overwhelmed in your care.

7. Be Bold

a. "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." Deut 31:8

b. Fear is a common response of a shepherd to tough caring situations. The Bible reminds us that we can be bold because we know the Lord is the One who is going before us, who is ministering through us, and who will continue to work in the member's life long after us. This frees us to go boldly, without timidity, into any caring situation.

Second thread...the rhythm of discipleship



A fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ is fully integrated into the Rhythm of discipleship at Covenant Church.

Covenant has a clear mission statement,
"We will develop and deploy fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ
to disciple our family, community, and world."

This mission statement is best lived out through the
four Rhythms of Discipleship: Worship, Grow, Serve and Go. These four
strands make up the thread for the Rhythm of Discipleship at Covenant.

The responsibility of the shepherd is to encourage the members as they live into the Rhythm of Discipleship. At times, this would include connecting them to different resources within the church (small groups, service opportunities, etc.). However, to be clear, the shepherd's responsibility is not to provide each part of the rhythm for the members (although sometimes there is overlap, as in the case of a small group leader being the shepherd.) For example, you are not responsible for providing the service opportunity but, rather, ensuring that the members are living into service opportunities at the church.

This thread of shepherding is best accomplished through a loving and eager spirit and not one of control or frustration. While we are keeping our members accountable for their continued engagement within the **Rhythm of Discipleship**, it is not done at the expense of love. In fact, good shepherding should compel people towards further engagement with the Lord.

What follows is a list of the four aspects of the **Rhythm of Discipleship**. Each part includes three different facets that can be addressed during your contacts with members. This can be done over a long period of time as you build a relationship with your members. In some ways, this is a checklist of all the ways to evaluate the extent to which a member is connecting to the church family and growing in their relationship with the Lord. After all, we desire to be *"A loving family, dependent on the Holy Spirit, committed to the Word, growing in grace, reaching out in mercy."*



WORSHIP

- **Quotes from Trent's book**

"A life of biblical worship is a sacrificial, logical, radical, transformational response to God's mercies."

"The things that influence us the most are usually the things of which we're least aware."

"What you long for is what you worship."

- **In the closet**

- o Devotional life
- o Private prayer

- **In the family room**

- o Family worship time
(prayer, singing, Bible reading)

- **In the Sanctuary**

- o Attendance at Church
- o Questions about sermons
- o Music



GROW

- **Quotes from Trent's book**

"Christians grow in community, through the Word, by the Spirit."

"You must be a person who dwells in the Word, if you want to be changed by the Word."

"It is the Spirit of God working through the Word of God in the community of God that promotes the growth of God's people."

- **Community**

- o Small group

- **Word**

- o Sunday School
- o Wednesday connect
- o Outside opportunity

- **Spirit**

- o Personal devotional time in the Word



SERVE

- **Quotes from Trent's book**

"The serving Church is Cross-Captivated, Love-Motivated, and Grace-Animated."

"When the Spirit comes, He never comes empty-handed. God gives spiritual gifts to each and every one of His children."

"You won't be judged for what you've done in comparison to others. You'll be judged for what you've done with what the Master gave you."

- **Time**

- o Service

- **Talent**

- o Spiritual Gifts

- **Treasure**

- o Tithing/Giving



GO

- **Quotes from Trent's book**

"We must GO, proclaim the gospel, and send others to do the same."

"God doesn't save good people. He saves sinners. Good works don't save people. Saved people do good works."

"When the gospel grips your heart, you will increasingly become a person zealous to do good, wherever you are, whenever you can.."

- **Personal Evangelism**

- o Personal Witness to others

- **Sent**

- o Near and far mission opportunities

- **Knowledgeable prayer**

- o Connected to specific mission partner needs

A Fray in the Tapestry

The tapestry of shepherding is a beautiful image. Unfortunately, sometimes the threads get frayed and the tapestry begins to unweave. For the purpose of the analogy, these frays can be considered sin. Sin is either not doing what God wants us to do or doing what He doesn't want us to do. Believe it or not, the church is filled with people who are sinful, including all of us! But we can take heart because Jesus said He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

In Mark 2:17 Jesus says, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners." Any doctor will tell you that the best way to fight against disease is to do preventive care: exercise, healthy eating, and sleep. This is no different for our spiritual health. The best way to fight against the fray in the tapestry is consistent, gospel-centered teaching and preaching that reminds the church of the truth of God's word. In this way, God strengthens the threads in the tapestry as He does preventive, sanctifying soul care.

Unfortunately, as much as the threads can be strengthened, our human hearts will still walk in disobedience. One of the hardest parts of shepherding is walking alongside someone as he or she is turning away from the Lord. As Dr. Lynn Anderson's book makes clear, "They smell like sheep." At times in your ministry as a shepherd, you will need to address a fray in the tapestry. This could look like encouragement, admonishment, or teaching but, regardless of the approach, at times a pattern of unhealthy Christian living needs to be addressed. What follows are some helpful tips for approaching a member on church discipline.



TIPS

1. Remember! You are a sinner too

a. Matt 7:3-5 “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? And how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

b. Jesus gives us a clear directive to seek repentance in our own life before approaching someone else about the fray we see in his life. This ensures a humble spirit in you which will help create a fertile soil in the recipient.

2. Always hold out the promise of reconciliation found in the Gospel

a. 2 Cor 5:18-19 “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”

b. Every part of the church discipline process has the aim at restoration and reconciliation. The hope of the gospel is the reconciliation that has been given to us by God when we did not deserve it. While talking with people about a fray in their tapestry, we must always acknowledge that God gives us and them new thread through repentance.

3. Don’t mistake discernment for judgment

a Matt 7:1 “Do not judge lest you be judged.”

b. Judgment leads to condemnation while discernment leads to life. Judgment is done usually with an air of self-righteousness while discernment is done with compassion. If you have the thought ‘HOW COULD THIS PERSON

DO THAT!?!?’ or ‘I COULD NEVER SEE MYSELF DOING WHAT THEY ARE DOING!’ , you may need to sit and pray that God would soften your heart without compromising the truth.

4. Grace must always lead and finish every interaction

a. Col 4:6 “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

b. Words have immense power, particularly in circumstances where a holy confrontation happens. Gracious words are not empty and filled with flattery, but purposeful and filled with hope.

5. Don’t be surprised if it doesn’t go well

a. Romans 1:32 “Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things are worthy of death, they not only continue to do these things, but also approve of those who practice them.”

b. Sin leads to death. This deadening is usually a slow process that has been present in someone’s life for years. Someone may get to a point where their heart is desiring things opposite of the Lord, the person’s will is actively choosing these things, and the mind will justify their actions. This could result in someone twisting your words to justify their actions. Take heart and do not be discouraged. The truth will always reign in the end.

For the biblical foundation of our process of church discipline, please read through Pastor Trent's sermon Being Shepherded in the Household of God on pages 14-19. Some of the points are expounded upon below. This sermon lays the foundation for how we want to approach a fray in the tapestry here at Covenant.

2 Corinthians
GOD'S STRENGTH IN OUR WEAKNESS SERIES

May 24, 2020

Competing Designs In Church Discipline

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Pastor Trent Casto

The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest day of the Civil War and the deadliest one-day battle in all of American military history. During the course of 12 hours in 1862, an estimated 3,650 Americans were killed.⁴ Historians say the outcome was basically a draw, but if The South had won, they likely would've won the Civil War. So how was the mediocre Union General George McClellan able to end the tactically superior Robert E. Lee's push into Maryland? It all came down to three cigars. As Lee's army moved and McClellan agonized over what to do, an Indiana regiment stopped for a rest in a field that had been occupied by Confederates a few days earlier. Three soldiers laying out on the grass happened to notice an envelope. Inside the envelope were three cigars wrapped in paper. The soldiers excitedly split the cigars, and one of them decided to look at the paper they were wrapped in. His curiosity changed history. The paper that wrapped those three cigars was a copy of Lee's marching orders, revealing where the Confederates were heading and what they had planned. With this information in hand, McClellan promptly went on the attack and curtailed the Confederate advance.⁵

In some respects, we are no match for our enemy, Satan, whose designs we are told to be wary of. He wants to destroy the Church by any means possible. But, as with General McClellan, our enemy's plans have fallen into our hands. Two of his preferred methods of bringing down the Church are to disrupt its purity and peace. We know his usual strategies—to entice us with lies, lust, greed, and the like and so destroy the purity of the Church. We know he seeks to sow discord and create division that destroys the unity of the church. With such knowledge, given us by God's Word, and God's Spirit within, we too can resist the enemy's advances."⁶

But the fact of the matter is that it's very hard to find a church that is concerned about both its purity and its peace. Churches that are concerned with the purity and holiness of the church oftentimes aren't very concerned with the peace and unity of the church. Likewise, churches that are concerned with peace

and unity often aren't very concerned with the purity or holiness of the church. But, if you're the member of a church like Covenant, one of your membership vows says that you promise to study the "purity and peace" of the church.⁷ It's not one or the other, it's both. And the good news is that God has given us biblical church discipline in order to preserve both the peace and purity of the church.

**Biblical church discipline exercised
in love, preserves the purity and
peace of the church and foils
Satan's designs.**

This biblical church discipline is what we see being described in our passage today and it's a topic little understood or appreciated in our cultural moment. But historically, many have seen the practice of it as an essential mark of a true church. And we believe, as a church, that it is one of God's gifts to us, and so we're going to talk about it this morning.

I. Church Discipline is Biblical When Exercised in Love. There's a backstory to our text today; the trouble is that we don't know exactly what it is. But here's what we read in verse 5,

"Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you."

Someone in Corinth has caused pain. And despite the fact that the offence was directed at Paul, the real damage was done not to him, but to the church in Corinth.⁸ The million-dollar question is: What exactly is the nature of the offense that caused pain to the whole church in Corinth? From very early on in church history there has been a consistent group of witnesses who identify the sinner here as the incestuous man who was sleeping with his stepmother and referred to in 1 Corinthians 5.⁹ We'll look at that passage in a moment because it's instructive, but most modern scholars today reject that identification. More likely the offender was a person who was a part of the church in Corinth who in some way verbally assaulted Paul's person and his authority as an apostle.¹⁰ It may have happened during his painful visit or perhaps shortly after, but the bottom line is that Paul was sinned against in a public fashion and the church didn't deal with it. As we'll learn later when we get to chapter 7, Paul wrote his tearful letter in order to grieve them into repentance over this matter and to exercise

church discipline, which they did zealously (7:11).

Why is church discipline necessary? The Westminster Confession of Faith gives five reasons (numbers mine), "Church censures are necessary, for

- (1) the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for
- (2) deterring of others from the like offenses, for
- (3) purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for
- (4) vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel, and for
- (5) preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders."¹¹
(WCF 30.3)

Notice that the first driving motivator listed in church discipline is to reclaim the sinner who has gone astray. Biblical church discipline is about restoration. One scholar highlights this when he writes, "Paul's disciplinary practices were intended as remedial rather than punitive measures, being infused from start to finish with the single-minded desire for the good of the offending individual."¹¹ And that was the case here in Corinth. They exercised discipline and it had its intended effect as we read in verse 6,

"For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough,"

We're not told exactly what the punishment was, but it worked. Now the danger was going too far as we read in verses 7-8,

"so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him."

The aim of the discipline was to reclaim the sinner. He has apparently shown sufficient repentance, therefore the discipline needs to stop and as surely as they've disciplined him, they need to make their love very clear to him. You might wonder: What does the process of church discipline look like in a PCA church like ours? There are basically six steps laid out in the Bible and also in our confessional standards:¹²

1. Training and instruction. The first part of discipline is that the church must know what

is expected of them from God's Word. Biblical preaching and teaching lays down a strong foundation of good doctrine along with the implications for living a Christian life. Church members must be taught and instructed, including in this matter of church discipline. But, despite great teaching and instruction, all of us fall short of the glory of God and we sin. What happens then?

- 2. Private admonishment.** This is the first step Jesus refers to in Matthew 18.

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone..."
(Matthew 18:15)

That's the first step, and in a healthy church most conflicts and sin should be resolved at that level of private admonishment. The offender confesses, asks forgiveness, forgiveness is granted, and on we go. Sometimes, however, we don't listen to admonishment. If that's the case,

- 3. Bring one or two witnesses.** Jesus says,

"But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses."
(Matthew 18:16)

We may try this multiple times in hopes of seeing repentance. But if that doesn't work, then we go to the next level.

