

HOW TO: Pastor Others

Pastoring is the term we use for looking after other believers. ‘Pastor’ comes from ‘pastoral’, the enterprise of having sheep or cattle. It is used in English translations of the Bible for the Greek word *poimēn*, which means ‘shepherd’. So ‘pastoring’ is ‘shepherding’. ‘Shepherding’ is actually a neutral term, but it does raise ire in many believers because of the damage done during the shepherding movement¹ of the 1970s.

The word ‘pastor’ only appears once in the NT,² but it is usually referred to using alternative terms – overseer³, bishop⁴, elder⁵, shepherd⁶. It appears that its single mention is an indication that pastoring of members was such a normal function of the community there was no need to bring it to their attention in letters (epistles).

Pastoring is a natural process in the *ekklesia* because we are family and our desire is to look after each other because of the *agapē* we now have.

So, how do we pastor each other in a small Community where there is no elder functioning as a Pastor?



There's an art to pastoring that requires anointing and specific interpersonal skills.

I don't know all that's required, but here are some important points for us to begin with so we can pastor each other in our Kingdom community.

1. Look out for each other
2. Have a heart for people
3. Always operate out of Father's heart
4. Always operate with lots of *agapē*
5. It's not about making people feel good about themselves
6. Meet their needs if it's appropriate – goods, food, finance, etc.
7. Listen more than speaking
8. Don't be people's pawn or 'gofa'
9. It's not about praying for them all the time
10. Prayer isn't always the answer for their needs
11. Point them to doing business with God
12. Develop their independence – change from depending on others to relying on the King

1 – See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepherding_Movement

2 – Ephesians 4:11

3 – Acts 20:28

4 – 1 Timothy 3:1-3

5 – Titus 1:5

6 – 1 Peter 5:2

13. Prying into their affairs is out-of-bounds
14. Keep their confidences and privacy
15. Cease making judgements/assessments based on outward appearances
16. Look past their quirkiness
17. Make sure that any irritation is covered by *agapē*
18. Be gentle but firm
19. Use godly wisdom constantly
20. Generosity can be a fault – be wise in your dealings

So, take courage and start practising your pastoring. Get feed-back from those you assist so you can better fine-tune how you do it. Learn from your mistakes.

Laurence

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