

The Pastoral Overseer

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Date: 07 May 2023

Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[0 : 00] Good evening and welcome once more to the time we have to worship our glorious Lord. We thank you, we thank the Lord for this time and the privilege we have of worshipping him on evening such as this.

One announcement, it seems a morning, to God willing, on May 16th, we'll have Leslie Sangster speak to WFM about the mercy ships. So May 16th, early morning, but good to get in the diaries.

Again, for the ladies in the congregation, if you can go along, well worth your time. May 16th, WFM, Leslie Sangster. More details, of course, to follow.

And just to remind you that the 22nd, the week beginning 22nd, I'll be away at the General Assembly. And that Sunday, we'll be doing a pulpit supply with Murdoch Campbell and Hugh Ferrier and myself.

So more details of that to follow in time. We're here, of course, to worship the Lord. Let's carry on that public worship by singing to his praise from a Scottish psalter.

[1 : 00] Scottish psalter on Psalm 46. Scottish psalter, Psalm 46, on page 271. Page 271.

It's a well-known psalm of God's protection and God's strength. Psalm 46. God is our refuge and our strength, and straits our present aid. Therefore, though the earth remove, we will not be afraid.

Though hills amidst the seas be cast, though waters roaring make, and troubled be ye, though the hills by swelling seas do shake. Psalm 46, verses 1-6.

Stand and sing, if you can. God is their refuge and our strength, and straits our present aid.

Therefore, though the earth's river, we will not give our faith.

[2 : 17] Though hell's an exterstity cast, O wonderful in Him, Have thou of thee, yea, o'er the hills, thy spanishes to shame.

A river, this is changed in life, the city of our God, The holy place where in the night most high I live, thou hold.

The dim and dim, O heart of man, nothing shall have revealed.

The Lord, this is the name of God, O God, I carry thee through.

The dim and dim, O God, I carry thee through. The dim and dim, O God, I carry thee through.

[4 : 23] To the dim and dim, O God, I carry thee through.

The dim and dim, O God, I carry thee through. Amen. Let's join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray.

Lord holy and eternal God, we come before you once more this day and we thank you once more for the privilege we have of gathering together. We thank you for gathering us here again this evening to hear your word, to sing your word.

We thank you for gathering us again this evening to spend time in your word, to spend time adoring and praising you, the only living God. We come this evening and we confess that we often find ourselves coming to times of worship with our hearts and our minds so distracted, our hearts and our minds on other things.

And we ask, Lord, for a short time together this evening, you would take us away from the things of this world, perhaps even the important things which may lay heavy on some here this evening.

[5 : 44] But for this short time, help us to spend time in your word. Help us to spend time knowing that as we gather here alongside brothers and sisters, alongside those perhaps who as of yet don't know you, but who are seeking after you.

But we know for certain, we know with a biblical certainty, with a truthful certainty, that you are here with us this evening. Not because of any merit of how we worship, of who we are, but you are here this evening because your word tells us, where your people are, that you have made your home in us and with us, that you dwell, that you tabernacle in us.

With that hope, just now we come before you, as those who you have made your home in. We come just now knowing that, if that is true then, this evening, we worship in your presence.

We worship as we were in your company. We meet as a family together this evening, as brothers and sisters, and as sons and daughters. But help that reality to be clear and to be fresh to us every time we gather together.

Help us never to become comfortable in the gathering together, just for the sake of it, just for the weekly pattern. Help us to gather together, our Lord, with the full hope and the full expectation.

[6 : 59] But we will leave this place having grown in our understanding, having grown in our love. We will leave this place having seen wonderful things from your word. We leave this place ready to serve you this new week.

We confess we seek to serve you in a world, in a day, in a time that is so challenging. We seek to serve you in an atmosphere where your word is so hated, where your goodness is so unknown.

We seek to serve you even in a community, in an island, where days of gospel blessing perhaps seem so far away to us, where we find ourselves living and serving in a community, in the world, in an island community, where there is so little gospel knowledge.

God, help us not to pine for the days that have gone by, but help us to understand that these are the days you have placed us in. These are the times you have called us to serve in. Help us to be faithful servants in these times.

We know that every generation, Lord, longs for the generation before. Every generation thinks that their generation is the worst, Lord, and we find ourselves confessing the same sin. That we think, Lord, that the days gone by were easier, but our forefathers told us and left record for us that they served in difficult days too.

[8 : 12] You are the God who sustained them. You are the God who made your gospel flourish in these dark days. We ask for the same flourishing in our own day, even in this community. We do pray especially just now for this community.

Pray especially for our own congregation here. We thank you for it. We thank you, Lord, for the gift we have of worshipping together week after week. Help us never to grow tired or to grow too used to the privilege we have of open worship.

We can worship you freely and openly without fear of man, without fear of an enemy coming in and destroying us. I do pray now for our dear brothers and sisters across the world this evening.

