

FOUNDATIONS – MY LIFE IN CHRIST’S CHURCH – UNIT 2

MLICC – 2.3

SHEEP & SHEPHERD

I. **Introduction:** A fundamental understanding of the nature of the necessary relationships for spiritual growth is critical to development as a New Testament Christian. Believers are referred to as sons, soldiers, children, branches, vessels, members of the body, temples, lively stones, and sheep. None of these designations is more descriptive of the oversight aspect of the relationship between Christ and His church as well as Christians and their leaders as shepherd and sheep. This lesson will explore this relationship and provide a basic understanding of the responsibilities and benefits of the shepherd and sheep relationship in a Local New Testament Church. Lambs are noted to be dependent on the shepherd for critical guidance yet have a great potential for fruit bearing if properly overseen. The relationship is one of unique balance featuring the dependency of the sheep on their caring overseer and a mutual sharing of love, tenderness and affection.

1. God’s desire for you: Fullness of life; care; protection; maturation; fruitfulness
2. Blessings: fruitfulness; mutual enjoyment; provision, protection ;comfort, restoration; correction
3. ACF Mission Statement: Our mission is to live in the light of Jesus Christ: revealing God’s love, restoring true hope, transforming lives.

II. **Christ and His Church: Shepherd and sheep:** 1 Peter 2:25 For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. **Isa 40:11** He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.

1. **The Good Shepherd Cares for His sheep:** Psalm 23:1-6 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ... green pastures; ... still waters. 3 He restores ... leads me ... For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.
 - a. The Lord – Great Shepherd and originator of the plan
 - b. The Good Shepherd’s nature and character – Omnipotent / Omniscient / Merciful / Just / Leader / Guide
 - c. Transcends circumstances
 - 1) Peaceful pasture
 - 2) Valley of the Shadow of death

FOUNDATIONS – MY LIFE IN CHRIST’S CHURCH – UNIT 2

MLICC – 2.3

SHEEP & SHEPHERD

- 3) _____
- 4) Well Being – food & healing for body, soul, and spirit
- 5) A home — a place to belong
2. **Christ was both lamb and shepherd** / Pastors are both lamb and shepherd / Each of you, when healthy and mature, are both lamb and shepherd
 - a. **Shepherd** — John 10:11-15 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ... I lay down My life for the sheep I am the Good Shepherd... (Heb 13:20-21)
 - b. **Lamb** – John 1:29, 36 Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...
3. **The Local Church Pastor and Elders are both shepherd & lamb:**
 - a. **Shepherd** – I Peter 5:1-4 / Acts 20:28 Shepherd the church of God...
 - b. **Lamb** – Matt 26:31 ... scatter the sheep
4. **Each Christian is both shepherd & lamb:**
 - a. **Shepherd** – Rom 15:1-2 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, ... / Gal 6:1
 - b. **Lambs** – John 21:16-17 ... tend my sheep

How is the pastor both shepherd and lamb? _____

How are you both shepherd and lamb? _____

III. **Shepherding through the local church:** God appoints people to take leadership to care for His flock and lead them into maturity and fruitfulness. John 21:16-17 Simon son of Jonah tend my sheep...

1. **God’s shepherds work with the Holy Spirit** to bring His sheep into His plan - Num 27:15-17 ... set a man over the congregation, 17 who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, ...”; 1Peter 5:1-4 ... 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you ...
 - a. **Set a man** – Holy Spirit appoints and anoints a person to lead.
 - b. **God shepherds** through the person He has placed
2. **God’s shepherd establishes a culture of equipping** — Eph 4:11-13 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of

FOUNDATIONS – MY LIFE IN CHRIST’S CHURCH – UNIT 2

MLICC – 2.3

SHEEP & SHEPHERD

the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

- a. Five fold order of ministry: Eph 4:11-13 And He Himself gave ... apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers
- b. Poimane’ – shepherd — a feeder
- c. **Equipping for the work of ministry** - Eph 4:12-13 ... to train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, 13 until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful ...

MESSAGE

- 1) **Till** – At the present time while looking ahead:
- 2) **All** – every Christian
- 3) **Come – The Future** – Journey
 - a) **Faith** – Sound Doctrine and practice coupled with diminishing division – Blended Body systems
 - b) **Knowledge** – intimate relationship with Christ and each other
 - c) **Perfect** – complete or reflecting Christ in word and deed
3. **God’s shepherd is an example of following Christ** - 1Peter 5:1-4 ... 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, ...willingly, ... eagerly; 3 ... being examples to the flock ... you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.
 - a. **Tend** — (Gk) Poimante – the flock as in feed, rule
 - b. **Attitude:** Willingly / Eagerly / Examples / Under authority
4. **God’s leaders hang in there** – Zech 11:17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd, who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm and against his right eye; his arm shall completely wither, and his right eye shall be totally blinded."

How should God’s leaders oversee His sheep or church? _____

IV. Responding well to local church leadership: Each Christian should prayerfully and carefully work with God’s assigned leader (set man, pastor, life group leader, elder) to come into maturity, Kingdom service, and fruitfulness.

1. **God’s people should receive teaching** - Mark 6:34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So **He began to teach them** many things.
 - a. Discipleship-mentoring / Sermons / Teachings

FOUNDATIONS – MY LIFE IN CHRIST’S CHURCH – UNIT 2

MLICC – 2.3

SHEEP & SHEPHERD

- b. LifeGroups / SFS / Seminars
- 2. **God’s people should be given a good example and model it** – 1Cor. 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.; Heb. 6:12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
 - a. Inside-out Christianity!
 - b. Keep your eyes on Jesus!
- 3. **God’s people need to be cared for** – Zech 10:2 Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; they are in trouble because there is no shepherd.
 - a. **Accept Christ’s position** as your Chief Shepherd
 - b. **Accept He provides people to lead us** into maturity and fruitfulness - Pastors and Life Group leaders are led by the Holy Spirit but they are not the Holy Spirit
 - c. **Pastors and LifeGroup leaders ought to be led by the Holy Spirit** but they are not the Holy Spirit
 - d. **Avoid Common Troubles:**
 - 1) **Isolated** – 1Cor 12:12 For as the body is one and has many members ...
 - 2) **Bad doctrine** – Titus 2:15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.
 - 3) **Unsafe** – Matt 10:16 "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.
 - 4) **Scattered** – John 10:12... the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.
 - 5) **Causing trouble** – 2Thess 3:6 But we command ... that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly ...
 - 6) **Feeble and limited fruit** – John 15:8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (Mt 28:18-20)
- 4. **How should God’s people respond to His sent leaders?**