- 4. Tell it to the church.** Jesus says,

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church..."
(Matthew 18:17)

In our church, that means bringing your case to the elders. They will engage with the parties involved to discern what the issue is and what sins need to be confessed and repented of. If there's still no repentance then,

- 5. The offender is barred from communion.** This includes not allowing the person to partake of the communion table, but I believe it also includes not engaging in fellowship with him.¹³ Communion is, after all, a picture of our fellowship, and to forbid someone from the table would also imply social isolation.¹⁴ An example is found in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 Paul writes,

"...keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us."

And then in verses 14-15 of that same chapter he writes,

"If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother."
(2 Thess. 3:14-15)

So, clearly, there is a social distancing to take place from those in the church who are living in sin unrepentantly. But at this point still they are to be regarded as a brother. The hope is that the shame of this public separation and exclusion will bring them to repentance. You have to see here that still the motive is restoration and love for the guilty from God and the church. But in our world today, this kind of treatment is seen as hate, as judgmentalism, and as unloving. Eric Bargerhuff rightly identifies the issue when he writes, "...if church discipline is not rightly seen as an expression of God's love, then it will inevitably be erroneously construed as an oppressive, intolerant, divisive, and harsh expression of human power."¹⁵ That's how effectively Satan has shaped the thinking of the church, that we have missed the plain meaning of the apostle and turned on its head the teaching of the Holy Spirit who says that this is how you show love to a persistent offender. You socially isolate from him until he repents. As Tom Schreiner writes, "Treating the person as usual would display one's lack of love, betraying one's apathy about the person's salvation."¹⁶ At the heart of our failure to hold one another accountable, even to the levels described in these passages, is a lack of love for one another and an apathy about our salvation. If after this barring from communion the offender is still unrepentant, then we go to the final phase:

- 6. The offender is excommunicated.** Jesus says,

"...And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."
(Matthew 18:17)

The New Testament sometimes refers to this as handing someone over to Satan. The

most prominent example of this is found in 1 Corinthians 5. Paul writes there,

"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you... When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."
(1 Cor. 5:1-2, 4-5)

This man was sinning in a very public manner and the church was not addressing it. Paul is shocked that they would allow it to go on. It seems they do not understand what he says in 1 Corinthians 5:6,

"...Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"

If they tolerate this sin, its effects are going to spread through the whole church. The church was commanded to remove the offender from them and deliver him

"...to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."
(Corinthians 5:5)

The discipline inflicted here refers to the expulsion (or excommunication) of this person from the membership rolls of the church. It is a declaration that they are not a part of the fellowship of Christ and are under the reign of Satan. It's possible that Paul expects this handing over to Satan to lead to some kind of grave physical affliction negatively affecting the offender's life in this world in the hopes that this suffering may turn him back to Christ.¹⁷ In this case the 'destruction of the flesh' may refer to his sinful inclinations.¹⁸ But notice, the hope is still that the sinner would come to repentance. This is love! And it's very counter-cultural. And it looks very strange to most of us who are Christians. Because most of us who are Christians and most of our churches are very worldly in our thinking about church discipline. David Wells writes, "Worldliness is what makes sin look normal in any age and righteousness seem odd."¹⁹ In no part of the Christian life is this more apparent than in our understanding and

practice of church discipline. Ignoring sin looks normal, and disciplining it looks odd, but church discipline is biblical.

We must own up to the fact that our failure to hold one another accountable is a failure of love.

And for those few churches that do exercise church discipline, there must be an acknowledgement that love for God and love for the sinner are often far from the driving motivator.

II. Church Discipline Preserves the Purity and Peace of the Church.

Paul writes in verse 9,

"For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything."

Paul wrote the tearful letter calling them to exercise church discipline on the offender, and he says he sent it as a test to see if they would obey in everything. In other words, disciplining people in the church who are in open sin is a matter of obedience to the Word. To not exercise church discipline in love is to sin against God and expose the church to impurity and disunity. Church discipline is given to protect against these two things particularly. And so Paul says in Galatians 6:1,

"...if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."

Here's what this means practically. We have a responsibility to love each other by practicing the church discipline I've been describing. Your sin is my business, and my sin is your business. We are called to be a part of *gently* restoring one another when we go astray. Looking back to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5,

"I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people — not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed,

or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

(1 Corinthians 5:9–13)

The church has a responsibility to discipline those in its body who are living in sin including not only sexual immorality, but also greed, idolatry, reviling, drunkenness, and being a swindler. We're not even to eat with people who are living in these kinds of sin. Obviously, this teaching creates a whole host of complicated implications. Christians are not forbidden from associating with non-Christians who are living in these kinds of sins. What is forbidden is associating with people claiming to be Christians while living in sin because they're a stain on the church and their sin will spread. So, is it okay to have friends living in homosexual sin? Not if they're claiming to be Christians. What about friends who are living together and sleeping together as though married but they're not? No, not if they're Christians. They should be called to repent of their sins. What about a greedy person? A person who loves money and has an inordinate desire to get more of it, even at the expense of others? Not okay. How about the reviler? The word is not one we use often but it refers to a person who insults another.²⁰ It's likely that the reviler is one who causes dissension and division in the church.²¹ A person who verbally attacks and abuses others, and that can happen through social media and the internet now easier than ever, that person is to be challenged about their sin and, if unrepentant, put out of the church. What about a drunkard? This refers to an intoxicated person. Of course, there are substances beyond alcohol that intoxicate, but alcohol has been an issue for a long time. We're not talking about addicts struggling to get sober; we're talking about people who aren't struggling. What about swindlers? Based on the way the word is used elsewhere in the New Testament²², we're talking particularly here about people who take advantage of others through various forms of extortion. What is clear is that this list is not exhaustive, but it is representative of the kinds of lifestyles that are not compatible with the holiness of the church. And when things like this go unchecked in the church, it's not pleasing to God. Gordon Fee writes, “Those who persist in that former way of life, not meaning those who

simply struggle with former sins, essentially do not belong to this new community. By their own actions they have opted out; the community must distance itself from such people for its own sake.”²³ There is a role for the leadership of the church to judge those inside the church.²⁴ And it is the role of the people and the leaders of the church to put away all our sins and to live lives of faith and repentance. The point is not to make people afraid of being honest about their sins. Exactly the opposite! In the Christian community we are encouraged to confess our sins and to turn from them. But those who are not turning threaten the purity and peace of the church and are not to be ignored.

III. Church Discipline Foils Satan's Designs. Finally, Paul talks about the importance of forgiving the offender in verses 10-11,

“Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”

Behind everything that's happening in his relationship with the Corinthians, Paul is cognizant of the enemy, Satan. Satan wants to destroy the Church. How he does it does not so much matter to him, but we must not be ignorant of his designs. On the one hand, he's happy to destroy the Church by encouraging us to wink at sin in our own lives and in our churches rather than keeping each other accountable. A lack of discipline in a church where sin goes unchecked is not a sign of love, but a lack of love. God disciplines those He loves, and so do good parents, and so do good shepherds. To not exercise discipline is to hate, not to love.²⁵ Satan loves when churches don't care about purity and holiness “in the name of love.” At the same time, for those churches that do practice discipline, Satan loves to take that discipline and make it merciless like he was doing in Corinth.²⁶ Charges are raised quickly, but there's no forgiveness, no mercy, no reconciliation.²⁷ That's not biblical church discipline either. The Church is a court, but it is first a family and church discipline should feel familial more than legal. Paul demonstrates for us in this passage that church discipline isn't about identifying the winners and losers in a conflict. Paul demonstrates both the courage of calling the Church to exercise discipline, but also the gospel-centered graciousness to allow his personal hurt to control his response. At the risk

of looking weak, Paul leads the way in forgiving. This kind of forgiveness looks weak to the world; it looks like you're surrendering your victory! But for Paul the victory is not winning the argument or fight; the victory is reclaiming the sinner who was lost but now is found. The celebration is over the one who has repented! As Garland writes, "His call for forgiveness changes an 'I win, you lose' situation to one where brothers in Christ win and Satan loses."²⁸ Here is what we're after in our exercise of church discipline, not someone winning and someone losing, but the exercise of church discipline and forgiveness is about the Church winning and Satan losing!²⁹

A church that is pursuing both purity and unity is a church that has grasped the gospel at its core. The gospel tells us that we were lost, hopelessly enslaved to our sinful condition and impure at every level. We were not united with God or with one another, but were at enmity with

God and each other. But God, in love, stepped into this situation of impurity and disunity in the person of Jesus Christ. And on the cross, Jesus took our impurity upon Himself and died to pay the penalty of it. Not only that, but by paying the penalty for our sin, He has caused us to be reconciled to God. Now, for all who trust in Jesus, not only have we been cleansed of our sin and united to God, but we're also united to one another. As one body in Christ, we are called to live out this purity and peace that Christ has accomplished for us. And in His loving grace, He has given us church discipline to be an aid to preserving that purity and peace until all of His Church will be finally saved to sin no more. So, in light of the gospel, let us practice and submit to biblical church discipline, and together win the victory over Satan and His designs.

Sermon Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think it's so unusual to find a church that is passionate about both the peace and the purity of the church? Which do you think is harder to secure?
2. Describe some of the reasons why biblical church discipline is necessary in local churches.
3. What are some of Satan's designs we need to be wary of when it comes to practicing church discipline?
4. How does Jesus's teaching in Matthew 7:1-5 on judging others relate to this message on church discipline?
5. How would your life change personally if you took the message of this sermon to heart? How might the life of those around you change?

CCN Restoration Commission Procedures

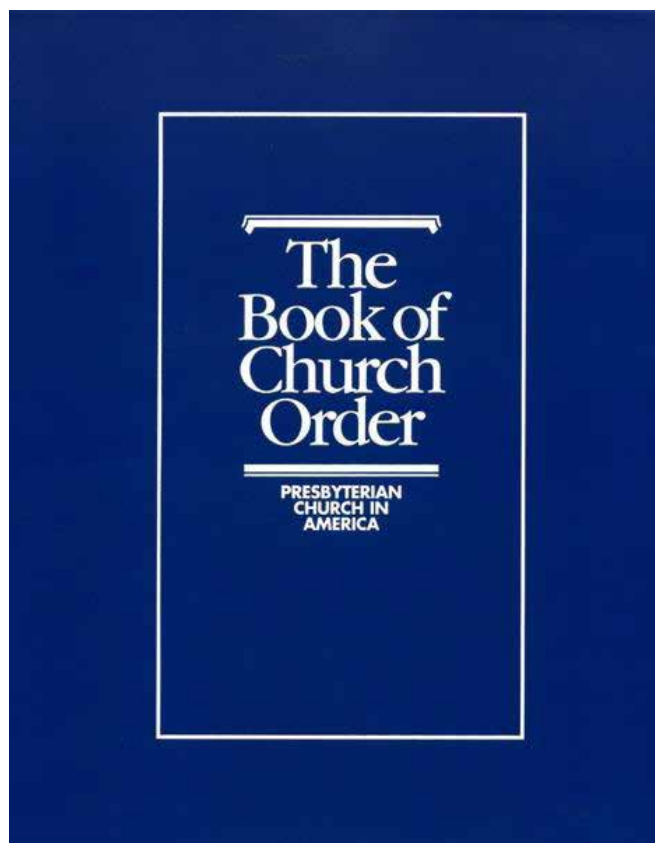
Pastor Trent outlines the “Why” of church discipline in his sermon, *Competing Designs in Church Discipline* which we hope you have read.

We now want to show you the “How.” Our Book of Church Order (BCO) outlines the process for church discipline.