Brothers and sisters who are suffering simply for daring to share the gospel. Who are suffering simply for daring to proclaim the good news that Jesus is Lord. Lord, find themselves in prison cells and under home arrest.

Lord, be with them. Help us never to forget them. We also bring just now before you especially our brothers who we heard every night. We pray especially for Derek and for Trevor.

[9 : 17] We thank you for them. We thank you for the work they are doing with the Slavic Gospel Association. We ask you to bless all their endeavours personally over the next few weeks as they seek to bring updates of the mission work across our island.

We pray for them as they go across the churches and across the denominations that your people will be encouraged by it. Your people will be encouraged as we hear the good news that even in challenging places and in situations far beyond our understanding that you are still building your church.

We pray especially now as we have heard in recent days the fresh gospel work in far east Russia. In communities and in towns where paganism and where animalism once held sway we now see and hear from our brothers that the gospel is spreading.

We also pray for Mongolia this evening. So we hear as we heard good news that your word is being spread there. We even pray for that couple whose testimony we heard a short part of that evening.

That couple of herders out in the steppes of Mongolia who came to faith, who can now call Jesus their Lord, who we can now call our brother and our sister in the faith.

[10 : 30] Brothers and sisters we will never meet, but brothers and sisters nonetheless. We give you praise, Lord. We worship this evening you. God who is not bound by nation, not bound by language, not bound by culture, not bound by time, not bound by creation, but you, the eternal sovereign God.

You have your people across our island, across our nation, across our world. As one service of worship ends and ever begins elsewhere in this world and you are worshipped morning to night continually.

As our foretaste for that glorious eternal worship will take part in the new heavens and the new earth. We pray just now, Lord, for those in leadership over us. We are mindful especially just now of our new king.

We pray for him, pray for him personally in the duties he must now undertake. We also pray for him personally in his spiritual life. We pray, Lord, he would learn from the late queen, indeed our late sister.

We pray he would learn from his own mother what it is to know you, to serve you and to worship you. We ask, Lord, you would give him gospel growth. Lord, he would begin this new role, not in his own power, but in your power.

[11 : 40] Not seeking to be a king of the faiths, but, Lord, to know the one through God himself. Lord, we ask you would transform his heart. You would save him. We pray the same for those in local leadership over us and in national leadership.

We pray for our leaders in the council in Stornoway. We pray for them in Holyrood. We pray for them in Westminster. For all who are set to lead us in civil matters, Lord, we ask you would give them wisdom to lead the country well, to lead the nation well, to lead us well locally.

We also ask especially for your people who are in these places of leadership, those who know you and who love you, who are seeking to serve you in a situation that is often so difficult for them.

We give you praise. You have your people there. Even in the highest echelons, Lord, of leadership in this country, that your people are there quietly seeking to serve you. We pray for them.

We ask you give them peace this day. We ask you give them comfort, as they often seek to serve you against a tide of unbelief and a tide of times of vitriol. We pray a special now for our own council, Lord, our own government locally, or for those even there who are yours.

[12 : 48] As they must, even in recent days and in future days, discuss complicated matters and complicated situations. Lord, that you would be sovereignly acting, even that as we find ourselves being faced locally and nationally and across our whole nation with legislation which seeks to destroy the simple gospel message, which seeks to destroy the reality of who you are and what you have given us of your creation ordinances.

Lord, we give you praise that despite the woes and worries we have, despite the situation, despite the darkness, we worship you, a living God. And despite, Lord, what the days ahead may bring, what the weeks and years ahead may bring, despite what our country may look like in 10 to 30 to 50 years' time, if you give it that time to us, we give you praise that we will still be found serving you with your assistance, with your upholding, with your keeping.

Lord, help us to serve you well in our own homes and our own village. Lord, regardless of what's taking place around us, help us to be faithful witnesses to you. We pray this evening for those who are struggling. We pray this evening for those who are calling out and who are crying out for some care, for love and for comfort.

We pray this evening with heavy hearts, with painful hearts. We pray this evening who are going through anxious days, perhaps dark days, who are facing depression, who are facing anxiety, who are facing physical health challenges.

We pray this evening for those who are going through situations, perhaps unknown to anyone but themselves in you. Lord, we ask you to draw close to them. We pray for ourselves once more as a congregation. Lord, we would know and sense that you have, Lord, given us your word.

[14 : 29] We would know and sense that we as a people are a people of prayer, a people who have been blessed greatly by having been entrusted with a glorious gospel. We pray we would see that glorious gospel be known across this village.

With that, we pray once more for our brothers and sisters next door as they meet to worship you just now. We pray for them in their own worship. We pray for them in their vacancy. We pray for the one who leads them this evening. Lord, give him the words to say.

Help us this evening to have hearts and minds set on you. We come confessing our sin. And once more today we confess we have sinned against you in our thoughts, in our words, in our actions. We have found ourselves to be in the wrong side of a holy God.

