

# COMMUNITY GROUPS

Living out the gospel with  
one another in our homes

## John Chapter 10:1-21

What Separates Jesus as the Good Shepherd? – Keith Fitzpatrick

At the close of the events that surrounded the healing of the blind man, Jesus tells the Pharisees, “your guilt remains” (9:41). What follows in Chapter 10 is Jesus’s declaration that through him is the only way to remove that guilt. Ted used an image to illustrate Jesus’ metaphor of the sheepfold. The barrier of the sheepfold, made of brambles and sticks, had only one gate to enter. The “Good Shepherd” who cared for the sheep would be permitted entry through the gate by the watchman. Jesus explains that those who seek to rob and steal will climb over, but the Good Shepherd does not need to climb. Furthermore, the sheep know the shepherd, and they follow him. Then in verse 7 and again in verse 11, Jesus declares himself to be the Good Shepherd who will lay down his life for the sheep, which the hired hands would never do.

Throughout scripture, God uses the shepherd metaphor to exemplify how church leaders should lead. God is a shepherd. Those who lead God’s people are shepherds. The shepherd shows care, mercy, compassion, and will sacrifice for the sheep. The Good Shepherd, Jesus, extends his love to us simply because we belong to him.

God as a shepherd: Gen 48:15, Psa 23, 28:9, 78:52-53, 80:1, Isa 40:11, Jer 31:10, Ez 34:11-16, 23, Heb 13:20, 1Pet 5:4

Church leaders as shepherds: Ex 3:1, Num 27:16-17, 1Sam 16:11, Jer 10:21, Ez 34:1-10, Act 20:28

Ted shared five ways we can trust that Jesus is our Good Shepherd:

1) Jesus is not a thief. Jesus doesn’t come to steal from you. Read verses 10:1 & 9.

Q: What can we do as disciples (the sheep) do to prepare ourselves to spot wolves and thieves?

2) Jesus has intimate knowledge of his sheep. “There is tremendous relief in knowing His love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me” J.I. Packer

Q: Are you ever tempted to think (to doubt)0, “am I one of his sheep?” Discuss why this is contrary to the Gospel. How do the Gospel and Jesus’s intimate knowledge of each of us (before the creation of the world) assure us that we are one of his sheep? (Jn 6:37 “never”)

3) Servant leadership. A biblical shepherd meets the needs of his sheep.

Q: How can we demonstrate biblical “shepherd leadership” as disciples in our church, home, and work lives? How did Jesus demonstrate “shepherd leadership?”

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4) Sacrifice. Our Good Shepherd sacrificed his life for us even when we were his enemies.

Q: Have you ever felt yourself hiding, avoiding, or fearful of God because of sin, even as you recognized his hand was caring and providing for you? Consider how we, at times, turn away from him even though he laid down his life for ours. The Good Shepherd continues caring.

5) Abundant life  $\neq$  easy life.

Q: Consider the cross. Reflect on the *abundance* that comes from your life as a sheep in the flock of the Good Shepherd. What difficulties do Christ's disciples experience due to our following Jesus? What abundance do we gain because of the Good Shepherd's sacrifice? How would you describe the abundance of life that comes from trusting that Jesus is the Good Shepherd...to an unbeliever?

Reminder: In the video Ted played, the good shepherd rescued the sheep stuck in the ditch, only to watch the sheep once again get stuck. During the service, we heard Connie say, "he got himself stuck again!" Only Jesus, the one and only promised Good Shepherd, our God, can save you when you get yourself stuck *again*.