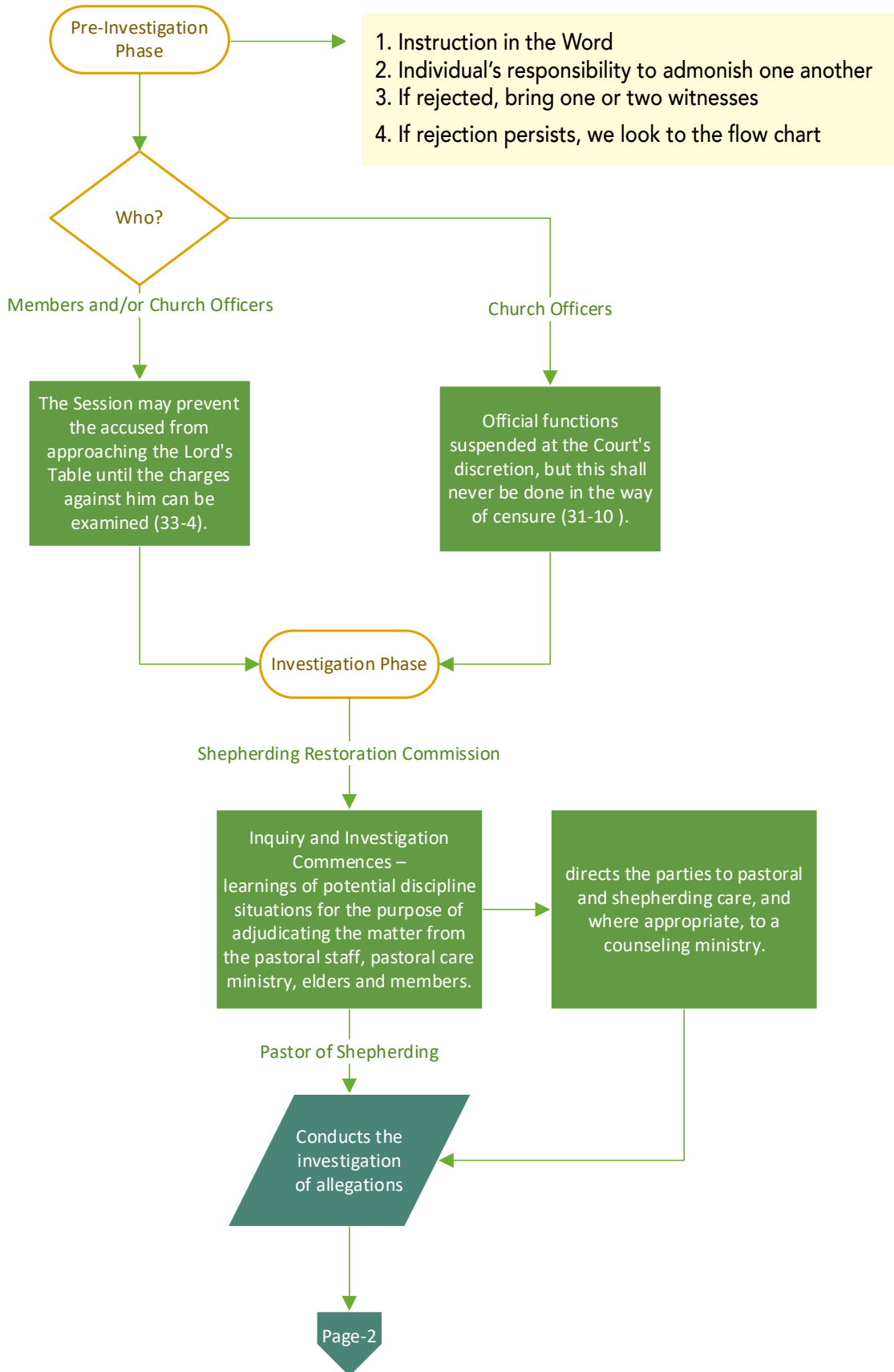
At times this can be a bit burdensome to understand.

What follows is a depiction of the process outlined in the BCO.

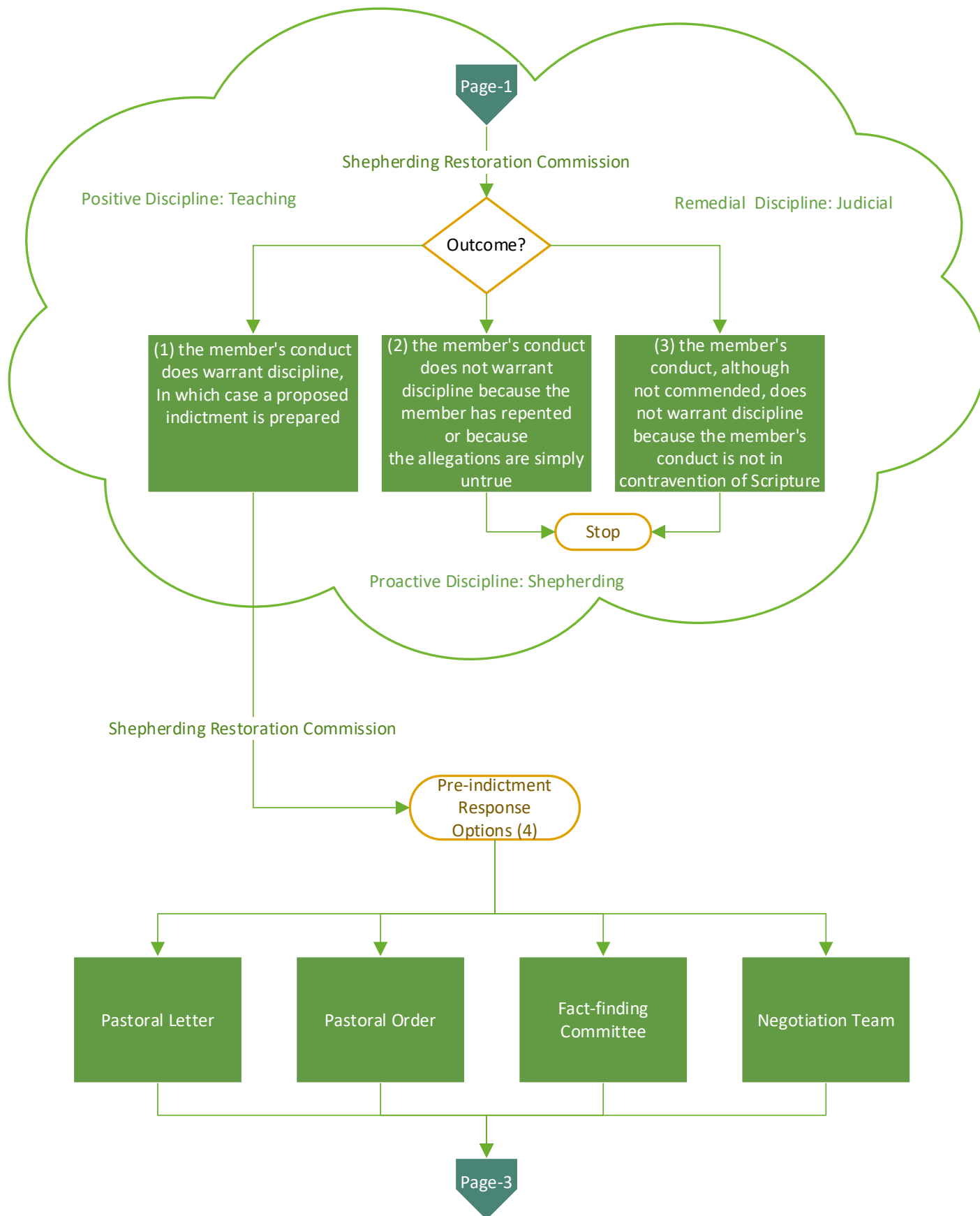
We hope this will help you get a better understanding of how we handle church discipline here at Covenant



CCN Restoration Commission Procedures



CCN Restoration Commission Procedures



CCN Restoration Commission Procedures

Page-2

Pastoral Letter: If approved, a Pastoral Letter of Advisements directing the offender to repent and demonstrate a contrite spirit by fully participating in the Shepherding/Pastoral Care Process may be sent out from the Shepherding Restoration Commission based on BCO 27-Sc. This is derived from the biblical precedent of 2 Corinthians 7:8-9 that demonstrates that the Holy Spirit uses such communications to bring godly conviction to the offender. However, this Pastoral Letter is never to be seen as an infliction of a Church Censure.

Or

Pastoral Order: If such a letter is rejected or this is the appropriate option to begin with, then a Pastoral Order of the Shepherding Restoration Commission may be issued specifying trigger dates that will cause an indictment of contumacy to be immediately forthcoming based upon BCO 27-Sc and the biblical precedents of Acts 15:22-29. This is effectively modeled in 2 Thelonians 3: 10-12: (a) For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, (b) Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living, (c) For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, then let him not eat.

Or

Fact-finding Committee: "It is the duty of all church Sessions to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character (31:2)" and "There are many cases, however, in which it will promote the interests of religion to send a committee to converse in a private manner with the offender, and endeavor to bring him to a sense of his guilt, before instituting actual process (31-7)."

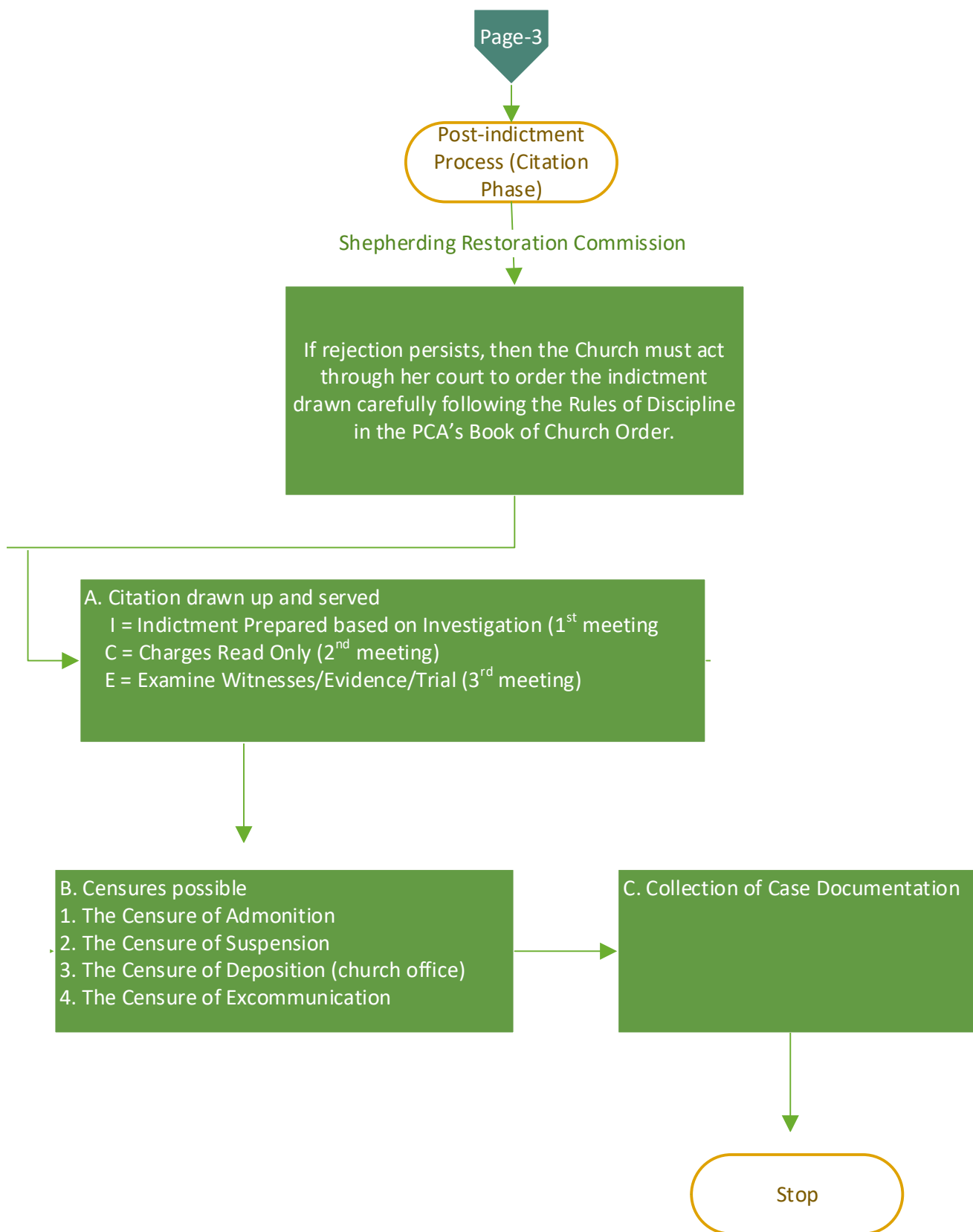
Or

Negotiation Team: "Every effort should be made to utilize private confrontation, mediation, and arbitration in order to reserve the use of formal church discipline, and the time of church courts, for those matters related to the purity of the Church and the keeping and reclaiming of disobedient sinners (BCO 27-3). Many of these ends will be realized through the processes of Christian conciliation and should be viewed as prerequisite procedures to the formal disciplinary process." Therefore, when a substantive issue related to money, property, or other material issues or rights divides Christians, a Negotiation Team should be appointed to follow a process of biblical negotiation that will meet the interests of all those involved.

