

## 1 Peter 5:1-4

<sup>1</sup> As a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings, and a partaker of the glory to be revealed, I appeal to the elders among you: <sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is among you, watching over them not out of compulsion, but because it is God's will; not out of greed, but out of eagerness; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Berean Study Bible

<sup>1</sup> The elders among you,  
I exhort as a fellow elder,  
and witness of the sufferings of Christ,  
and a partaker of the glory to be imminently revealed.  
<sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of the flock of God that is among you,  
Keeping diligent oversight [of them]  
not out of compulsion, but according to Godly willingness;  
not out of personal gain, but eagerly;  
<sup>3</sup> not by control over those entrusted to you,  
but being examples to the flock.  
<sup>4</sup> And when the Chief Shepherd appears,  
you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

My own translation, Preacher's literal translation

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1

### Lookout for leaders. 1 Peter 5:1-4

What Godly leaders have. 5:1a

Leaders are team players. 1a "fellow"  
Leaders have a testimony. 1a "witness"  
Leaders share the triumph. 1a "glory"

What Godly leaders do. 5:1b-2a

Leaders listen to the appeals. 1b "appeal"  
Leaders are able to arrange. 2a "shepherd"  
Leaders are present among. 1b, 2a "among"

How Godly leaders act. 5:2-3

Leaders act because they must. 2 "not compulsion but God's will"  
Leaders act out of mercy. 2 "not greed but eager"

Leaders act as good role models. 3 “being examples”

What Godly leaders know. 5:4

Leaders are accountable. 4a “Chief Shepherd”

Leaders are responsible. 4b “receive the crown”

Leaders leave a legacy. 4c “never fade”

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2

### **Trustworthy leaders. 1 Peter 5:1-4**

The character of trustworthy leaders. 5:1

Trustworthy leaders are humble before others. 1a “a fellow elder”

Trustworthy leaders are faithful in difficulties. 1a “witness... sufferings”

Trustworthy leaders are gracious in glory, 1b “the glory”

The attitude of trustworthy leaders. 5:1-2

Trustworthy leaders are of the people. 1b, 2a “among you”

Trustworthy leaders are for the people. 2a “shepherd / pastor”

Trustworthy leaders are for the Lord. 2a “God’s flock”

The actions of trustworthy leaders. 5:2-3

Trustworthy leaders are deliberate. 2b “not compulsion but God’s will”

Trustworthy leaders are disciplined. 2b “not greed but eagerness”

Trustworthy leaders delightful. 3a “not lording it over but being examples”

The results of trustworthy leaders. 5:4

Trustworthy leaders are under authority. 4a “the Chief Shepherd”

Trustworthy leaders are worthy of honour. 4b “receive the crown”

Trustworthy leaders leave a lasting legacy. 4b “never fade away”

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3

### **Looking up to the lowly. 1 Peter 5:1-4**

Servanthood is the mark of God’s leader. 5:1

Servant leadership is marked by teamwork. 1 “a fellow... I appeal”

Servant leadership is marked by vision. 1 “a witness”

Servant leadership is marked by engagement/participation. 1 “a partaker”

Shepherding is the ministry of God’s leader. 5:2-3

Shepherd leaders use all their tools. 2a “Be shepherds” (rod and staff)

Shepherd leaders maintain vigilance. 2a “watching over”

Shepherd leaders are role models. 3 “examples”

Success is the measure of God's leader. 5:4

Faithful leaders are recognised. 4a "Chief Shepherd"

Faithful leaders are rewarded. 4b "receive the crown"

Faithful leaders are respected. 4b "never fade away"

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4

### **Meaning of maturity. 1 Peter 5:1-4**

Maturity has a stable foundation. 5:1-2

I am a witness of Christ's sufferings. 1 "witness of Christ's sufferings"

I am a partaker of Christ's glory. 1 "a partaker of the glory"

I am humble among Christ's people. 2 "among you"