You who can see no evil. You who can bear no evil. You who cannot be near sin. And we find ourselves going back time and time again to our sin. Being back drawn to the old ways of things.

Being drawn back to the temptations that once assailed us. Lord, keep us away from these things we ask. Help us to serve you joyfully. To serve you willingly. To serve you knowing that there is no greater privilege than to know Jesus.

[15 : 37] And for him to know us. Than to love Jesus and him to love us. To hold on to him and to know that he holds eternally on to us. Let's call these things in and through and for his precious name's sake.

Amen. Let's turn to reading God's word. 1 Peter 5. 1 Peter 5. That's on page 955 of the Church Bibles.

1 Peter 5. On page 955. 1 Peter 5.

Let's hear the word of God. 1 Peter 5. 1 Peter 5.

1 Peter 5. 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. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders, clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another. For God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

[17 : 24] Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

By Silvanus, a faithful brother, as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to you all, to all who are in Christ. Amen. We give praise to God for his holy and his perfect word. Let's sing once more, again from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 131. Psalm 131.

On page 422, Psalm 131, on page 422, a short psalm, but a psalm which speaks so beautifully about the care the Lord gives his people, the comfort he gives his people. Psalm 131, on page 422.

My heart not haughty is, O Lord, mine eyes not lofty be, nor do I deal in matters great or things too high for me. I surely have myself behaved with quiet spirit and mild. A child of mother weaned my soul is like a weaned child. Upon the Lord let all the hope of Israel rely, even from the time that present is unto eternity. Psalm 131, to God's praise.

[19 : 28] Josephpe Church.

nor did I give in majesty for things to have for me.

I truly am, I serve thee here with quiet heart and mind.

As child of mother, weep my soul, is like a weaned child.

A fallen heart, let home and hope of Israel relive in thong the time that present is and to eternity.

[21 : 21] Let's for a short time turn back to the chapter we had, 1 Peter and chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 5. Looking this evening just for quite simply a few verses, verses 1 down to verse 5.

1 Peter 5 verses 1 down to verse 5. By the sake of a text, we can just take the first verse. 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's going to be revealed.

And so on down to the end of verse 4, verse 5. We are of course coming to a conclusion of our very short series looking at what is an overseer.

Just a quick summary, of course, we say overseer because this is one of the texts we could use to prove that in Scripture the term overseer, minister, bishop at times, they're used interchangeably.

Just simply saying the ones who have been called to lead and to serve the church. So we saw the conduct of an overseer, the conduct of an elder, of a minister.

[22 : 43] We saw the person or the personality of a minister or an elder. We saw last week the preaching of the overseer.

And finally this evening, as we bring our short study to an end, we can see the pastoral care of an overseer. What should it look like for an overseer to exercise pastoral care within the congregation?

Now every week we say the same thing. This is not supposed to be a checklist for you or for us. It's just a reminder for us. It's a reminder for the overseers and for myself and the elders together for us to be reminded what it is we've been called to do.

It's also a reminder for yourselves as a congregation of what it is we've been called to do. We've been called to serve you and to serve you very specifically as overseers.

So this evening we see the pastoral care side, the minister or the overseer, in this case the minister and his pastoral care. Looking, plenty of examples we had to look at in Scripture.

[23 : 55] Plenty of examples that have gone to see pastoral care in action. There's a whole series worth there alone. But just for this evening, just these few short verses from 1 Peter 5, just to summarize for us what it is for us as overseers, or for a minister at least, to be involved and to show and to engage in pastoral care, pastoral duties for the congregation.

We are of course called as ministers to be first and foremost ministers of word and sacrament. That's often a phrase that our friends and our brothers and sisters in the church column will use, but it's a valid phrase.

Ministers of word and sacrament. We are called first and foremost to preach. We are called to be preachers. We said that last week. And that is our first duty. That is my first duty amongst you.

You have called me to preach the word, to study and to preach the word, and to see that word then being used by the Lord to build up you as a congregation. But straight after that, we touched on this last week, straight after that, so preaching is there.

Just below it, it's a very fraction, but it is below it, but just by a fraction below it, we then see the pastoral care. Yes, I'm here to teach and to preach, but also I'm here to be a pastor, to minister to the congregation, literally to serve, to minister.

[25 : 20] And we're called as overseers and myself in my role, we're called of course to follow the example of our Saviour.

We've seen that all the way through this short series, and it's no different this evening. We follow the one who is the great shepherd, the perfect shepherd, the good shepherd, the ultimate shepherd.

And seeking to follow his example, we're also called, we see here in this chapter in a few moments, we're called to be shepherds. We're called to shepherd the flock of God.

Like any good shepherd, we must look after our sheep. We're called to care for our sheep. Now sometimes it's said that some ministers preach whilst others visit.