Post-indictment
Process
(Citation Phase)

Page-4

CCN Restoration Commission Procedures



Section 4:

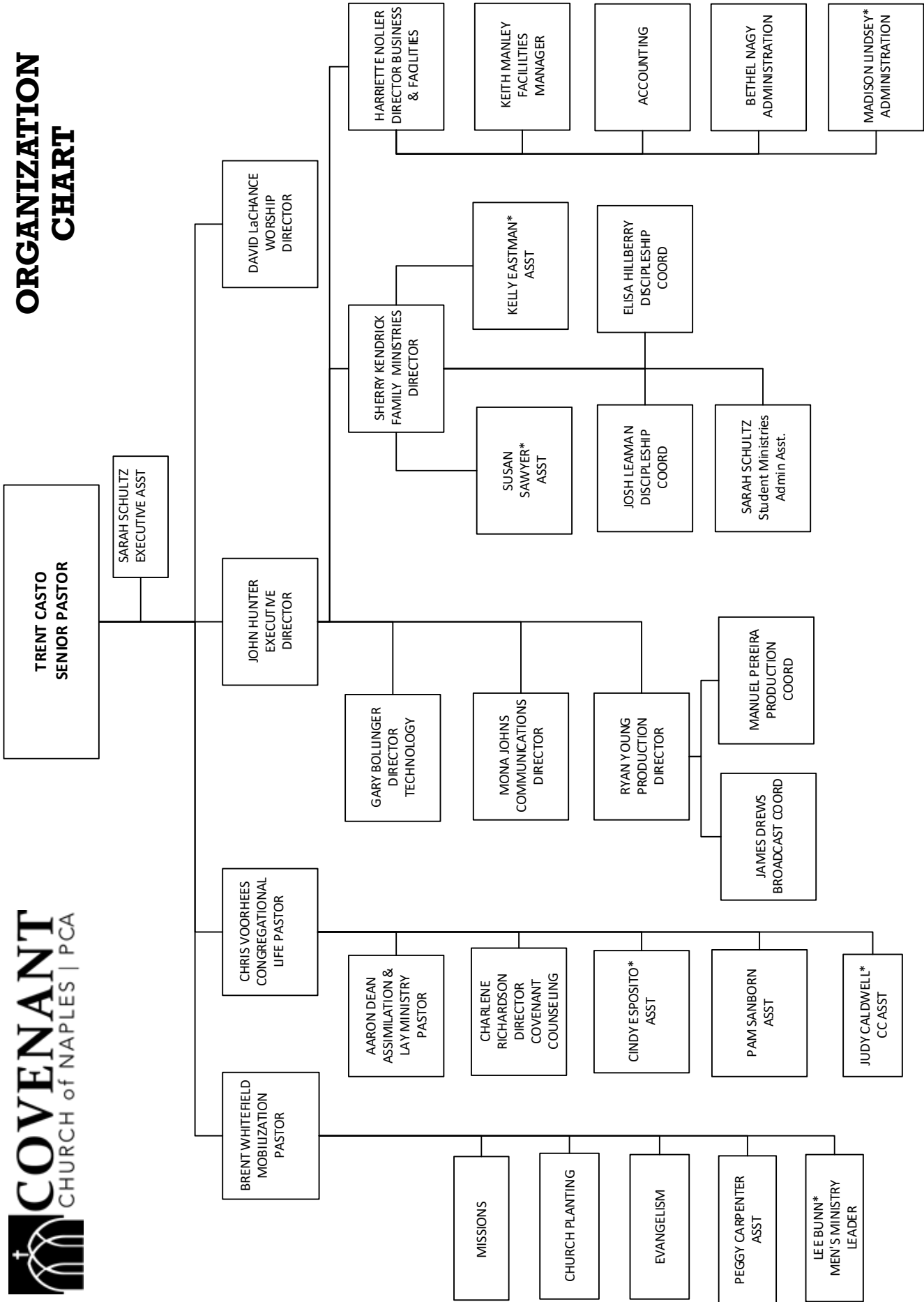
Tools of Shepherding: Organization and contacts available at CCN

This section contains administrative helps
like calendars, tracking forms,
organization structure and
ministry information.





ORGANIZATION CHART



* Part time personnel
Revised December 2021

Shepherding Committee

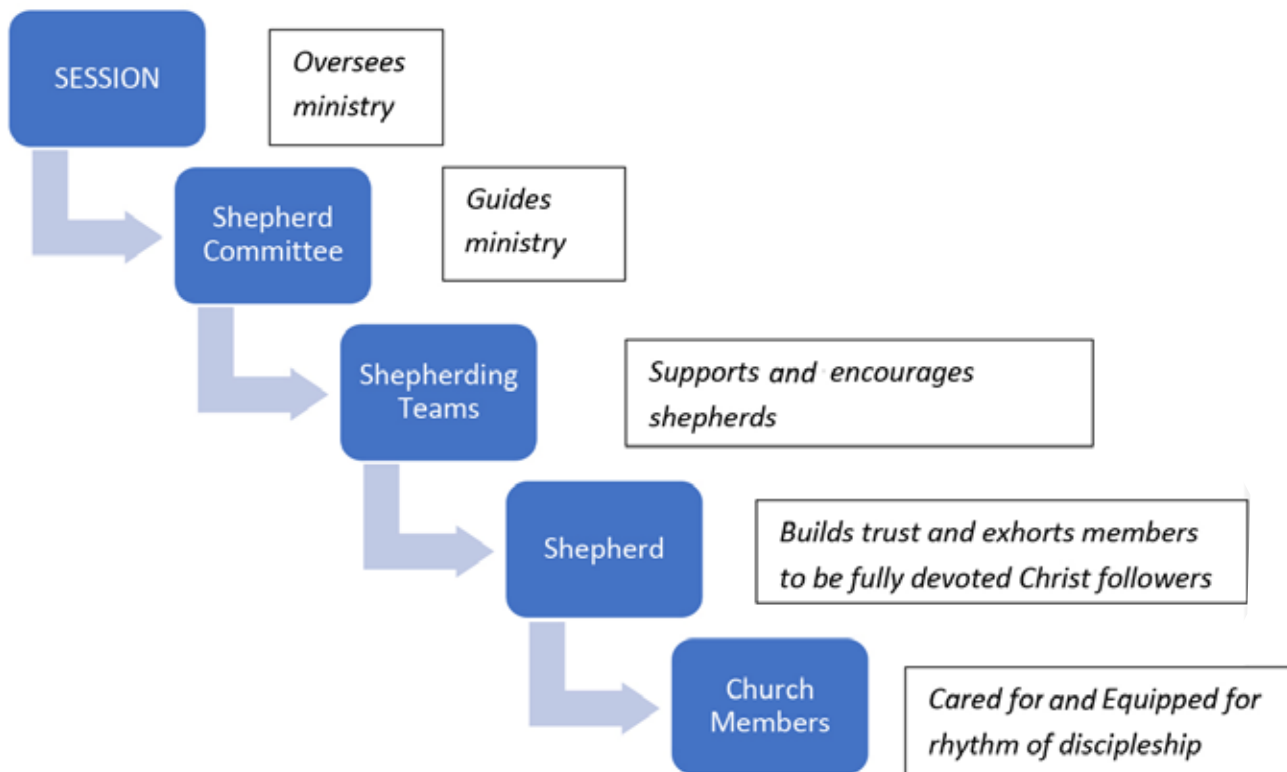
The committee is comprised of

Debra Griswold
Ken Leahy
Helen Lucyk
Carl Massa
Marcilio Pereira
Skip Schoenhals, Chair
Pastor Chris Voorhees

This committee was established by the Session to guide the ministry under the supervision of the Session.

Overview of how the Shepherding Committee is organized

See the write up on page 21 for more information



Shepherding Team Leaders

<u>TEAM LEADER</u>	<u>EMAIL ADDRESS</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
Basil Anderson	basilanderson@gmail.com	610-613-4332
Dan Herwig	danherwig@yahoo.com	317-294-9804
Tim Hoeksema	hoeksemas@aol.com	262-367-3252
Ken Leahy	ken.leahy3525@gmail.com	215-962-3525
Carl Massa	carlenmass@yahoo.com	847-738-4466
Mike Norman	mikenor50@gmail.com	612-963-5950
Gary Ogrosky	g.ogrosky@gmail.com	703-901-0414
Marcilio Periera	marcilio@synergy-FL.com	561-563-6719
Chris Voorhees	chris.voorhees@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Carl Wilbanks	cdw2463@aol.com	917-930-8685

**MINISTRY ROSTER: WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT COVENANT**

MINISTRY	LEADER	EMAIL	PHONE
Musicians Production	David LaChance Ryan Young	david.lachance@covenantnaples.com ryan.young@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464 239-597-3464

**MINISTRY ROSTER: GROW OPPORTUNITIES AT COVENANT**

MINISTRY	LEADER	EMAIL	PHONE
Adult Education	Trent Casto	trent.casto@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Library	Peggy Carpenter	peggy.carpenter@covenantnaples.com	239-470-4757
Men's Ministry	Lee Bunn Ken Vitor	lee@leebunn.com kenvitor@aol.com	919-604-3932 616-827-1057
Small Groups	Carl Massa	carlenmass@yahoo.com	847-738-4466
Women's Ministry	Diane Bruere	diane.bruere96@gmail.com	630-212-1634

**MINISTRY ROSTER: SERVE & GO OPPORTUNITIES**

MINISTRY	LEADER	EMAIL	PHONE
Advocates	Dave Stauffer	stauffdv@aol.com	239-302-6126
Children	Shery Kendrick	shery.kendrick@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Missions	Brent Whitefield	brent.whitefield@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Greeter	Aaron Dean	aaron.dean@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Kitchen	John Hunter	John.hunter@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Library	Peggy Carpenter	peggy.carpenter@covenantnaples.com	239-470-4757
Meals for New Moms	Nancy Manley	realtornancy@hotmail.com	
Mercy Meals	Judy Caldwell	judith.caldwell@covenantnaples.com	239-250-2589
Memorial Reception	Jean Granholm	jgranholm@gmail.com	239-537-2450
Men's Ministry	Lee Bunn	lee.bunn@covenantnaples.com	919-604-3932
Mercy Ministry	Ed Stranberg	edstranberg@gmail.com	
Music/Worship	David LaChance	david.lachance@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Prayer Team	Terry Manley	terrymanley@me.com	610-389-9822
Prayer Chain	Judy Caldwell	judith.caldwell@covenantnaples.com	239-250-2589
Production	Ryan Young	ryan.young@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Small Groups	Carl Massa	carlenmass@yahoo.com	239-597-3464
Stephen Ministry	Judy Caldwell	judith.caldwell@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Student Ministry	Elisa Hillberry Josh Leaman	elisa.hillberry@covenantnaples.com josh.leaman@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464 239-597-3464
Usher Team	Stew Casterline Wayne Kaufman	stew.casterline@gmail.com wckbon2@aol.com	570-881-9560 908-285-4229
Visitation	Judy Caldwell	judith.caldwell@covenantnaples.com	239-250-2589
Welcome Center	Jen Stepan	jen@spmnaples.com	239-963-5500
Women's Ministry	Diane Bruere	diane.bruere96@gmail.com	630-212-1634

QUARTERLY COMMUNICATIONS

PERSON	Date	CONTACT TYPE	Care	WORSHIP	SERVE	GROW	GO
Notes/Prayer Requests:							

TYPE CODES: P=phone; T=text; E=email; C=church; V=visit, not church; G=group; H=hospital; S=special occasion

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TYPE CODES: P=phone; T=text; E=email; C=church; V=visit, not church; G=group; H=hospital; S=special occasion

**Looking for a place to plug-in and engage with
the family at Covenant?
START here...**



ADVOCATES

Participate with our Mercy Ministry team helping those in need of financial and spiritual assistance.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Opportunities include:

- Children's leadership team
- Children's Sunday school
- Children's Church (4 years to 3rd grade)
- Vacation Bible School
- Infant & Toddler Nursery

COMMUNICATIONS

Opportunities available for graphic designers, social media, photographers, public relations, videographers and video editing.