Maturity is by a servant heart. 5:2-3

Mutual care by oversight. 2a "watching over"

Mutual care with eagerness. 2a "out of eagerness"

Mutual care by example. 3 "being examples"

Maturity has a seeking attitude. 5:4

Looking beyond this world. 4a "Chief Shepherd appears"

Looking beyond personal glory. 4b "receive the crown"

Looking beyond temporary things. 4b "never fade away"

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5

### **Look what develops in God's darkroom. 1 Peter 5:1-4**

(Photographic theme. Develop-Fix-Wash)

The 'selfie'. God wants you to develop yourself. 5:1

Develop yourself by reaching in. 1 "witness of the sufferings"

Develop yourself by reaching up. 1 "partaker of the glory"

Develop yourself by reaching out. 1 "among you... fellow..."

The 'group shot'. God wants you to develop others. 5:2-3

Develop others by humility. 2 "not out of compulsion"

Develop others by enthusiasm. 2 "but eagerly"

Develop others by example. 3 "being examples"

The 'landscape'. God wants you to develop logically. 5:4

Develop by accountability. 4 "when the Chief Shepherd appears"

Develop by expectancy. 4 "appears" (1 "imminently revealed")

Develop by eternity. 4 "unfading crown of glory"

### **Your sheep are waiting for you. 1 Peter 5:1-4**

What I can do for my sheep. 5:1

I can be humble. 1a "among you... fellow..."

I can tell of pain. 1b "sufferings of Christ"

I can live in thanks. 1b "partaker of the glory"

How I care for my sheep. 5:2-3

Keep diligent oversight by expression. 2b "Godly willingness"

Keep diligent oversight by eagerness. 2b "eagerly"

Keep diligent oversight by example. 3b "being examples"

Why I care for my sheep. 5:4

I care because it is my responsibility. 4a "Chief Shepherd appears"

I care because of what I will receive. 4b "receive the crown"

I care because what I do remains. 4b "never fade away"

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### **Other possible titles**

Growing up is better than growing old.

How do I know when I am mature?

Who shepherds the shepherds?

Today, you are the Pastor.

It's your turn to be the Pastor.

The most important thing you will do today.

We all share the load.

Here is your revised Position Description.

Prepare to meet your Maker.

When sheep become shepherds.

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### **Commentary**

This Scripture, 1 Peter 5:1-4, is not primarily about the office of Elder, but rather, about the person who is mature. We know this because verse 5 opens with similar instructions for those who are younger.

"And when the Chief Shepherd appears" Anything with more than one head is a monster.

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## Greek commentary

The **elders** among you,

πρεσβύτερος [Strong's 4245] is a common adjective occurring 66 times in the Greek New Testament, including twice by Peter, here in 1 Peter 5:2, and in 1 Peter 5:5. The word occurs here as an Accusative Masculine Plural Adjective. The feminine singular form never occurs in the Bible. (Does this imply there are no old women, or no women who admit to their advanced years! – or is the Feminine a form that was not used in their culture? However, the feminine plural occurs once in Scripture, in 1 Timothy 5:2.

The word means, 'older, elder, advanced years, mature'. This adjective applies equally to both men and women. This word is also used as a noun, being an officer within the Jewish hierarchy within the synagogue or Sanhedrin. Some Jewish-based churches also adopted this term to describe an office of church leadership.

However, Peter does not use the word 'elder' as an officer of the church (in either v1 or 5), but as an adjective to describe those men and women who are mature. We can be sure of this because the context shows the older people in v1 and 5 are contrasted with younger people in v5.

### Further information about New Testament church leadership structure

Jewish synagogues were led by Elders, and when churches were established in a Jewish context, the church frequently adopted the term Elders for their leaders. For example:

- The church in Jerusalem was led by Apostles and Elders (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23).
- Each church in Asia Minor was led by Elders (Acts 14:23).

