

Introduction

- A. The presence of abusive shepherds is a sad reality in Christ’s church
 - B. There are typically three reactions to abusive shepherds
 - C. Peter gives two broad principles in this passage:
 - 1. Shepherds are to shepherd the flock of God by exercising authority and oversight as humble servant-leaders (5:2)
 - 2. The congregation is to humbly submit to their elders insofar as their elders lead according to the word of God (5:5)
 - D. Though we should not discount the painful experiences of pastoral abuse, we must not let such experiences turn a good and legitimate thing into a bad and illegitimate thing
- I. Three Things to Remember as we Consider Pastoral Abuse
- A. Congregations can abuse pastors just as much as pastors can abuse congregations
 - 1. Example of Jonathan Edwards
 - 2. Our understanding of church government (ecclesiology) should take into account the biblical view of sin and man
 - B. The abuse of the sheep at the hands of wicked and faithless leaders is nothing new and the bible has warned us to be aware of it
 - C. Do not let the appearance of abusive pastors distort or eclipse your appreciation of faithful pastors
 - 1. Our practice of church government (ecclesiology) should function under three realities:
 - a. The promise of our Lord that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church (Matt 16:18)
 - b. The promise that God has always and ever shall preserve a remnant of faithful shepherds and believers (2 Kgs 19:30–31)
 - c. The New Covenant promise that God would give faithful shepherds after his own heart who would feed them with knowledge and understanding (Jer 3:15; cf. Eph 4:8–14).
 - D. *How are we to avoid even the whiff of pastoral abuse in the church on the one hand, and congregational abuse on the other?*
By defining the relationship between leader(s) and congregation according to scripture and governing the church according to that definition
- II. What is an elder?
- A. The model of “elder” was commandeered from synagogue practice and employed in the church under inspiration of the apostles (Acts 11:30; 14:23)
 - B. Peter assumes the three-fold function of Shepherds (1 Peter 5:2; cf. 1 Tim 3:1–2)
 - 1. Elders rule
 - 2. Shepherds feed and lead
 - 3. Overseers protect
 - C. Under-Shepherds follow the Chief Shepherd in their Leading (5:4)

- III. The Voluntary and Mutual Commitment Between Shepherds and Sheep
 - A. A Shepherd without Sheep is no Shepherd (5:1, 2)
Peter assumed that all professing Christians he addressed were unmistakably identified with specific local congregations.
- IV. Peter's Model of Grace-Driven, Humble Leadership (5:1)
 - A. Entreats rather than commands (5:1)
 - B. No mere theorist but a Fellow elder (5:1; cf. Heb 13:17)
 - C. Witness of sufferings of Christ (5:1; cf. Matt 26:69–75)
 - D. Partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed (5:1)

Conclusion: An Under-Shepherd's principle role is to lead straying sheep to the Chief-Shepherd (1 Peter 2:25)

Questions for Application:

1. Has a past experience of pastoral abuse, or something close to it, distorted my role of submission to Christ's under-shepherds?
2. How does the biblical view of sin and of man help me to understand how something like pastoral abuse could happen?
3. What three promises should govern my view of pastors in the church?
4. Does an elder in the local church have authority? What is this authority? Must I submit to this authority? (Heb 13:17)
5. Does the congregation have any authority? In what areas/decisions?
6. How can congregations abuse that authority?
7. Give some examples of ways in which pastors may legitimately bind Christian's consciences.
8. Give some examples of ways in which pastors **may not** bind Christian's consciences.
9. What are the three principle functions of New Covenant Shepherds?
10. How does Peter's entreaty to fellow elders to "shepherd the flock of God" model a grace-driven perspective on shepherding the flock?
11. Does a pastor have the divine responsibility to shepherd someone who is not a member of their local congregation?
12. Does a member of a local church have an obligation to submit to the pastor from a different local church?