GREETERS

Welcome people as they arrive at the Covenant doors for Sunday morning and special events.

KITCHEN MINISTRY

Join the kitchen team to provide food for Midweek Connection dinners and other special functions.

LIBRARY

Help cataloging, shelving and inventorying books and/or assist in checking items in and out on Sundays.

MEALS FOR NEW MOMS

Make or purchase and deliver a meal for a new Covenant mom and her family. When the new baby is born, you will receive an email with the dates that meals are needed.

MEMORIAL RECEPTION TEAM

Set up, serve and clean up as well as provide food for memorial service receptions.

MEN'S MINISTRY

Living life with passion and purpose! Opportunities include: Men's Leadership Team, help to plan, organize, and host Bible studies, service projects, events, and retreats.

MERCY MEALS

Gather in the Covenant kitchen 3-4 times a year to prepare meals for those who have been hospitalized, had surgery, or are in the midst of a recent crisis. Drivers to transport meals also needed.

MISSIONS

The Go ministry reaches out to our community and world through the work of four teams: Mission, Mobilization, Evangelism, Church Planting.

MUSIC/WORSHIP

Use your gifts to enhance Covenant's worship. Opportunities include:

- On stage worship leaders (no mic)
- Musicians and Singers

PARKING LOT TEAM

Serve as secondary greeters, drive people movers and assist parking lot team. Report 20-25 minutes prior to the beginning of the service, and serve one or two Sundays per month.

PRAYER CHAIN

Serve as a prayer warrior for those asking for prayer on our daily email prayer chain.

PRAYER SHAWLS

Knit prayer shawls and baby blankets for our Covenant families and beyond.

Gather once a month for group knitting, prayer, and conversation. Or work from home. Instructions, yarn, and needles provided.

PRAYER TEAM

Serve through prayer as part of our Sunday morning prayer team.

PRODUCTION

Opportunities for live operation of audio, lighting, presentation software, camera, video switching and stage management. Pre-production and post-production opportunities available.

Training provided.

RIDE MINISTRY

Volunteer to help those who need rides to church or important appointments because they can not drive or do not have a car.

SMALL GROUPS

(Adult home groups)

Small Groups bring church and community into the home!

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Complete a 50 hour training course to learn ways to serve with compassion and care.

STUDENT MINISTRY

Serve middle school or high school students on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings to help with worship, small group discussions, meals or activities.

USHERS

Serve as secondary greeters, distribute bulletins and help congregants find seats. Report 20-25 minutes prior to the beginning of the service, and serve one or two Sundays per month. After service, ushers help clean up.

VISITATION

Visit the homebound, those in rehab, and those in long-term care. Take Jesus to each bedside or residence and bless friends who are encumbered, enabling them to stay connected to their loving family at Covenant.

WELCOME CENTER

Serve and welcome our guests/members with various questions and needs related to activities and happenings and events at Covenant Church. Volunteers serve shortly before and after each service and work within a team environment that is energizing, and guest focused.

WIDOW/WIDOWERS

Provide care, compassion and companionship to our members who have lost their spouses.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Growing in faith with our sisters in Christ.

Opportunities include:

- Women's leadership team
- Plan women's fellowship meetings and retreats



MINISTRY ROSTERS: CARE Ministries

Resources to support shepherds in caring for flock (August 1, 2020)

MINISTRY	LEADER	EMAIL	PHONE
Covenant Counseling Center	Charlene Richardson	counseling@covenantnaples.com	239-591-4354
Deacon's Mercy Ministry:	Ed Stranberg	edstranberg@gmail.com	239-597-1014
Short Term Relief	Dave Stauffer	stauffdv@aol.com	301-471-9136
Long Term Development			
Widows & Widowers	Bill Hauser	bhjokerman@aol.com	703-517-3564
Home Repair & Moving	Steve Manley	sjmanley1225@comcast.net	610-368-4037
Ride Ministry	Mike Ryon	michaelryon@yahoo.com	239-273-0172
Elders	Sarah Shultz	sarah.shultz@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Griefshare Support	Chris Voorhees	chris.voorhees@covenantnaples.com	908-672-0130
Mercy Meals	Judy Caldwell	judith.caldwell@covenantnaples.com	239-273-6785
Prayer Chain Email	Judy Caldwell	judith.caldwell@covenantnaples.com	239-273-6785
Prayer Shawl	Judy Caldwell	judith.caldwell@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Prayers Team	Terry Manley	terrymanley@me.com	610-389-9822
Stephen Ministry	Chris Voorhees	chris.voorhees@covenantnaples.com	908-672-0130
	Judy Caldwell	judith.caldwell@covenantnaples.com	239-597-3464
Visitation Ministry	Cathy Blackmore	blackmorecatherine@hotmail.com	440-537-3836

SHEPHERDING CONTACT NOTES:

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL

PHONE

FAMILY MEMBERS

BIRTHDAYS

IMPORTANT DATES (anniversaries, deaths)

PRAY FOR WISDOM AND REVIEW PREVIOUS NOTES BEFORE THE CALL

LISTEN FOR DETAILS (physical and spiritual health, interests, church and other activities, life in general)

ASK FOR UPDATES (previous concerns, new issues/how you can serve them)

NOTE NEEDS AND PRAYER REQUESTS.

Resources:

Shepherding Guide

Covenant weekly email

Send card (seasonal, birthday, get well)

Send email or note with Scripture (to comfort and encourage, etc.)

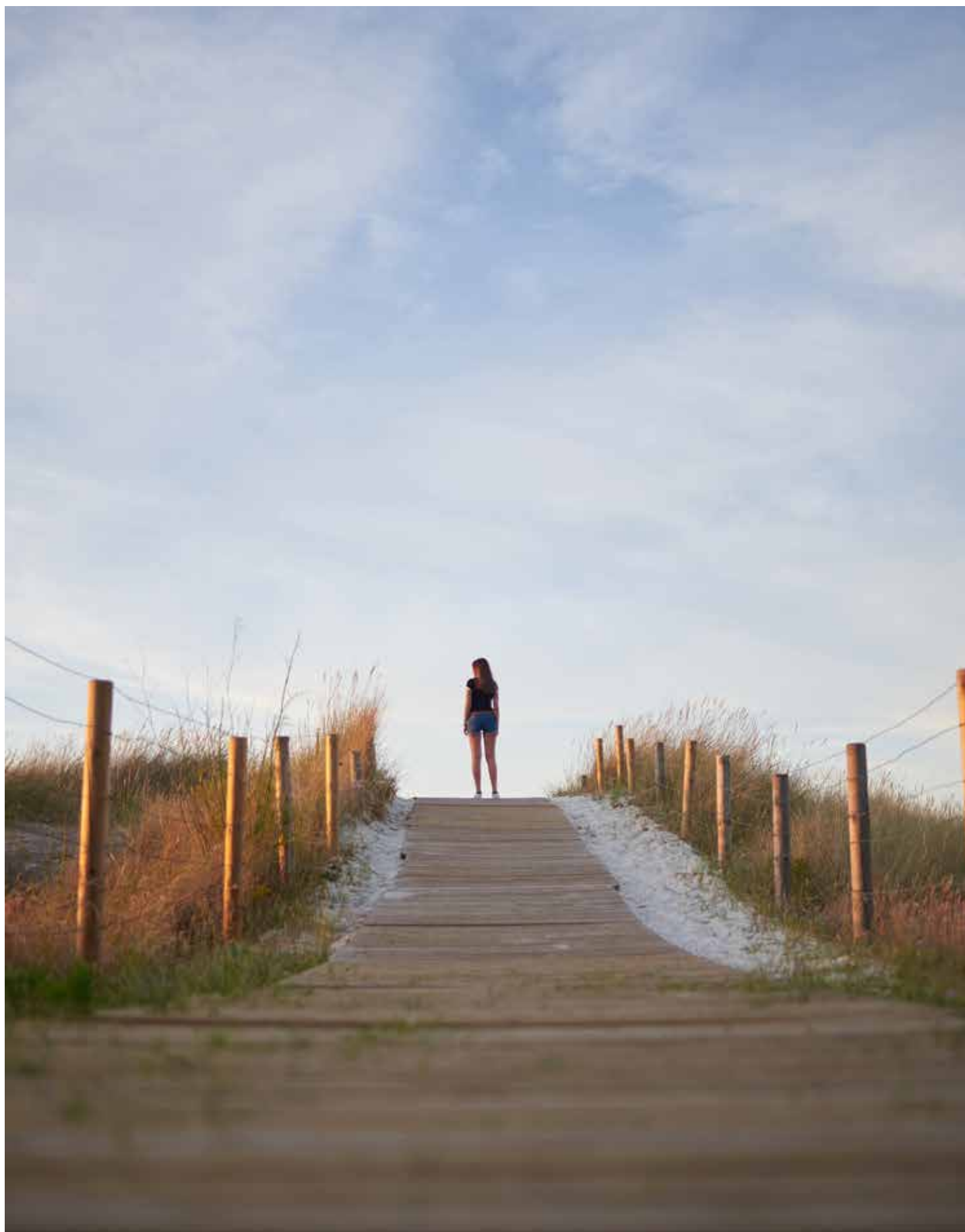
CONCLUDE OFFERING PRAYER

Section 5:

Resources of Shepherding a "Go-to" collection of training materials available to provide support on an ongoing basis

Resource Matrix
List of Key Books on Shepherding
Frequently Asked Questions
Hospital/Nursing Home Visitation
Materials from Shepherding Training Sessions
Domestic Abuse Policy
How tos: Sample Agenda, Conversation Starters,
Suggested Phone & Email Scripts





RESOURCE MATRIX CHART:

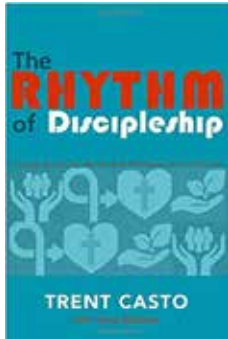
This chart shows which resources are available to address specific issues you may have as a shepherd....

If you are concerned for a person's health or safety immediately contact the church office at 239- 597-3464.

SITUATION/MATRIX	STAFF CONTACT	CHURCH RESOURCES		TRAINING MATERIAL	MORE RESOURCES
Adoption	Sherry Kendrick	Meals for New Moms			
Baptism: Request	Sarah Schultz		#6	Book of Church Order	
Birth	Sherry Kendrick	Meals for New Moms			
Church Discipline	Chris Voorhees			Competing Designs in Church Discipline https://bit.ly/3ojzPGP	
Death: Notification	Chris Voorhees	Memorial Meals			
Death: Grief	Chris Voorhees	GriefShare/ Stephen Ministry			
Domestic Abuse	Charlene Richardson Deborah Griswold	Counseling Center, Mercy Ministry	#2	Domestic Abuse Policy, page 71	
Family Issues: Children/ Grandchildren Elderly Parents	 Sherry Kendrick Charlene Richardson	Counseling Ministry Children's Ministry Mercy Ministry			
Financial/ Physical Assistance: Long Term Crisis: Short Term Home Repair Transportation	 Mercy Ministry Message Line 239-597-1014				
<u>Illness</u> AcuteChronic Hospitalization Terminal	Chris Voorhees	Meals Ministry, Prayer Chain, Elder Prayer, Stephen Ministry, Counseling Center, Visitation		A guide to Hospital & Nursing Home Visits, page 66	Https: www. The gospel coalition .org/article/7 ways -shepherd terminally ill/
Loneliness	Chris Voorhees	Counseling Center, Mercy Ministry Prayer Ministry, Stephen Ministry, Visitation			
Marriage: New Issues Divorce	Chris Voorhees	Counseling Center/Stephen Ministry			Meaning of Marriage by Tim Keller
Membership New Withdraw	Sarah Schultz				

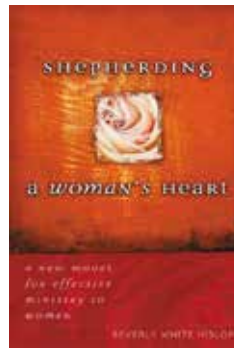
Key Books on Shepherding

Available in the Church Library



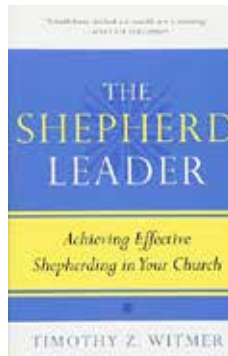
The Rhythm of Discipleship

Dr. Trent Casto
<https://amzn.to/2EvuKE1>
Available at the church.



