

PASTOR

You do not have to hold the office of pastor to have the gift of pastor. The same Greek word for “pastor” is translated “shepherd” several times in the New Testament. A pastor, or shepherd, is one who cares for the sheep – seeking out the lost or wandering, responsible for guiding them into the right paths and being sure they are fed and protected. The gift of pastor can be used, for example, to pastor a church, to lead Bible studies and prayer groups and to disciple believers.

CHARACTERISTICS

1. One who shepherds God's flock.
2. The ability to sense what another needs to grow and be safe.
3. Go out of their way to care for others spiritually; a desire to sacrificially seek out the straying.
4. Makes real efforts to keep others from making bad decisions.
5. Is patient and loving, communicating the Father's concern.
6. Is a good listener and cares about even the small things in a person's life.

CAUTIONS

1. Becoming possessive of the flock that really belongs to God. After investing so much time, effort, and heart in others, it is easy to adopt the attitude that the flock belongs to its pastor rather than to God.
2. Manipulating those they are trying to help. Pastors can step over the line between advising and coercing. They can assume too much authority over a believer rather than helping them become independent decision-makers, able to sense God's will for themselves.
3. Spending so much time meeting the most immediate needs that they neglect training others how to avoid future problems. “Putting out fires” can dominate a ministry.
4. Becoming so compassionate that enforcing standards in God's Word is neglected. Mercy is necessary, but it must be balanced with accountability.
5. Allowing themselves to be taken advantage of by those who are always needing help but are never helped. There are those who have no intention of growing, but are adept at getting assistance from well-meaning Christians.
6. Neglecting their own family to help others. Many pastors have realized too late that they reached out to others and lost their own.