Some preach whilst others do pastoral work. Of course some ministers, indeed all ministers are often better at one than the other. We all have different skills, different abilities.

[26 : 25] But to be a minister truly under the gospel example, to follow our Saviour truly, to be a biblical overseer, it's never one or the other.

We must strive at least. It's always strive, but we never achieve it well. We're always striving. And we said this before, we as elders will fail you. I as a minister will fail the elders and will fail you.

But we all strive together. It's never preaching or visiting. Never preaching or pastoral. It's together. It's together.

We must, as overseers, be engaged in both things. So three broad areas in this text and these verses to help us understand what it is to be pastorally caring for the congregation.

What should you as a congregation look out for? What should we and I be reminded of this evening? First of all, we see who we are. Who we are.

[27 : 26] Then we see what we're called to do. And finally, we see how we do it. So who we are. What we're called to do. And how do we do it?

How do we do what it is we've been called to do? So first of all, who we are. Quite simply, just starting from verse one.

Peter says, I exhort the elders among you. And this section, of course, is written to the elders, to the leaders of the church. To the leaders of the church. I exhort the elders among you. As a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

And so on and so on. Who are we? As overseers. We are, of course, fellow elders. I know we say this week after week.

But we say it because scripture brings it to us week after week. And scripture brings it, we must look at it. The minister is a fellow elder. Different roles, different jobs, yes.

[28 : 27] But a fellow elder. And the elders together, me included, we are fellow brothers and sisters of the congregation. The only difference is we've been called to serve you.

Fellow elder. Called and chosen. The overseer is a fellow elder. Called by the congregation.

To serve, to lead. Chosen by the congregation. Of course, called ultimately by God. But then the congregation chooses your overseer. The process was there.

And you chose your overseer. You chose an overseer to serve you. Pastorly. But also we see from Peter here, we are one of many.

It's not as we heard even the boys and the girls this morning. It's a trick question. It was quite bad of me. But you saw the response when asked, who's in charge of the church? And every kid will say the minister. Most kids will say the minister.

[29 : 28] And that's what happened this morning. You, the minister. But who is in charge of the church? Practically speaking. Of course, our saviour is. We know that he is head of his church. Is it the minister?

No. It's the elder. Yes, in that there are different roles. And I will lead and perhaps do bits and pieces here and there that are different. But generally speaking. In preaching and in pastoral care.

I will take the lead. But the elders together as one body. We are here to serve you. We are also part of a group in a wider sense.

We are, of course, a Presbyterian church. We are part of a local presbytery. I know perhaps for many of us, presbytery is something that just happens every so often. And we are none the wiser of what takes place.

A reminder, if you are ever free on a Tuesday morning. And this is a genuine, I'm not, this is genuine. Presbytery, of course, is an open court. It's an open court.

[30 : 25] There are parts which are closed. But everyone, everyone and anyone is welcome to attend and sit in and listen to Presbytery business. It's open. It's completely open.

Sometimes it happens. It hasn't happened often, I think. But sometimes folks will do that. In the olden days, it happened a bit more. You are free to come along, perhaps with Donald or myself, as we go to Presbytery.

You would be more than welcome to come along. We are part of Presbytery as a wider body. We are also part of a wider body that is meeting at the end of this month. We are part of a wider church gathering.

We see that in the General Assembly. We see that in the General Assembly. We see that in a wider church, a wider free church gathering. All this is to say, there is no just minister on his own. We are all serving together as part of a wider body.

That is who we are. That is who the elders in Peter's day were. They were part of the local church, yes. Part of this wider church. This wider gathering of God's people seeking to serve the early church.

[31 : 27] The young church. We are also together in our suffering. A fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ. Now of course Peter could say that.

But also for us, he means in a general sense. As he speaks to these elders who didn't see Christ. Who never met Christ. As he speaks to them. He says that they also with him are fellow sufferers.

Fellow witnesses of the sufferings of Christ. In other words, we have all been called as elders to suffer. We have been called to serve. And to give ourselves in service.

We have been called to sacrifice at where. And we are in comfort for the sake of the people we have been called to look after. Pastorally speaking, we should suffer first before you suffer.

In any given situation where that is possible. It is a shared burden. It is a real burden. Please do often pray for us as your elders.

[32 : 25] At times the burden is real. At times the burden feels more real than other times. And it is there. Behind the scenes. The burden to serve. It is a privilege. We saw that last week. A great privilege.

A joy. But still a burden. We are together in sufferings. But also we are together in future glory. Together in future glory. As well as a partaker.

At the end of verse 1. As well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed. We serve with the full knowledge. That we serve a Lord who has called us to serve him.

To serve his people. We serve knowing that perhaps we will not see the result of our hard work on this side of glory. But we serve or we seek to serve the Lord nonetheless.