Shepherding A Women's Heart

Beverly White Hislop,
Moody Publishing
<https://rb.gy/f1h1z2>



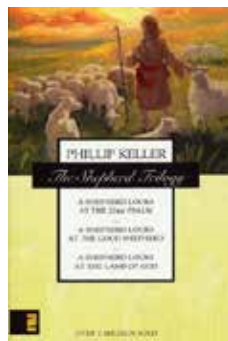
The Shepherd Leader

(Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church),
Dr. Tim Witmer,
R&R Publishing
<https://bit.ly/2HAEn6w>



Spiritual Mothering

Susan Hunt,
Crossway Publishing
<https://rb.gy/kfuxtm>



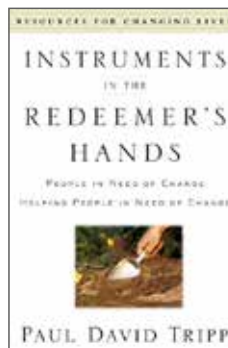
The Shepherd Trilogy

Philip Keller, Zondervan
<https://rb.gy/e4nb7k>



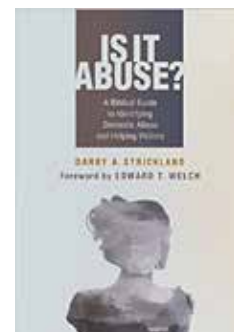
Nine Marks of a Healthy Church

Mark Dever,
<https://amzn.to/3I7LjoO>



Instrument in the Redeemer's Hand

Paul David Tripp
<https://www.paultripp.com/products/instruments-bk>



Is It Abuse?: A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims

by Darby Strickland
<https://amzn.to/3xP4G1h>

RESPONSES TO FAQs

1 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE NUMBER 239-597-3464?

Our church receptionist will most likely answer calls to our church office. They will either transfer you to the staff person you are trying to reach or you can present a situation to them and they can connect you with the right staff member.

2 WHAT DO I DO WHEN I HAVE AN IMMEDIATE CONCERN ABOUT A PERSON'S SAFETY OR HEALTH?

You should immediately contact the church office and you will be connected to the appropriate person to respond. The name(s) of the party should only be disclosed to the appropriate staff member.

3 WHERE CAN WE SERVE AND OR GET INVOLVED WITH THE CHURCH?

First, it is important to find out some of their interests and where they think God is leading them. Second, Section 4 has a list of the key ministries that depend upon volunteers and whom to contact with regard to each. In addition, as part of the Intro to Covenant, Aaron Dean leads the Assimilation Ministry process. We encourage contact with him as well.

4 WHERE CAN WE GET HELP?

Obviously, the type of help required guides the response. When the request is for spiritual help, this should be discussed with the appropriate elder. See page 46 for a list of Covenant ministries that aid our members.

5 WHY ARE THERE NO FEMALE PASTORS OR ELDERS AT COVENANT (OR AN EQUIVALENT QUESTION)?

If you are comfortable doing so, we suggest the first response should be: Men and women are equally made in the image of God. The teachings of the Apostles make it clear that in some circumstances there are distinctly different roles for men and women, particularly reserving the role of teaching and ruling elder for men. Covenant Church and the denomination of which we are a part, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), believe it is appropriate to follow these distinctions. We recognize that not all Protestant churches do so and we do not require that Covenant members agree with this interpretation. However, members of Covenant are expected to humbly be at peace with the church's position.

If the person wishes to go further, suggest they make an appointment with one of the pastors. This is also the appropriate response to any significant theological questions.

6 WHY DOES COVENANT BELIEVE IN INFANT BAPTISM?

This is a wonderful theological question that has practical implications for young families and grandparents alike. Infant baptism is rooted in Covenant Theology which sees a continuation between the Old and New Testaments. The sign of the old covenant, circumcision, was given to the males of the family. In a similar but expanded way, baptism, as a sign of the new covenant, is given to the entire family. The blessings of the covenant are reserved for the families of believers.

If there are more questions, refer them to their shepherding elder or a pastor. We do not believe in baptism regeneration.

7 QUESTIONS ABOUT CHURCH PERSONNEL, SUCH AS, WHY DID A PERSON LEAVE STAFF?

If no information on a staffing change has been made, then the response should be that church personnel matters are handled by the Governance Commission and the Executive Director. Except in unusual situations, they are not discussed publicly. If there was a public statement, then refer the person to it. If a person persists, then suggest they contact John Hunter, Executive Director.

8 WHY DOESN'T COVENANT HAVE A MORE CONTEMPORARY SERVICE; OR A MORE TRADITIONAL SERVICE; OR A LARGER AND MORE FREQUENT CHOIR; OR MORE CLASSES, ETC.?

Refer them to John Hunter, Executive Director.

9 WHAT IF SOMEONE EXPRESSES ANGER TOWARDS THE CHURCH?

Remember that a gentle answer turns away wrath - Proverbs 15:1. It is helpful to repeat back what you hear them saying in your own words. "It seems to me you are not happy with ____ ." If appropriate, pray with the person at the end of discussion. Sometimes, people just need to be heard. In certain circumstances, it might be appropriate to talk with your Shepherding Team Leader about the issue.

10 WHAT IF THERE IS A QUESTION I FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ANSWERING OR DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER?

If you encounter a question to which you do not have an answer or are uncomfortable answering, then it is acceptable to say, 'I do not know, but I will get back to you with an answer.' Then contact the appropriate elder, the leader of your shepherding team, or a pastor and make sure to get back to the member in a timely manner.

HOSPITAL/NURSING HOME VISITATION

As a “pastor” to people, you will at some point, be called upon to do a hospital or nursing home visit. For some this may come easier, because your gifts are more geared that way. For others, visitation is very scary, because you may be unsure of what to do or how to respond. This section is designed to equip you with the necessary skills for making a hospital or nursing home visitation.

There may be many different reasons for visiting the hospital or nursing home. At some point you may be there to share in the joy of a baby’s birth, and at another time you may be there at someone’s death. And of course, with these different experiences, you encounter a wide range of emotions from elation to depression, even anger.

THE HOSPITAL VISIT

Emergencies will always require an immediate response. These emergencies usually include someone near death and/or a serious accident or complication. If you’re unable to make the visit, contact someone else to make the visit. If you don’t know someone else who can make the immediate visit, contact the Congregational Care Pastor. In the meantime, call the hospital, speak to the family member and pray with them (if appropriate) over the phone.

THE EMERGENCY ROOM

If there’s been an emergency, you will want to go to the Emergency Room first. Even if you’re not able to see the patient, typically a family member should be present. Who else is present and the seriousness of the emergency will dictate the extent of your involvement. If the family member is alone, stay with them initially or contact someone who can be with them. When a family member is alone in the emergency room, they may need someone’s assistance and help to think through issues and/or decisions.

THE PATIENT'S OR RESIDENT'S ROOM

When visiting a person in their room, use the following *guidelines*:

1. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after entering a patient's room.
2. Before entering the room, always knock first.
3. Introduce yourself as you enter. If you know the person, you may still need to introduce yourself, because they may be drugged or asleep.
4. Introduce yourself to others who may be in the room.
5. Position yourself so you can maintain eye contact with the patient.
6. Don't sit or lean on the bed. Besides getting in the person's space, more importantly, it might be quite uncomfortable and even physically painful for them.
7. Don't do all the talking. Allow them to talk if they so choose.
8. If medical personnel enter the room, offer to leave.
9. Offer to read Scripture and lead in prayer.
10. If you pray with them and you want to hold their hand, ask their permission first.
11. Don't stay too long (5-15 minutes is enough), unless you know them better and your friendship may dictate a longer visit.

SELECTED SCRIPTURES

OLD TESTAMENT:

Numbers 6:24-26

Deuteronomy 33:27

Psalms 23, 100, 121

Isaiah 40:28-31

Jeremiah 17:7-8, 14

NEW TESTAMENT:

Matthew 11:28-30

Romans 8:28-30

Romans 8:38,39

John 14:1-7

II Corinthians 4:7-9, 16-18

Philippians 4:4-7

Revelation 21:1-5

OTHER ISSUES IN VISITATION

What if there is a “No Visitors” sign on the door?

If you get to the patient’s room, and it says “no visitors,” go to the nurses’ station and ask if this applies to pastors. Usually, it does not. Most of the time “no visitors” signs reflect the desire for the patient to have some rest. So, if you do visit, don’t stay long.

What if the patient is asleep?

It’s not always easy to know what to do here. Sometimes, depending on how well you know the person may dictate what you do. Here are some options:

1. You may go by the nurse’s station and ask whether they can be awakened.
2. If a family member is there, ask whether you should come back.
3. Wake the person up by quietly calling the person’s name.
4. Leave a note, letting them know the day and hour when you came by.

If there is an operation, should I come and be with the family?

This probably depends on how well you know the person and how much time you have. If you know them better, you can probably stay with them a more extended time. You will need to gauge that. If you don’t know them well, then a brief visit is probably more warranted.

Can I visit someone in the ICU?

Visitors (besides family members) are usually restricted from visiting someone in ICU. However, pastors are typically allowed entrance. Check with the nurse’s station and tell them you’re a pastor. When visiting, don’t make the visit too long. Also, you may want to go by the ICU Waiting Room and see if any family members are there.

Can I do an “anointing” at the hospital?

Absolutely. You will need to gather at least two other elders to come with you and pray over the person. If the patient doesn’t ask for an anointing, just make sure you ask the patient first. If you’re dealing with someone in a coma, for instance, ask the family if you can anoint the person, explaining to them what is involved.

What about praying and even doing anointings with non-Christian family members present?

This is a great time to minister to the entire family. Praying in the hospital is almost always “socially acceptable,” so don’t be afraid to take the initiative here.

What if I’m physically sick, even it’s a common cold?

Don’t visit. Call the patient, if possible, and let them know your reason or leave a message at the nurses station, letting the patient know you called.

What about ministering to those who are grieving and/or depressed?

Occasionally, you may be called upon to deal with grieving patients or family members. You may think the skill involved here is saying the “right thing.” In many cases, you being there is enough. Don’t feel under pressure to give some “magic” words. This is where wisdom is needed, because you don’t want to quote Romans 8:28 immediately after someone has lost a child. The Scripture can ultimately bring us hope, but timing is necessary for certain truths and exhortations. The important thing is to be a comfort, while you allow people to grieve. If you comfort through words, you can offer to pray and read Scripture, but make sure you ask permission.