But when the church expanded into Gentile settings there was no commitment to retain the Jewish title of Elders for the Gentile churches. For example:

- The church in the Roman colony at Philippi had no Elders, but was led by Overseers and Deacons (Philippians 1:1).

New Testament churches were not locked into using set terminology for their structure. Instead, they used flexible terms or titles for their leaders. For example:

- The church in Ephesus was led by Elders / Overseers / Pastors (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Timothy 5:17, 20).

Titles and tasks were used interchangeably. Elders are also Overseers and Pastors (Acts 20:17, 28).

Within one small area, different churches were free to adopt either a Jewish model of Elders, and/or a Gentile model of Overseers to suit their own situation. For example:

- The churches in Crete were led by Elders and Overseers (Titus 1:5, 7).

The office of Eldership is not listed among God's gifts to the church (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Corinthians 12:28; and Ephesians 4:11). But His leaders included Apostles, Prophets, and Pastor-Teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

Each church used a title for their leaders that suited their unique circumstances. The only consistent characteristic among New Testament churches is they always had a plurality of leaders, or a team of leaders, (Philippians 1:1, Titus 1:5; James 5:14). A careful examination of Bible-believing churches today, shows that the form of leadership and governance of each church needs to change according to the size of the church. For example, the leadership structure for a church of 40 people will be unworkable in a church of 400 people; and vice versa. I have served in numerous churches over the decades, each with a unique form of leadership. The church in which I currently serve is under the governance of a Church Council consisting of a team of Councillors. The factor which is far more important than the title is the Position Description.

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I **exhort** as a fellow elder,

παρακαλέω [Strong's 3870] is a composite verb consisting of the preposition παρά [Strong's 3844] meaning, 'close beside, closely alongside, in the near presence of'; plus the verb, καλέω [Strong's 2564] meaning, 'I call, summon, invite'. Hence, this word, παρακαλέω, means, 'I call to come close, invite to be nearby, to be up close and personal'.

This word is also the cognate of the noun, παράκλητος [Strong's 3875] primarily meaning, 'one who is called to be close by', and so used to describe one who is, 'called to assist, gives aid, an advocate, intercessor, consoler, comforter, helper'. A specific use is in a legal setting where it means, 'a legal advocate, an attorney, lawyer'. This noun occurs only 5 times in the Greek New Testament, and only by John, and only to describe the Holy Spirit, and is usually translated into English as, 'Helper' or 'Comforter', in John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, and 1 John 2:1.

συμπρεσβύτερος [Strong's 4850] meaning, 'fellow-elder, co-elder' is a noun occurring only here in the Greek New Testament. (see 'elders' in the notes, above)

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and a **partaker** of the glory

κοινωνός [Strong's 2844] is a noun meaning, 'a participant, one who mutually belongs, a sharer, partner, companion, joined in fellowship'. The word occurs only 10 times in the Greek New Testament, including twice by Peter, here in 1 Peter 5:1, and in 2 Peter 1:4.

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the glory to be **imminently** revealed.

μέλλω [Strong's 3195] is a verb occurring 110 times in the Greek New Testament, including 3 times by Peter, in 1 Peter 5:1, 2 Peter 1:12, and 2 Peter 2:6. This word means, 'at the very point of acting, about to happen, on the brink of occurring, ready right now'.

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the glory to be imminently **revealed**.

ἀποκαλύπτω [Strong's 601] occurs 26 times in the Greek New Testament, including 3 times by Peter, in 1 Peter 1:5, 1:12, and 5:1. This is a composite verb, consisting of the preposition, ἀπό [Strong's 575] meaning, 'from, away from'; plus the verb, καλύπτω [Strong's 2572] meaning, 'I cover, veil, hide, conceal, envelop'.

Hence, this word, ἀποκαλύπτω, means, 'to uncover, reveal what is hidden, unveil, to make plain'.

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### Quotes and illustrations

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd;  
I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside quiet waters.

