

The Greatest Way I, As a Pastor, Can Love My Flock

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I love my church. I love the sheep that God has entrusted to my care & shepherding-oversight. But I must ask and remind myself frequently of the best ways that I can love my flock. If I don't review this regularly, I may easily veer into a myriad of "good" opportunities but I need to remember that – especially as a church planter who has limited time, resources, and energy – I need to find the "best" ways that I can serve, love, shepherd, and minister to my flock & relentlessly pursue them.

I. Intercede for Them Before the Throne of God

Like Jeremiah who interceded on behalf of his people in Judah before the Lord and prayed frequently for them. He lamented their sin. He asked God to intervene. He trusted in God's future promise of restoration. Paul reminded the Thessalonian church that he prayed always for them (2 Thess 1:11). He also emphasized to the church in Colossae that he does not cease to pray and ask that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (Col 1:9). So then, a faithful shepherd is one who intercedes on behalf of his people. He beckons the throne of God on behalf of his flock. He prays for their spiritual welfare, their continued perseverance, and their increased knowledge of God that would result in an uncompromising commitment to holiness. May I love my flock in this way.

II. Teach to Them the Full Counsel of God's Word

When Paul was with the church in Ephesus he did not shrink back from declaring to them the entire purpose of God. That is to say, he taught them what God had revealed in His Word. This is why Paul demands that his young protege, Timothy, preach *the Word*. His mindset and focus must rest solely upon the things of the Word of God. He is to be "in them" and to "be absorbed in" the reading of Scripture, the exhortation, and teaching (1 Tim 4:13, 15). A necessary commitment that I must have is to faithfully study, adequately prepare, organize simply, communicate clearly, and boldly herald the full counsel of God's Word. May I love my flock in this way.

III. Shepherd Them with the Sufficiency of God's Word

The church at Rome was able to admonish one another in a counseling/discipleship way because they had the Word of God (Rom 15:14). They could speak into each other's lives because Paul had invested in them, taught them, relayed the truth to them, and prompted them to pass it on to others. With the "living and active" Word of God, one can apply the truths of God's Word to any situation in a believer's life so that the believer can replace sinful patterns or habits with godly patterns and habits so as to walk in a new trajectory so that he is conformed to the image of Christ for God's glory. I must shepherd the flock of God with tenderness, care, humility, and willingness. May I love my flock in this way.

IV. Model for Them a Man Saved by Grace & Growing by Grace

Those that saw the change in the Apostle Paul after his conversion kept hearing that "he who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy" (Gal 1:23). For this reason, the immediate result is that "they were glorifying God because of me" (Gal 1:24). May it be said that as the flock sees change in me – a sinner saved by grace and one who is growing in grace – they would glorify God and worship Him for His mighty power in saving and sanctifying a rebel such as I. One of the reasons the minister should be in the Word, taking pains with the Word, and abiding in the Word is so that his progress will be evident to all (1 Tim 4:15). The church is commanded to imitate the faith of their leaders (Heb 13:7). So may it be said that I can say with Paul that my people can look at my life and follow my example (2 Thess 3:7). May I love my flock in this way.