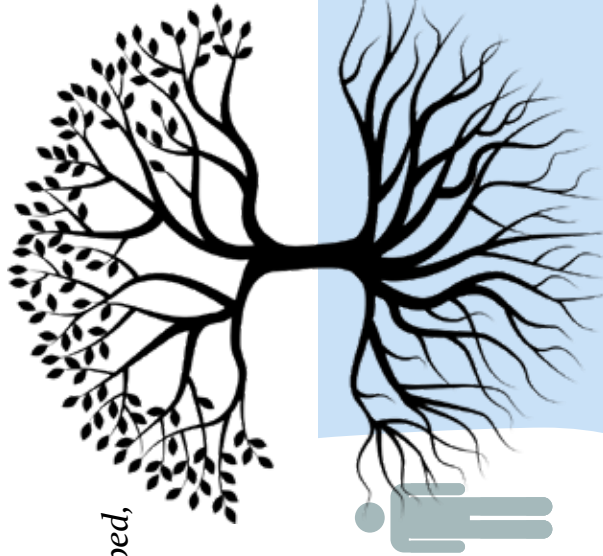


TYPES OF LISTENERS

⁵ *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*

⁸ *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

– *Philippians 2:5-8*



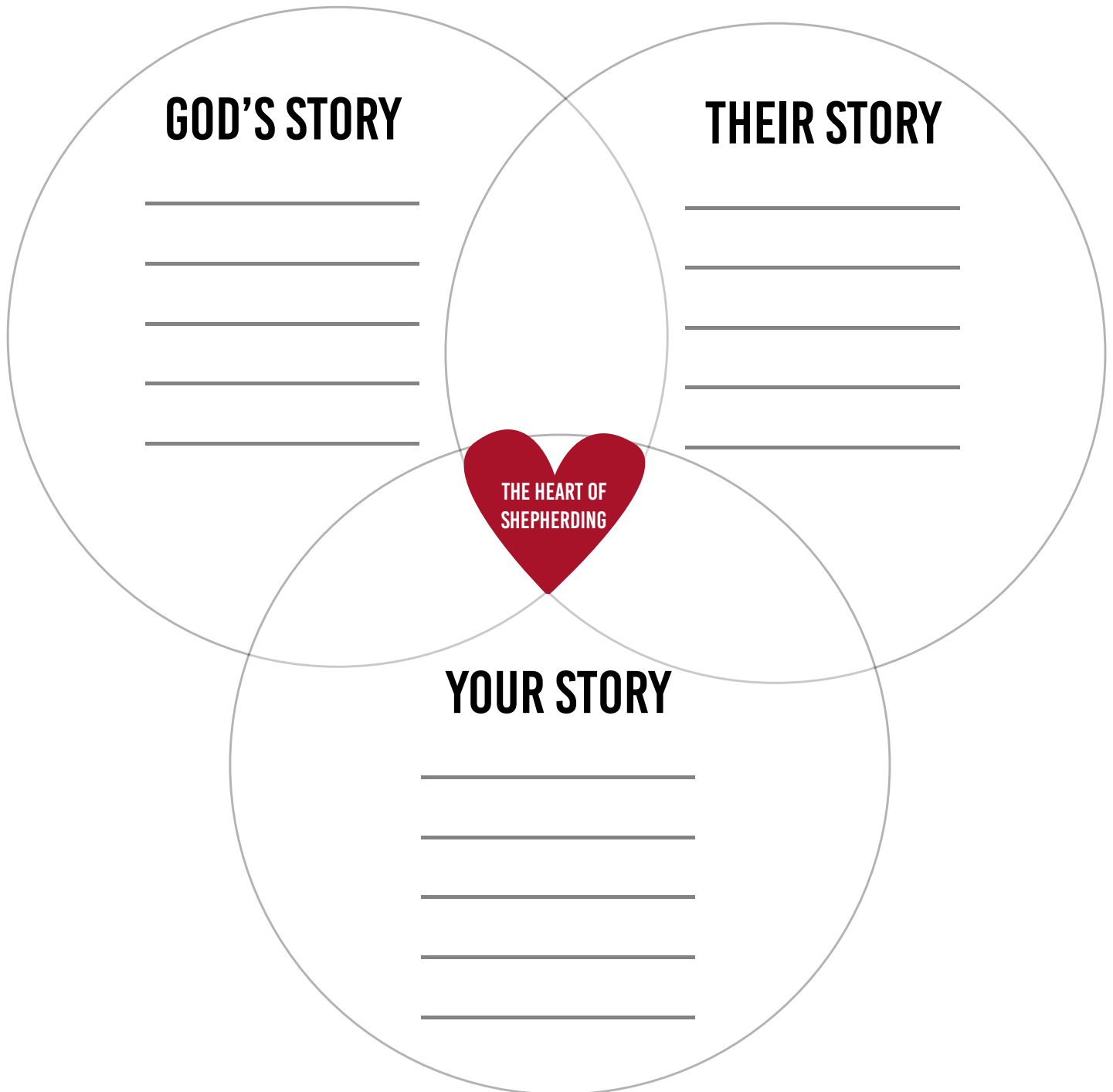
- FIX IT FREDDY
- HURRIED HARRIETTE
- SYMPATHETIC SAM
- EMPATHETIC ED
- OVERLY IDENTIFIED ORVILLE
- ONE UPPING OMAR



LISTENING

Christians should be famous for their listening

- Dane Ortlund



DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

DEALING WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE AT COVENANT:

The Session has approved the following principles and practices to be put in place through the Shepherding ministry at Covenant

- 1.** Abuse of any kind does violence to the Imago Dei, or Image of God, in every person.
- 2.** Abuse cannot be tolerated. In the event of this sin or any sin, we must always hold out the hope of the Gospel to all involved. While many abusers may not have genuine repentance, it is our biblical mandate to extend the gospel hope of repentance and forgiveness to all.
- 3.** Creation of a culture within CCN and the Shepherding Ministry specifically, where it is safe to raise the subject of abuse.
- 4.** Development of easily remembered guidelines for shepherds if they suspect abuse and how they to respond when they come to have specific knowledge of abuse.
- 5.** Development of resources for the Pastoral staff and all shepherd to use as needed.

To implement these principles, Debra Griswold, as a trained counselor, has been appointed the 'Point Person' within the Shepherding Ministry to lead this effort working with Charlene Richardson, Director of the CCN Counseling Center.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHEPHERDING ACTION PLAN (Revised)

Domestic Abuse refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have or have had an intimate relationship in domestic settings. It can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to maintain power and control over an intimate partner. It is most commonly seen in a dating or family relationship. The abuse can be mental, physical, economic, verbal, spiritual or sexual in nature. It includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure or wound someone. Domestic Abuse can happen to anyone, of any race, religion, or gender as well as all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. It may also impact a child or other relative or any other household person. The incidents of abuse usually escalate in frequency and severity and can result in physical injury or death.

THE GOAL OF THE SHEPHERD is to be able to follow easily remembered guidelines if you suspect abuse or have specific knowledge of abuse to know how to respond. If a member of your shepherding group shares a personal matter with you that could indicate some type of abuse, assure them you care very much about what they are experiencing. You are not trained to resolve this problem. However, as a lay shepherd, it is part of our compassionate calling to at least walk the first steps with them toward professional assistance. We are called by God to confront oppression, provide protection and care for the vulnerable.

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

Isaiah 1:17

Seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

Psalms 82:3-4

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

This is the heart of shepherding!

This is why we do what we do in the Mighty Name of Jesus Christ.

With that knowledge and confidence, let's continue:

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHEPHERDING ACTION PLAN (Revised)

WHAT NOT TO DO:

Do not panic if you feel inadequate. Help is only a phone call away!

The greatest gift you can give in this moment is your listening and empathy skills grounded in your love for Christ.

Do not judge this person, it will only add to their pain!

Do not make any decisions for the person or assume you know what is right for them.

Do not pressure them to act.

Do not ask for proof of violence.

Do not try to rescue the person or fix the problem.

Do not break confidentiality.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHEPHERDING ACTION PLAN (Revised)

WHAT TO DO:

FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES IN YOUR CONVERSATION

LISTEN It is important to listen carefully to the victim's story. Listen to their hurts and concerns. Talk little and ask only a few questions. Abuse silences victims and renders them powerless. Listening restores dignity to the victim. Their experience may not be ordered. They may be frightened, weary and overwhelmed. You are giving them a safe place to tell a difficult story.

You might say: *"Would you tell me more about that?"*

OFFER EMPATHY AND COMPASSION Affirm them with words of encouragement. Keep your voice quiet and slow. Stay present with them in the moment. Look them in the eye. Acknowledge their courage to share this painful reality. An abuse victim often experiences threats, assaults, personal shame, fear, anguish and a belief that it is their fault. If they feel uncared for or unsafe in the moment of disclosure they might not have the courage to seek help. Look for ways to affirm them. Grieve with them and speak truth about what they describe.

You might say: *"I can't imagine how much courage it took for you to share that with me. Thank you."*

BELIEVE THE VICTIM. Abuse is traumatic but disclosing can be more traumatic if the victim isn't believed or is blamed by someone trusted to help. Do not cast doubt on their story.

You might say: *"I am so sorry this happened to you. This is wrong."*

Sometimes, you don't need to say anything. Just look them in the eyes and support with your presence. They will KNOW if you believe them and that is powerful.

VALIDATE AND SUPPORT When an individual discloses abuse this is a time to listen and validate them. Let them know what they are doing is courageous and right. Assure them that abuse is not their fault. They have honored you by coming to you. You are seen as safe, as a shepherd is meant to be. Let them know you want them to be safe and want to help them get the care they need. Check in with how they are feeling.

You might say: *"That must have been incredibly sad/scary/painful/etc."*

EMPOWER the victim. When an individual discloses abuse to you address their SAFETY first. Assure them there are resources and options to protect and assist them.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHEPHERDING ACTION PLAN (Revised)

The following needs to happen before the person leaves your meeting/this conversation ends:

1. MAKE A SAFETY PLAN

If you are speaking by phone, ask, " *Are you in a safe place right now?*"

If the answer is "**No.**" say, " *Please hang up and dial 911 or go to a safe place and call me from there. Please call me back.*"

If the answer is "**Yes**" ask, " *Do you have a plan if you need to leave?*" Assure the victim there are people and resources in place to support and help make a plan for his/her safety.

A safety plan is a personalized and practical plan on how to remain safe in an abusive relationship while preparing to leave when the timing is right and it is safe to do so. A good plan will contain all the vital information needed to help the victim address safety both at home and at work. It can be hard to think clearly or make logical decisions during moments of crisis. It could take months or longer for a victim to actually leave an abusive relationship. If a person is unsure about using a safety plan, having one in place will give them confidence if needed.

Trained advocates are ready and willing to problem solve with the victim. They will provide **CONFIDENTIAL** assistance in guiding the person in developing a personalized plan.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHEPHERDING ACTION PLAN (Revised)

2. SHARE RESOURCES

The first is a National Hotline number.

The second, the Shelter for Abused Women and Children is local to the Naples area and can provide protective shelter for the victim and children if needed.

The third number is Covenant's Counseling Center, which has a team of three Domestic Abuse Advocates ready to assist as needed.

RESOURCES LIST:

THE NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

1-800-799-7233 or text 2252
(SAFE)

<https://www.thehotline.org>
Available 24 hours a day 7 days a week

THE SHELTER FOR ABUSED WOMEN AND CHILDREN NAPLES FLORIDA AREA

CRISIS LINE 239-775-1101
SHELTER CALL OR TEXT 239-775-3862
<https://www.naplesshelter.org/>
Available 24 hours a day 7 days a week

COVENANT COUNSELING CENTER AT COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Charlene Richardson Counseling Director:
Email: Counseling@covenantnaples.com
Office: 239-591-4354

COVENANT COUNSELING CENTER DOMESTIC ABUSE ADVOCATES

Charlene Richardson 239-591-4354
Mary Pendleton 314-616-7444
Debra Griswold 407-902-9023

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

1-800-962-2873
www.myfamilies.com

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHEPHERDING ACTION PLAN (Revised)

3. SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW

The victim might feel supported if you offered to be present with them when they make a call for help.

You could support them in what they learn during the call.

Encourage them to create a safety plan with the help of one of the professionals listed, if needed.

You can encourage them to seek counseling at Covenant Counseling Center for more support.

You may contact a Covenant Counseling Center Advocate yourself ONLY if you have the victim's permission. Confidentiality and trust is vital in this matter.

It is the victim's choice to receive assistance.

REMEMBER THE PERSON MUST MOVE FORWARD AT THEIR OWN PACE...
NOT YOURS.

4. END WELL

With each contact continue to listen well, show empathy and compassion, believe their story, validate and support them in the journey they are taking to be safe. Reassure the person that no matter what they choose as a next step you are there for them. Let them know you will be praying for them. Always ask permission to PRAY with them and share Scripture that will support and encourage them. Then make a plan to reconnect either with a phone call or in person.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHEPHERDING ACTION PLAN (Revised)

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CONTACT WITH THE VICTIM:

If you have received permission from the victim to contact a Covenant Domestic Abuse Advocate (listed above) you may do so.

Please provide the following information:

Name of victim

Best contact information

Description of abuse

What the victim would like to happen next or what goal they need help with.

Thank you for your willingness to walk alongside this wounded person. If you are feeling overwhelmed by the story you have been told and your experience with the victim, please feel free to contact one of the Covenant Counseling Domestic Abuse Advocates listed above. They will be happy to process your questions and feelings about the experience without names (if permission has not been given) to protect the victim's confidentiality. This ministry is about caring for our shepherds as well as our sheep.