For his glory. For his glory. Because we know that we are partakers. Along with our brothers and sisters in this congregation. We are partakers of the glory that is going to be revealed when our Saviour comes again.

[33 : 26] So who are we? We are united together as elders. Locally. Nationally. Even across the world this very evening. What are we called to do in terms of our pastoral care?

Quite simply. The very first word we see here in verse 2. The first phrase. We are called to do what? Shepherd the flock of God. That is among you.

Shepherd the flock of God. The first word there. Shepherd. It is an imperative. It is a command almost. It is there. Not just a suggestion. Peter is saying very clearly.

The Lord speaking through Peter. It is very clear. Our role as elders. As overseers. My role as minister. Is to shepherd. First and foremost. After preaching. Is to shepherd. Shepherd the flock of God.

What an amazing way to summarize the whole work of a minister.

[34 : 25] The whole job of a minister. In one simple word. We are to shepherd. To lead. Of course we are shepherding under the under shepherd.

We are the under shepherds of a great shepherd. The greatest shepherd. The good shepherd. But we are to shepherd the flock of God.

And as shepherds. What shall I look like? What does a good crofter do? How does a good crofter as aware. Act towards his sheep? Of a good crofter.

He loves his sheep. He cares for his sheep. To your brothers. Your sisters. Your overseers.

Your elders. Your minister. We truly do love you. And we don't say that lightly. We don't say that to give you a happy feeling this new week. We say that because we mean it.

[35 : 24] You see it behind the scenes. In the Kirk sessions. In the meetings. In the discussions. In formal and formal. Your elders do care for you. They do love you.

Love you. A shepherd must also know his sheep. We'll see this more in a second. He must know his sheep. And get to know his sheep well. Also of course a shepherd must be willing.

As we said. To give himself for his sheep. Must be willing to sacrifice. As it were. For his sheep. There is no easy way of serving.

There are some ministers. And some elders. We know. And to the shame. And to their shame. And to the. Often to the shame of the church. Who often seem to live an easy life. And get away with doing very little.

And live a life of luxury. But that is not the standard. That is not the normal. For the normal elders. Those who have served before here. Going back years. Those faithful men. Who love the Lord.

[36 : 24] Who serve the Lord. Who loved his people. Despite perhaps their own faults. And feelings at times. They serve the Lord well. All the ministers. Who have come before me. The few. Who came before me.

In this pulpit. With the Lord's will. Perhaps the many. Who come after me. In this pulpit. We will all seek to do one thing. To shepherd the flock. Of God. It is well known that.

My love of sheep. Is somewhat. Nothing. Is nothing at all. I can't stand the creatures. We know that. We discussed that before. But my love. As a shepherd. Over you.

As a congregation. Is real. Not because of anything. In my own abilities. No. Because it is a calling. That your elders accepted. That I have accepted. A real calling. To love.

To shepherd. To lead. The flock. Of God. To who we are. We are elders. Together. What is it called to do? We have been called. To shepherd.

[37 : 21] The people. And like a shepherd. We have been called. To look after. To care. For. The flock. So how does that look?

What does it look like. Being practical. To care. For the flock. Of God. It is all good in practice. All good in theory. But actually in practice. How does it look.

How does it feel? Shepherd the flock. Of God. That is. Among you. The flock. That is. Among you. The good crofter.

The half decent crofter. At least. Lives close to sheep. In the same village. The same area. As a sheep. The good crofter. Is often spending time. With his sheep.

The good shepherd. Is with his sheep. The good under shepherd. Must. Spend time. With the sheep. It sounds so obvious. Isn't it? So obvious.

[38 : 19] But like the shepherds. In this first century. We know what happened. They often spent time living. Quite literally. With the sheep. As a flock moved.

They would move with the flock. And live with the flock. And sleep. Alongside their sheep. Spend their days. Walking them. Their evenings. Protecting them. Even their own people. Not so long ago.

If you are. Spend time away with the flock. With the people. With the sheep. The same for us. Your minister. And every minister after me.

And every minister before me. We've been called. To leave our old life. Called to leave. What the life. We perhaps once knew. At times. Called to leave family.

And to move. To a place. To serve. A flock. Whatever it is. We might give up. To become ministers. It is worth it.

[39 : 16] To serve. The flock. God has given us. The flock. That is. Among us. A good shepherd. Knows his flock. He lives.

Around his flock. How does a good shepherd. Get to know his flock. First and foremost. That is. The informal. Everyday interactions.

By existing. For me. Existing in the village. Existing in this place. The day to day interactions. Around the house. Around the manse. Around our house. Around the village.

Around the shop. Whatever. The day to day. Walkings. The day to day. Comings and goings. Of village life. Bob Aykroyd. Our professor.

Would often say. Every interaction matters. And it does. That is both for dealing with. Our congregation. But also dealing with those. Outside. The wider community. Every interaction matters.

