

The word PASTOR  
NOUN or VERB?

Pastoring...

The Gift is the Person

There are leadership graces for the Church and none of them are abilities-- they are all people.

“Do you carry gifts with you,  
or are you the gift?”

Quick summary:

All people are gifts.

Specific gifts and graces are found in people. Everyone has gifts and graces to share to love others. Some people are leadership gifts because they have been called and equipped by Jesus uniquely for the work of leadership.

# The Pastor is a Unique Leadership Grace

In Ephesians 4 this unique grace is listed, “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers...” all for the purpose of equipping and strengthening the Family of God.

# Jesus Is Our Ultimate Pastor

In 1 Peter, Jesus is referred to as both the “Chief Shepherd [pastor] and the Overseer” of our souls.

# Defining the Grace to Pastor

Defining a pastor by pointing first to his spot on the top of a leadership chart is not a Kingdom mindset. I believe that defining this leadership role by discovering the heart and function of the pastor is the right way to go.

A widespread systemic mindset has led to a longstanding myth that the word “Pastor” is a manager’s role that lives only in the fellowship’s flow chart

Do You Have an  
Institutional Mindset?

Take this test...

1. Do you call anyone a “pastor” who is not on staff at a local fellowship?

2. Have you ever said, “I feel called to be a pastor...I am looking for a church to hire me?”

3. You are a woman.

Say aloud, "I can be a pastor."

Was that awkward?

4. You are a man. You read #3 and became uneasy because you think women should not serve in an office of leadership over men.

Is that what I really said?

# The Institutional Mindset Has Touched Us All

If the word has become a noun that means a position in an organization somewhere near the top, but we have forgotten that it is first and foremost a grace--an ability--then we will always struggle.

# The Function Of Pastoring

The function is the action or the work of pastoring. We must discover the verb of pastoring, before we can effectively recognize the noun. A person who is a pastor must, of course, act like one! Let's keep the discussion simple and ask some simple questions like: "How do they see?" "What do they naturally do?"

# The Pastor's Heart

I believe the pastor always sees  
people by name and face

Pastors are about individual people,  
just as shepherds are about  
individual sheep.

# Jesus Defines the Vision of the Pastor in Matthew 18

“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? 13 And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.”

# Pastors Love People

Pastors don't just love large groups of people, that belongs to another kind of person. Pastors don't just gather people together for a specific ministry purpose, that, too, is another kind of person.

Pastors genuinely know their people intimately and with a sincere love-- the kind of love that will fight for, even at a high cost, their well being. He knows them individually, but he will bring them together.

The pastor will war against isolation in his people because he knows that the Church is a family and that togetherness is mandatory.

# Pastors Deeply Empathize with Their People.

“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.”

# Answer These Questions

- Do you love people more than ministry ideas?
- Do you feel their joys and pains and want to be with them?
- Can you write down some names of people that you would fight for their health and future?

If you can answer these questions positively, then you already have the heart of a pastor.

Maybe it is time to say it...go on...  
try it:

“I am a pastor.”

# The Pastor's Function

So, then, a pastor is a “one another” lover. He or she does not rule over people. They do not think more highly of themselves than they should according to Romans 12. Let me quote just a few of the sweet “one another” passages throughout the New Testament that certainly apply to pastors of all shapes and sizes:

- Rom. 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.
- 1 Th. 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
- 1 John 4:11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

# The Myth of the Modern Pastor

The myth of the modern pastor is built on a mistake we have all made.

We let the word pastor become a position instead of a function.

Pause... Think...

We let the noun “pastor” take over from the verb of “pastor” and we disconnected the two. We see positions before we see the gifts who are people. Our world is full of this disconnection that has harmed good people who wanted to be pastors, and good people who really wanted to be pastored--but they were confused by poor teaching and poor examples in our traditions.

Our traditions have often robbed us  
of enjoying the grace of pastoring  
and being pastored.

# Pastors and Elders

## A Grace By Degrees

We are taught in the New Testament on how to think about leadership in the local fellowship, and we must dig in.

I propose that leadership in the local Church is always in the plural--there is more than one leader--and the key leadership are called elders.

# The Difference Between an Elder and a Pastor

We can easily discover that pastors and elders are very close in heart, but not quite *synonymous* terms.

“Each According to His Ability.”

Matthew 25

Some of us can nurture and shepherd a few, others a few more, and some of us can watch over lots of folks. This varying degree of capacity is the key to understanding the word pastor in the basic sense (for a few), and pastor in the broader sense (for the many) as an elder or overseer.

epískopos “to see over”

Denotes the overarching ability to watch over others in a care-taking way.

presbuteros is translated  
“elder”

is used to describe leadership and  
wisdom that comes from age.

## Titus 1:5

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders [presbuteros] in every town, as I directed you. 6 An elder [implied] must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

7 Since an overseer [epískopos] is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

This basic overview of eldership and pastoring grace is why I promote the local Church's primary leadership team being the elders in accordance with New Testament guidelines, and the recognition and commissioning of key pastors in the fellowship as the next natural leadership influence.

Then the growth and health of the other special ministries like prophetic ministry, teaching ministry, evangelism, worship, hospitality, missions, etc. can be birthed from the soil of family care.

# Summary Thoughts

1. Jesus is the Ultimate Pastor and Overseer.

2. Pastoring is a caring action for people. It does imply some overseeing.

3. Overseeing is a leadership grace that requires the heart of pastoring, but emphasizes the broad visioned leadership role.

4. Those whose grace is to pastor and oversee a larger group of people are called elders, or overseers.

5. Elders might also be teachers or prophets, etc., but they are first and foremost have pastoral hearts.

# A Closing Prayer

You are precious to God, and you deserve to be pastored by real people in this life. Our Chief Shepherd is sending his shepherds to you. Don't despair you are not alone.

I pray for your eyes to see. You are pastors, friends. I release you to be yourselves, to claim others, and to take care of them. Dream, suffer, pray, and advocate for those you love. Write their names down in your own Book of Love. We will be known as a family of tender watch-care for one another. Amen