<sup>3</sup>He restores my soul;  
He guides me in the paths of righteousness  
for the sake of His name.

<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever. (Psalm 23:1-6)

<sup>10</sup>Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and His arm establishes His rule.  
His reward is with Him,  
and His recompense accompanies Him.  
<sup>11</sup>He tends His flock like a shepherd;  
He gathers the lambs in His arms  
and carries them close to His heart.  
He gently leads the nursing ewes. (Isaiah 40:10-11)

<sup>11</sup>For this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘Behold, I Myself will search for My flock and seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As a shepherd looks for his scattered sheep when he is among the flock, so I will look for My flock.

I will rescue them from all the places to which they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. <sup>13</sup>I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them into their own land. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the settlements of the land. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them in good pasture, and the lofty mountains of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in a good grazing land; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.

<sup>15</sup>I will tend My flock and make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bind up the broken, and strengthen the weak; but the sleek and strong I will destroy. I will shepherd them with justice.’

<sup>17</sup>This is what the Lord GOD says to you, My flock: ‘I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the goats. <sup>18</sup>Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of the pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink the clear waters? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? <sup>19</sup>Why must My flock feed on what your feet have trampled, and drink what your feet have muddied?’

<sup>20</sup>Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says to them: ‘Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Since you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak ones with your horns until you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup>I will save My flock, and they will no longer be prey. I will judge between one sheep and another. <sup>23</sup>I will appoint over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them. He will feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be a prince among them. I, the LORD, have spoken. (Ezekiel 34:11-24)

When Jesus stepped ashore and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things. (Mark 6:34)

<sup>1</sup>“Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup>But the one who enters by the gate is the



shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen for his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

<sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will flee from him because they do not recognize his voice."

<sup>6</sup>Jesus spoke to them using this illustration, but they did not understand what He was telling them. <sup>7</sup>So He said to them again, "Truly, truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness.

<sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>The hired hand is not the shepherd, and the sheep are not his own. When he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf pounces on them and scatters the flock.

<sup>13</sup>The man runs away because he is a hired servant and is unconcerned for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep know Me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. And I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them in as well, and they will listen to My voice. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd.

<sup>17</sup>The reason the Father loves Me is that I lay down My life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father." (John 10:1-18)

<sup>15</sup>When they had finished eating, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he answered, "You know I love You."

Jesus replied, "Feed My lambs."

<sup>16</sup>Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love Me?"

"Yes, Lord," he answered, "You know I love You."

Jesus told him, "Shepherd My sheep."

<sup>17</sup>Jesus asked a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love Me?"

Peter was deeply hurt that Jesus had asked him a third time, "Do you love Me?"

"Lord, You know all things," he replied. "You know I love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep..."

<sup>19</sup>...And after He had said this, He told him, "Follow Me." (John 21:15-19)

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Quotes from Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader*

The fundamental responsibility of church leaders is to shepherd God's flock... There will always be leaders—the issue is whether they are the leaders called and gifted by God to

shepherd his flock or those who push themselves forward so that they can push others around.

#### Quotes from T M Moore, *Shepherding God's Flock*

Where faithful shepherds are at work, the Lord's sheep will be well fed. Both milk and the meat of the Word will be their daily diet, according to the needs and callings of each. Well-fed sheep are healthy, strong, and fruitful in their own contributions... Only when the people feel known and loved, and only when they know and love those who are called to lead them—only then will they be willing to follow where the shepherds of the church are seeking to take them.

In the Christian life, people tend to live up to or achieve, not the level of their abilities, for their abilities are virtually limitless, given the presence of the indwelling Spirit of God. Rather, they tend to live up to the level of their vision—of what they see for their lives in Christ. Unless we are leading them into God's vision for their lives, the people of God will settle for something less than the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

When temptation arises, we can follow one of two courses. Either we will fall through temptation into sin, or we will grow through temptation into a higher stage of sanctification. ... The shepherd's task is twofold: first, he must help the Lord's sheep to recognize temptation, by grounding them firmly in the law and Word of God; second, he must equip and encourage them in finding the way of escape from temptation, so that they may grow as the Lord intends.