[40 : 12] We get to know. The flock. By informal. Interactions. Now when I first came. I. Offered. And reminded you all. That. The manse.

Is your manse. Yes. It's where I live. But it's. Your building. Ultimately. With Emma and myself. Having moved in. We're here. In our home. And our home.

Is open. To you. As a congregation. Because we. Want to get to know you. As best we can. Always feel free. To come and visit. Come for a kelly. Come for a visit. Come say hello.

It's not easy. It's not easy at all. I know. Myself. It's not easy. But we're here. To serve you. I am here. To serve you. And make yourself known. As best you can.

As often as you want. The door. To the congregation. And of course. To the community. A good shepherd. Also gets to know. His flock. Via more. Perhaps formal. Visitation.

[41 : 08] By visiting. By getting to know. You. In your own home. In your own space. I'll see that more. In a second. A good shepherd. Also gets to know. His congregation.

In times of worship. Times of fellowship. And God willing. We'll have more times. Of fellowship. And more times. Of getting together. To worship. The Lord. Together.

If a shepherd. Is not in. And amongst. His flock. Spending time. Getting to know. His flock. And serving. His flock.

He is not being. A good shepherd. Simple as that. There's a quote. Again from Calvin. I mentioned Calvin. Last week. A week before. So often. Poor Calvin. Gets.

Tarred. A harsh man. A rigid. Unloving. Uncaring man. Calvin. Was a great theologian. Yes. But also. He was a great. Pastor.

[42 : 03] He cared. And he poured himself. Out continually. For the sake. Of his people. Who he ministered to. He preached most days. And he wasn't preaching.

He was visiting. He wasn't visiting. He was writing letters. To his friends. And he wasn't doing that. He wasn't doing that. He was in hospital. The equivalent of being hospitalized. Because he was so tired. Of exhausting himself.

Serving his people. But Calvin says. It's a lengthy quote. But it's worth listening to. Calvin says. Talking about pastoral care. Christ. Hath not appointed pastors.

Upon this condition. That they may only teach. The church in general. And an open pulpit. But. That they may take charge.

Of every particular sheep. That they may bring back. To the sheepfold. Those which wander. And go astray. That they may strengthen. Those who are discouraged. And weak.

[43 : 03] Wherefore. The negligence. Of those men. Is inexcusable. Who. Having made. One sermon. Or two a week. As if they've done their task. Live.

All the rest. Of their time. Idly. Calvin's. Are writing. To pastors. He's trying to train up. Young pastors. He's saying. If your job. Is just preaching.

Once. Twice a week. And that's it. And you aren't. In the life. Of your people. Then you're wasting. Your time as a minister. This is Calvin. The theologian. Calvin.

The teacher. And yet. For him. Pastoral care. Came. A very close second. To his work. Versus. To young ministers. Who aren't involved. In the lives.

Of the congregation. They've been called to. Very harsh words. Words. Words. You wouldn't read. Read from my pulpit. But he says it. He's clear about it. We're called.

[43 : 58] To serve. And called. To minister. And called. To get to know. The flock. We do it also. By exercising. Oversight. Shepherd.

The flock. Of God. Exercising. Oversight. Being actively. Involved. In the care. Of your souls. Actively involved.

In the care. Of your souls. Clear. And active. Care. For you. As God's people. Exercising. Oversight. The sense that is.

Exercising. Exercising. We must be engaged. In ongoing work. Of looking after. You. Of coming alongside you. As best we can.

Of seeking to serve you. As best as I can. Seeing how I can help. As best I can. One example is. Pastoral. Visitation. I've been a few visits.

[44 : 57] Over the last few weeks. I've kind of getting into a pattern of it. Getting into a pattern of it. And trying to get as much. As many visits in a week. As I can. And just to say.

When I visit. Why am I visiting? When I come and knock at your door. And come and say hello. In my suit. In my jeans. In my hoodie.

Whatever situation I might be in. Why am I coming? Am I coming to have a wee nosey. Your house. To see how your life is? Am I coming to have a wee nosey. And see how holy. You're looking to me that moment. Am I going home in writing.

A wee record. Of everything I've seen. And said. No. Why am I visiting? Why do I want to visit? Why do I want to see you all. In your own homes. And get to know you?

Because I've been called. To exercise oversight. I've been called. To get to know you. To see how I can best serve you. And best support you. As one you've called.

[45 : 53] To do that job. When I come and visit. And I fully intend. The Lord's help. And I'm going to be closing. Of course the whole congregation. A good few times. Even this year. If the Lord gives us strength. I'm not coming to be nosy.

I'm coming to say hello. To get to know you. I'm coming to pray perhaps with you. To see how I can help you. How I can encourage you. That's what we're doing here.

Myself and the elders. With that in mind. Please do. I will get round. Hopefully the congregation. As fast as I can. But. If you hear yourselves.