May God bless you as you continue to minister to your flock, especially those who are vulnerable, in the Name of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHEPHERDING ACTION PLAN (Revised)

A SIMPLE REMINDER:

WHAT TO DO in ministering to victims of Domestic Violence

Listen carefully to the victim's story.

Offer support, empathy, compassion and affirmation.

Validate their experience and BELIEVE their story.

Empower the person with resources that promote safety and well being.

LESSONS FROM THE PROPHETS: ONE WAY COMMUNICATIONS

Challenge:

Shepherds get discouraged when they don't get any response from members, despite repeated attempts to make contact or keep in touch.

Response:

Maintain effort and don't lose heart by drawing from the experience of the OT prophets who often faced being ignored, ridiculed and even persecuted by the people the Lord called them to serve.

Strategy:

Learn from the prophets to excel in "one way communication" so the message goes out even if it is not responded to by your members.

THE MODEL:

Jeremiah 7:27

*"So you shall speak all these words to them,
but they will not listen to you.
You shall call to them, but they will not answer you.*

Jeremiah gives us an example of being faithful to our calling and to delivering God's message. We can only do our part in obedience, but we do not control the response or outcome.

Why don't people respond?

1. They are not familiar with what a shepherd does and how to respond.
2. They are shy or private people.
3. They are new to CCN and not ready to engage.
4. They already have a strong support network, so they don't see the need for a shepherd.

LESSONS FROM THE PROPHETS: ONE WAY COMMUNICATIONS

How do you create connection opportunities?

1. Provide information on what is going on at CCN such as a new series or important church news.
2. Recognize occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries including sad occasions that mean a lot to people.
3. Reach out with a “non-occasion” note, text or email that tells them you are thinking of them.
4. Connect with them on social media.

The Benefits of One-Way Communication

1. It encourages us to pray for our members
2. It helps to strengthen our shepherding teams as we share our concerns for people and pray in community.
3. It sharpens our focus on why we are shepherds.

Conclusions

Learn the lessons from the prophets and in so doing honor the Great Shepherd by being faithful to your call.

Galatians 6:9

And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Ezekiel 2:5

I will send you to them. Whether they hear or refuse to listen they will know a prophet (shepherd) has been among them.

HOW TO: Sample Agenda

A sample Agenda for a shepherding team meeting

1. Shepherd the Shepherds

- a. Check in with each shepherd in your group.
- b. Look for things like:
 - i. Engagement in Rhythm of Discipleship
 - ii. Burnout
 - iii. Joys
 - iv. Sorrows
 - v. Life happenings
- c. This can be a model for them of how to shepherd their people.

2. Shepherd the Sheep

- a. Ask about how the team can help them shepherd their sheep
- b. Remind them that if a sheep has chronic concerns or problems there are resources available to help
 - i. One phrase that is helpful:
Do not be the only one who knows about THAT sheep
- c. Use collective wisdom of team to support one another
- d. Encourage them with specific things you see them doing well
- e. Remember to respect a person's privacy. Trust is hard to earn and easy to lose.

3. Intercessory Prayer

- a. Based on items presented in the previous two sections, spend time in intercessory prayer

HOW TO: Conversation Starters

HOW TO START A CONVERSATION IN A NEW SHEPHERDING RELATIONSHIP?

Good conversation starters are the ones a person can easily relate to.

Introduce yourself. Let the person know you are looking forward to getting to know them!

ASK questions to show interest in learning about the person AND what they care about.

FOCUS on the person and what they are telling you.

STAY in the moment. Don't drift in thought to your next question.

FOLLOW their affections by genuinely wanting to learn something new about the person.

SHOW LISTENING with good eye contact, leaning in, nodding, "mhm", etc.

ASK appropriate follow up questions.

REMEMBER, relationships take time to develop.

HOW TO: Conversation Starters

HELPFUL CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR SURFACE LEVEL INTERACTIONS

It should be expected that small talk will be the first step in a relationship. People need to develop trust before they begin to open up about emotional issues or theological questions. Here are some Pump Priming questions.

What brought you to Covenant Church? What do you enjoy about the service and activities?

How is your week going?

Are you new to the area? Where do you live?

Tell me about yourself /family? (Look for commonalities)

What do/did you do for a career? What do/did you like most about your work?

What do you like to do for fun/ relaxation? Do you play any sports?

What keeps you busy during the week? (hobbies, volunteering...)

What are your plans for the holidays?

Do you have any questions about the ministries and activities available to you at Covenant that I can assist you with?

How can I pray for you this week?

What would be a good time for us to get together for (coffee, lunch, dinner)?

The above questions are just some suggestions.

Other topics that promote commonality and put people at ease are:
travel, food, music, hobbies, plans, sports, seasons, holidays and others.

HOW TO: Conversation Starters

TAKING THE CONVERSATION DEEPER

Once a relationship has been established, begin to listen for places to dig deeper. This is accomplished by asking yourself these types of questions.

- What is dear to them?
- What is loved?
- What is feared?
- What is hard?
- What are the feeling words they say?
- What is God doing in their life right now?
- How has God been faithful to them in the past?

Some people respond with very basic answers to all questions. But sometimes the words they say don't match the emotions in which they say them. If you sense this is true, adding the word REALLY to a question can help.

- How are you doing, really?
- How has work really been?
- How are your kids really doing?

This communicates to them that you really do care and want to know what is going in their life. It is not done to challenge them but, rather, to give them permission to talk freely about what is going on.

Suggested Email Scripts

DRAFT – SUGGESTED EMAIL INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO NEW MEMBER

Modify as appropriate for each situation

Dear Member(s) Name,

Welcome to Covenant Church Naples. We are delighted that you joined the Covenant Family. I am contacting you as a team member of the Covenant Shepherding Ministry.

In early November 2019, the Covenant Shepherding Committee sent a letter to all members of Covenant. For your convenience, a copy is attached.

That letter explains that on October 6 and 13, Pastor Trent taught about Shepherding. Those sermons were the public initiation of a long-planned enrichment of the Covenant Shepherding Ministry. I am contacting you as your newly assigned Shepherd.

The desired outcome of the ministry is that each member will know and trust their shepherd well enough to reach out to them for spiritual help and guidance or in times of crisis or concern. For the shepherd, the desire is to know how they can pray for those under their care and help them develop a vibrant relationship with Jesus as they live out the Rhythm of Discipleship.

Since you are a new member, I also want to help you get connected to a Ministry at Covenant that will effectively utilize your talents and optimize your spiritual growth.

To begin that journey, I would like to suggest we meet for coffee, breakfast or lunch or, perhaps, initially, after a worship service. Alternatively, I would be happy to have our first visit be by phone. I will call you within the next few days to find a mutually convenient time to get acquainted. Is this the best number to use [INSERT NUMBER]?

Please note that if you already have an established relationship with another shepherd or would be more comfortable with someone else as your Assigned Shepherd, we will be more than happy to work with you. Finally, being your Assigned Shepherd, does not preclude you from access to any of the Elders, but it does provide you with a point person when a need arises.

I look forward to getting to know you. And please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for being part of Covenant Church Naples.

Possible paragraph to consider inserting

You can help me be of greater support to you by letting me know when you have a particular prayer request or matter of concern. Please let me know if you would like a home visit, will be going into the hospital, or any special situations. I sincerely hope that you will feel comfortable in contacting me in times of need or just to have a friendly visit. Please let me know if you currently have any special prayer requests.

Suggested Email Scripts

DRAFT – TO MEMBER NOT PREVIOUSLY ASSIGNED A SHEPHERD

Modify as appropriate for each situation

Dear Member(s) Name

In early November 2019, the Covenant Shepherding Committee sent a letter to all members of Covenant. For your convenience, a copy is attached. [ATTACH LETTER]

That letter explains that on October 6 and 13, Pastor Trent taught about Shepherding. Those sermons were the public initiation of a long-planned enrichment of the Covenant Shepherding Ministry. I am contacting you as your newly assigned Shepherd.

The desired outcome of the ministry is that each member will know and trust their shepherd well enough to reach out to them for spiritual help and guidance or in times of crisis or concern. For the shepherd, the desire is to know how they can pray for those under their care and help them develop a vibrant relationship with Jesus as they live out the Rhythm of Discipleship.

To begin that journey, I would like to suggest we meet for coffee, breakfast or lunch or perhaps, initially, after a worship service. Alternatively, I would be happy to have our first visit be by phone. I will call you within the next few days to find a mutually convenient time to get acquainted. Is this the best number to use [INSERT NUMBER]?

Please note that if you already have an established relationship with another shepherd or would be more comfortable with someone else as your Assigned Shepherd, we will be more than happy to work with you. Finally, being your Assigned Shepherd, does not preclude you from access to any of the Elders, but it does provide you with a point person when a need arises.

I look forward to getting to know you.

Thank you for being part of Covenant Church Naples.

Possible paragraph to consider inserting

You can help me be of greater support to you by letting me know when you have a particular prayer request or matter of concern. Please let me know if you would like a home visit, will be going into the hospital, or any special situations. I sincerely hope that you will feel comfortable in contacting me in times of need or just to have a friendly visit. Please let me know if you currently have any special prayer requests.

Suggested Telephone Scripts

DRAFT – SUGGESTED SCRIPT FOR INITIAL PHONE CALL CURRENT MEMBER

Hi, my name is _____, I am a shepherd at Covenant Church of Naples. Do you have a few minutes to speak with me? I am calling because I am a member of the Shepherding Ministry.

On October 6 and 13 of 2019, Pastor Trent taught about Shepherding. Those sermons were the public initiation of a long-planned enrichment of the Covenant Shepherding Ministry. I am contacting you as your newly assigned Shepherd.
[Consider Offering to Send November Letter]

[Optional Paragraph] The desired outcome of the ministry is that each member will know and trust their shepherd well enough to reach out to them for spiritual help and guidance or in times of crisis or concern. For the shepherd, the desire is to know how they can pray for those under their care and help them develop a vibrant relationship with Jesus as they live out the Rhythm of Discipleship.

To begin that journey, I would like to suggest we meet for coffee, breakfast or lunch or perhaps, initially, after a worship service. Alternatively, I would be happy to have our first visit be by phone.

Would you be willing to arrange getting acquainted?

Consider asking; In the meantime, is there a specific way I could be praying for you?

CONCLUDE AS APPROPRIATE

Suggested Telephone Scripts

INTRODUCE YOURSELF AS SHEPHERD BY PHONE

(Suggested Phone Scripts)

NEW MEMBER

Hi, my name is _____, I am a shepherd at Covenant Church Naples. Do you have a few minutes to speak with me? I am calling because I am a member of the Shepherding Ministry.

Welcome to Covenant Church Naples. We are delighted that you joined the Covenant Family.

On October 6 and 13 of 2019, Pastor Trent taught about Shepherding. Those sermons were the public initiation of a long-planned enrichment of the Covenant Shepherding Ministry. I am contacting you as your newly assigned Shepherd. *[Consider Offering to Send November Letter]*

[Optional Paragraph] The desired outcome of the ministry is that each member will know and trust their shepherd well enough to reach out to them for spiritual help and guidance or in times of crisis or concern. For the shepherd, the desire is to know how they can pray for those under their care and help them develop a vibrant relationship with Jesus as they live out the Rhythm of Discipleship.

To begin that journey, I would like to suggest we meet for coffee, breakfast or lunch or perhaps, initially, after a worship service.

Alternatively, I would be happy to have our first visit be by phone.

Would you be willing to arrange getting acquainted?

Consider Asking: In the meantime, is there a specific way I could be praying for you?

CONCLUDE AS APPROPRIATE

2022 Shepherding Meetings

Shepherding Meetings have been scheduled as follows:

February 3rd

April 7th

June 9th

August 4th

October 6th

December 8th

The meetings will start at 5:15 with dinner.

Teaching will be at 6:00.

Team meetings will follow.

To provide teams with more time, there will not be Session meetings on these nights. Session will be held in the alternating months.

For the most up to date info please check

covenantnaples.com/shepherding



Our Mission

*We will develop and deploy
fully devoted followers
of Jesus Christ
to disciple our family,
community and world.*

Our Vision

*We are a loving family
dependent on the Holy Spirit,
committed to the Word,
growing in grace,
reaching out in mercy.*



COVENANT
CHURCH of NAPLES | PCA

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