

# There's More To It Than Preaching!

## A. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

There's more to the ministry than preaching! We have to shepherd our people – all of them – as well.

[1] What it means 'to shepherd'

Two key verses are Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2, both of which are found in direct addresses to elders. We are to look after the sheep.

[2] Who has to be shepherded

All the believers (including yourself and your fellow-elders) who the Chief Shepherd has put in your care. Every one!

[3] Why they have to be shepherded

He has purchased them with his own blood and doesn't intend to abandon them to the wolves. Your shepherding is his means of keeping them persevering, and thus of ensuring their salvation.

[4] How they have to be shepherded

This is revealed by paying close attention to Acts 20:17-38 and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

[5] You must know each individual sheep

We must have an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of each individual sheep. We cannot do this while keeping our distance. We can only do this by taking time.

[6] You must take definite steps to ensure that each sheep is looked after

Here are some suggestions:

### **Preaching**

A major part of our pastoral work is done through our teaching.

This needs to be accessible to all and discriminatory in its applications.

### **The church**

The church needs to be taught what 'fellowship' really is: it is a genuinely shared life.

We must foster it. We must also keep people abreast of what is happening in other people's lives.

### **The eldership**

Elders can discuss every sheep as an individual and decide pastoral action, organise proactive visiting, pray together for everyone, and let the deacons handle everything that gets in the way of pastoring the flock.

## **B. PRACTICAL OUTWORKING**

[1] You must know who is a sheep and who is not.  
We have to go by their credible profession.  
We evaluate this by biblical criteria alone.  
To do this properly, we need to get close to people.

Yourself You can:

- pray systematically for each person
- be the 'person' of the place
- visit both reactively and proactively
- be biblically hospitable and have an open home
- stress your availability, and display it before and after meetings
- see people by appointment and counsel them from the Bible
- have a 'surgery' and find a variety of ways of putting in the sickle.

Other suggestions:

- a separate class for children professing faith
- a nurture group
- training class for young men
- theological discussion
- much more two-way teaching, so as to scratch where it itche
- preach on subjects put into a question box
- let pastoral visits sometimes decide a series
- etc.

Plus all the thoughtful touches that show that you love and you care  
Chief among these is giving all your attention to the person in front of you.

Also phone calls, notes, e-mails, moments of prayer together, spontaneous visits, etc.,  
relating to anything which the person concerned might see as an important event in their life.

Given by Stuart Olyott at the Eccentrics Conference in Dinas Powis, near Cardiff,

in January 2011 and also on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011.