If anyone needing a visit. Or if yourselves. Are finding yourselves. Perhaps wanting a visit. For one reason or another. Please get in touch. Next week. I've got wee. Business cards.

I can leave them at the door. Next week. Take them. The number's there. The email is there. Just get in touch. We're here for you. To serve you. As best we can. Exercise oversight.

[46 : 51] Be actively involved. Also. We do it. Willingly. Not. Under. Compulsion. Exercise oversight. Not under compulsion. But willingly.

As God would have you. Not for shameful gain. But. Eagerly. Not doing a job. Because well. Someone has to do it. The congregation had to call somebody. So it might as well be me.

So I'm. I'm. Called me. Since I've moved myself into the man. Since I got married. We're. We're here to serve you. No. We do it. Willingly. Willingly.

We are here to serve you. Willingly. We uprooted our lives. To move here. Willingly. We find ourselves. In this congregation. Willingly. Wanting to be. Your overseer. To be your minister.

To be your elders. Willingly. We are here. To do the job. We've been called to do. To serve you. To care for you. To minister to you. To praise and glorify the Lord.

[47 : 47] By doing that. The truth is. That often. A willing minister. And a willing eldership. Leads to a willing congregation.

Not speaking of yourselves. It's too early for us. To say this. But. History proves it. And many ministers. Before me. Who.

Have spent many more years. In ministry. Than I have. They all say the same thing. McShane said it too. Calvin touched on it. Also plenty of times.

The more willing. You are. To serve your congregation. The more willing. The more willing. The more willing. The more willing. The more willing. The more willing. The more willing.

In only that believing. To serve the Lord. In only. The more willing. In only that time. In only that time. In only that time. In only that time. You are willing. The more willing. In only that time. This morning. In only that time. A living.

[48 : 42] To serve the Lord. A living church. To do. To do. A living Jesus. A living church. A living church. A living church. A living church. A living church.

A living church. A living church. A living church. will strive to serve you. Why? Not for financial gain. Not for the pride of doing it. Not for getting a name for ourselves.

We see halfway through verse 2. Not for shameful gain, but eagerly. Yes, for some who serve for money. Yes, for some who serve for the pride and the authority it gives them.

The power it gives them, perhaps. But we serve. We seek to serve, at least. Because we're here to honour the Lord and to serve you the best way we can. Not domineering.

We serve you by not being domineering. We serve you in a non-domineering way. Not under compulsion, willingly, as God would have you. Not for shameful gain, but eagerly.

[49 : 42] Not domineering over those in your charge. Pastoral care should always feel like care.

It should always feel like care. It should never feel as if you're being imposed upon. It should never feel as if you're being attacked. There is a tendency.

And because sin is sin, because we live in a sin-sick world, the truth is that positions of power, such as ministry, and there is power involved in ministry, and we'll see in a second, there is real power involved.

Positions of power attract those who want to domineer and control. Those who want to have a name for themselves and get a name for themselves and keep a name for themselves. Those who want to keep and have people under them, serving them and looking up to them.

We know that ourselves. In our own history, we know that has been a story for us, even as a denomination. At times, there has been a failing for us. Not just us, across the board, across the denominations, across the church's history, there are those in power who should not have got near a place of power because we're there for power alone.

[50 : 53] We're called not to be domineering, not to be domineering over those who are in our charge. As we said, there is power involved in ministry.

There is power involved in the role you've been called to do. But as Knox said, I have never once feared the devil, but I fear every time I enter a pulpit, every time I ascend a pulpit.

There is great power, perhaps at times, in being a minister. There is great responsibility. And these things are done with trembling hands. That power is held with trembling hands. Never done happily or joyfully.

It's done reverently and carefully. And there are times. There are times when there must be, for the sake of the congregation's souls, there are times when there must be tough conversations from the pulpit and personally.

Tough conversations. Challenging conversations. We live in a world of sin where lives are complicated. At times, we must oversee well and oversee in a way that involves us having conversations, discussions, which are difficult, which aren't pleasant, but which must be had for us to serve you well.

[52 : 12] Even these tough times, these complicated times, we are still called to lead gently and carefully with all the qualities we looked at a few weeks ago.

A gentle man, a careful manner, joyfully serving the Lord. What is the end goal?

What is the prize? What's our reward at the end of it all? Verse 4. Verse 4. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

We're not in it for the money. We're not in it for the power. We're not in it for the ego boost. We're not in it for the fame. We're not in it for the name. We're not in it to have a congregation.

I adore you and look up to you. We're in it to serve our Saviour. I am in it. As well as the man, the minister, the brother stood before me. He was in it to serve his Saviour.

[53 : 18] For the Lord's will, perhaps who will come after me will be in it, we pray, to serve their Saviour also, his Saviour also. Our goal, our reward, it's not fame, it's not money.

Our reward is a life lived well, serving the flock, shepherding the flock of God whom he has given us. We take our job seriously.