Jesus' approach to bearing witness was thus energetic, proactive, continuous, compassionate, and pioneering. Should we expect anything less from the shepherds He has left to bring other lost sheep into His fold?

The work of shepherding begins in relationships of mutual love and trust, spiritual friendships where sheep and shepherd know, love, and care about one another.

#### Quotes from Larry Osborne, *Lead Like A Shepherd*

It's not so much about the task of leadership as it is about the heart of leadership and what it means to lead like a shepherd instead of a CEO.

When it comes to being a New Testament shepherd, it's all about the sheep, not the shepherd... The right question is always, "What do the sheep need?"

Every shepherd has to occasionally make his sheep do something they don't want to do. It's an unpleasant but necessary part of leadership. A good shepherd doesn't take a poll to see where the sheep want to go. He finds out where the sheep need to go and then leads them there... A good shepherd doesn't berate his weak, frightened, or struggling sheep. He adapts and adjusts in order to help them do what they need to do. His goal is to help the sheep, not to harangue the sheep.

As a shepherd, I don't have the luxury of being pained, frustrated, or angry. I have sheep who need to know what the Bible says so they can renew their minds and align their lives with it. It's my job to create quiet waters so they'll drink deeply from it.

A leader has to put people into boxes. It's the only way to know how to treat them. The reality is that liars lie, helpers help, gossips gossip, the dependable show up, and the impulsive chase butterflies. A wise shepherd takes that into account and puts them into the appropriately labelled boxes. But a good shepherd never seals the box.

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## Music and songs

### Songs about Christ's sufferings

A wonderful Saviour... He hideth my soul, H 624  
Are you washed in the blood, H 640  
At Calvary. Years I spent in vanity, H 716  
At the cross [I'm not ashamed], H 732  
Consider Christ, Ot 2  
He paid a debt He did not owe.  
It's Your blood that cleanses me, 566  
It's about the cross, Ot 54  
Jesus keep me near the cross, H 665  
Lead me to Calvary / King of my life, H 666  
My hope is built, H 717  
My worth is not in what I own... At the cross. (Getty)  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus, H 705  
O sacred head now wounded, H 152  
O to see the dawn... Power of the cross, Ot 62  
Take me to the cross, 671  
Tell me the old old story, H 375  
The old rugged cross, H 678  
There is Power in the Blood, H 715  
There is Redeemer, SiS 644

### Songs about sheep, flock

In God's green pastures feeding... His sheep am I,

### Songs about the Shepherd

Shepherd of love, FE 30  
Shepherd of my soul, Ot 48  
The King of Love my Shepherd is, 86  
The Lord's my Shepherd (Psalm 23)  
The Shepherd King, 726

Songs about crown of glory

Crown Him with many crowns.

Give Him glory, 270

Glorify Your Name, 206

Glory, Ot 59

Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, CWH 46

In my life Lord be glorified, 5 / SiS 577

Looking for the city, Ot 106

Power and the glory of Your Name, Ot 24

Watch ye therefore.

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### **Discussion starters with no wrong answers**

1. What is your experience of sheep?
  2. Why do you think the Biblical imagery of Jesus as The Good Shepherd, and us as His sheep is so popular, and so relevant?
  3. 1 Peter 5 begins with a call to those who are/would like to be mature (v1a). They are to be shepherds (v2a). Why is shepherding a task for the mature? Do you have to be mature before you can start shepherding?
  4. Peter describes himself (v1) in ways that surprise those of us who remember him from the Gospels. In what ways do you think he has changed over the years?
  5. In this verse what clues do you discover that are signs of growing maturity, both for Peter and for us?
  6. What words (v3) summarise how to live a mature life? In what ways does Jesus model maturity for us (Mark 6:34)?
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