



LOCKINGCASTLECHURCH

Life Group Notes – 20th February 2022

Humble Leadership. 1 Peter 5

Please visit the LCC website to listen to the talk or read the transcript if available.

1 Peter 5:1-7

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ² Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them— not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. ⁵ In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Comment

Peter's first letter was written to encourage Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) who were facing a rising backlash of political and cultural persecution. Peter's message is clear – in the face of uncertain times we need to stay alert and clear minded, so that we can do 3 things: Firstly in chapter 1 he says we are to *set our minds* on the Living Hope of the Lord Jesus, then secondly chapter 4 says we are to *pray* and in the final section next week we shall see how we are to keep alert and clear minded in order to *resist* the devil and his schemes. So the key to standing firm in times of trouble is to focus on Jesus, pray and resist. But Peter is even more practical than that. He knows that in challenging times the thing that will set the church apart as holy and make us shine like a beacon in our dark world is the strength and resilience of our relationships. Holiness is worked out in relationships and Peter says that the key to living in harmony with one another is to submit to one another for the Lord's sake. In previous chapters he outlines the need for humility and submission in the context of civic duty, employment, and family life, but in this final section he addresses the need for humility in relationships in the church, particularly when it comes to the power dynamics of leadership.

Peter calls for the elders (more mature Christians) to take responsibility and demonstrate *shepherd* leadership. Jesus himself said 'I am the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.' Shepherds sometimes need to be warriors, or servants to the flock, but their chief functions are to provide safety, watching out for predators and thieves, to monitor and protect the health and wellbeing of the flock and to lead and guide them to good pasture and water. Shepherds do not force-feed the sheep or beat them, they know their flock and guide them with care and attention. Sheep need to feed themselves in order to grow healthily, provide wool and reproduce. Similarly it is our responsibility as disciples to feed on God's word, grow healthy through prayer and reproduce by sharing the message of the Kingdom with others. Peter calls for more shepherd leadership, but this should be voluntary, not be under compulsion, and avoiding the pitfalls of Christian leadership: Money, sex and power. Instead of being manipulative, Christian leaders need to be examples to the flock, both in private as well as in public. For healthy relationships in the church we need all the generations to work together in humility – casting our cares on the Lord, instead of depending primarily on people for our core identity and affirmation (v7).

Questions

1. What do you find most encouraging about this passage? What do you find most challenging?
2. How does shepherd leadership differ from other styles of leadership you have experienced?
3. How might shepherding become coercive and unhealthy 'heavy shepherding'?
4. When and how might it be right to challenge leadership that could be misguiding the flock?
5. 'Everyone is a leader because we all influence somebody'... how can we take our responsibility seriously and develop good shepherd leadership throughout the church?

Pls pray for Godly leadership in the church as we navigate uncertain times.