We take our role seriously. And part of that role is to care for you and to love you as best as I humanly can.

I'm not saying this to sound good or to sound smart or to sound caring. Say it because we mean it. To come to an end of this study, an end of this study, what it is to be a minister, quite simply, it's one word and that word is the word we have here.

We're called to be shepherds. To preach the word, to see the sheep, to see the flock grow in love and understanding of the Lord. To see the flock grow in love one another and to serve you as a flock of God.

[54 : 25] To see you grow in your love for him. To see you grow in your understanding of him. To see you grow as his beloved people. That is our goal.

That's our aim. That is our reward on earth. Our reward on earth is to see you grow and to mature. To present you until last week to present you mature in Christ.

And eternally, our reward is the unfading crown of glory. To hear the Master say that we are good and faithful servants. That's what we're striving towards.

The final reminder. All of this, of course, is very much aimed at those who are Christians here this evening. Those who know and who love the Lord. You have put yourself under the care of the overseers.

The reminder has to be said to keep stressing as I keep trying to stress as much as possible. We only serve because we serve under the great shepherd.

[55 : 22] The good shepherd. The truly perfect shepherd. And your overseers and myself, we will fail you. We will find, you will find great many faults in us. If you look hard enough at times, if you look at us, you'll see the faults.

He will never fail you. You will find no fault in him. When you become a Christian, you aren't putting yourself under our care where you are as a member, but ultimately you put yourself under his care, his love, his protection.

You become one of his church. don't, perhaps, let what's happened in the past, things being said, things being done, don't let that stop you from coming to the Lord.

Don't let that stop you from coming once more to him and crying out that he would save you. Man will fail you. Men will fail you. Again and again. The good shepherd who cares for his flock, who calls his sheep his own, he will never fail a single one of us.

That is our hope. And the best thing is that's the hope of us as overseers, hope of me as a minister, the same hope we have as brothers and sisters together. We all serve the same shepherd who loves us, who gave his life for his people and who one day will bring us home to be of himself.

[56 : 43] Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you for that one small reminder this evening that you have placed over your church at this point.

you've placed overseers. We've been called to serve you by serving the flock well, to glorify your name by seeking to serve your people. We pray, Lord, for ourselves as overseers and, Lord, who has roles and tasks you've placed us to serve you well, serve you well in our duties.

We pray for ourselves as a congregation we would grow together in love and understanding. Tell her for the congregation that they would feel cared for and loved, first of all, by us as overseers, but ultimately they would know the love of you, the ultimate shepherd, the truly good, eternally good shepherd who cares for the souls of your people in a way that no human can ever care, who keeps the souls of your people in a way that no human can ever keep or guard, who promises that eternal, ongoing love to your people in a way that none of us can ever guarantee.

You alone and in and through you alone we have all our hope, all our peace, all our joy. Help us to serve you well, we ask, to begin this new week. For, Lord, as we come to grow as a family here, as we come to grow as brothers and sisters, as we come to grow perhaps even closer as brothers and sisters, who do so knowing that by doing that we are honouring you and glorifying you.

As we show our unity to this community, as we show our love to this community, we honour you, we glorify your name. Lord, we ask once more and we thank you once more for the one who leads the praise.

[58 : 30] We thank you, Lord, for those who week by week lead the singing of your praise, the singing of your word. Lord, you bless them and they would know that they are performing and they are undertaking a serious task as they lead your people in worship.

A serious duty as they sing the very words you have given us, the very inspired words that you have given us to sing. Lord, help us never to underestimate the wonder of it is we can sing your word back to you, knowing that in it we sing the glorious truths of our Saviour.

Help us rest this evening to have our hearts and our minds focused on you as all these things in and through and for Christ. In his precious name, seek. Amen. Let's bring our time to a conclusion by singing to God's praise from Sing Psalms and Psalm 147.

Sing Psalms and Psalm 147. Psalm 147.

We can sing verses 1 down to verse 7 of the psalm. Sing Psalms in Psalm 147. Oh, praise the Lord how good it is to sing him songs of praise, how pleasant to give thanks to him for all his gracious ways.

[59 : 49] The Lord builds up Jerusalem and he it is alone who reaches out to Israel to bring the exiles home. Psalm 147 verses 1 to 7 to God's praise.

O praise the Lord how good it is to sing him songs of peace and let's have blessed how good it is to him of all his gracious grace.

the Lord is of Jerusalem and it is our home who reaches to quand on his own glory and to use Christ■ me to subscribe for all this singing to is George and Bruce and I He sets the number of the stars

And was then reached by Him It lifts the Lord and they turn out His wisdom is so proud
The Lord shall still stand me But now, shall we get to the ground Sing to the Lord with time
For this with dry hills

It is broken And let the music of the high Carefully in this year In the grace of the Lord
Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Both for
now and forevermore Amen