



The Pastor's Home as Paradigm for the Church's Family Ministry

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pastoral experience, having previously served Southern Seminary adjunctively since 2006, teaching courses on preaching and pastoral ministry. In addition to his role on the faculty, he is also the pastor of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky. He is married to Judi and they have eight children.

As a young, newly-married man with no children yet, I listened intently to what sounded like a helpful idea for the small congregation where I served at the time.

"I really want to see our church minister to families," my pastor declared, "and I want my family to connect with families as well!"

To meet this goal of leading the church toward more family-oriented ministry, the pastor presented this plan: He put out a jar with small slips of blank paper beside it; families in the church could write their names and telephone numbers on a slip of paper if they were willing for the pastor's family to come over for a visit and then place that piece of paper in the jar.

Each week the pastor reached into the jar, pulled out a slip of paper, called the number listed on it, and took his entire family over for a visit on Sunday afternoon. The idea was well-received, and the jar filled up quickly. It had been a long time since this church had been pastored by a

man who so sincerely desired such a personal connection with families in the congregation.

Within a few weeks, something began to happen that was a bit awkward for the entire congregation—something that worked against the pastor's intention of leading the church toward family-oriented ministry. The little slips of paper began to disappear from the large jar, but *not* because the pastor was working overtime at making those visits. After four or five weeks, the jar that was so full at the beginning only included a few lonely papers—and even those slips, rumor had it, weren't deposited by the families whose names were written on them but by others in the church.

Why was this happening?

The pastor and his family were well-liked; the problem was that his family was not well-ordered. It hadn't taken long for news to spread that if the pastor's family came to visit, your valuables might not be safe—and your children might not be safe either. The pastor was a kind, warm-hearted servant—and his popularity never waned during the course of the ordeal—but he lost his credibility in attempting to lead the church toward family-oriented ministry.

People were looking for someone who could practice in his own family what he was preaching from the pulpit.

HOW DO WE GET FROM HERE TO THERE?

In the 1980s and 1990s, discontent with segmented-programmatic ministry began to simmer in many evangelical churches.¹ In the dominant segmented-programmatic approach, families functionally said goodbye after exiting the car in the church parking lot and greeted one another again when they climbed back into the car to return home. In the worst cases, ministry environments were so tightly tailored to the preferences of individual groups that there was nothing to discuss on that car ride home.

In the opening decade of the twenty-first century, this simmering discontent boiled over into a full-scale movement in many evangelical churches—a family ministry movement that is now sweeping across a broad range of methodological and ecclesiological boundaries. This movement toward comprehensive-coordinative family ministry is not a program or a denominational campaign; it is made up of local churches coming to grips with the failure of segmented-programmatic ministry and then searching the Scripture for a more biblical alternative.²

I praise God for this movement, but I also recognize that every church desiring to move toward a comprehensive-coordinate family ministry model must answer a single crucial question: “How do we get from *here* to *there*?” In answering that question, there is a key component, often overlooked, that will be essential: No church will effectively establish any form of comprehensive-coordinative family ministry unless the pastor’s family models the change that the congregation is seeking.³ If the pastor’s family does not reflect the desired change, you can be assured that the slips of paper in the family ministry jar will quickly begin to disappear.

FATHERS AS SHEPHERDS

Fathers are called to be pastors in their homes. “What the preacher is in the pulpit,” Lewis Bayly declared, “the same the Christian householder is in his house.”⁴ The idea of fathers as the pastors of their homes is not one constructed artificially; it arises from the testimony of Scripture. The word “pastor” comes from the Latin word for “shepherd”—and every father is called to serve

as a shepherd in his home.⁵

Sheep are mentioned in the Bible more than any other animal and shepherds appear in the text more than one hundred times.⁶ Any examination of pastoral responsibilities must begin with the Lord who revealed himself as “the God who has been my shepherd all my life long” (Gen. 48:15; see also Ps. 23:1). When many contemporary evangelicals consider what it means to be a shepherd, their minds conjure pictures of an effeminate Jesus gazing longingly at a sheep as he strokes its wool. In the Ancient Near East, however, shepherds were rugged warriors who bore scars from protecting their sheep. To identify God as a shepherd suggests that he is the authoritative head of his people, the one who directs, disciplines, and defends his own. The psalmist Asaph celebrated God’s redemption of his people from Egypt by singing, “You led your people like a flock” (Ps. 77:20). This same event was described by the Israelites as a time when God went to war on their behalf (Exod. 15:3).

David made the case to Saul that he could defeat Goliath by appealing to his experiences as a shepherd:

Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them. (1 Sam. 15:34-36a)

In the context of the Old Testament, the compassionate care offered by a good shepherd was costly and sacrificial. The mark of an unfaithful shepherd was that he served himself and did not sacrifice himself for his sheep (Jer. 23; Ezek. 34). Jesus fulfilled the ancient promises of a Shepherd-King (Matt. 2:6) and identified himself as “the good shepherd” who “lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).⁷ In the end, it is Jesus who will defeat the enemies of God’s people, wiping away his flock’s every tear, precisely because he is “their shepherd” (Rev. 7:17).

When the triumphant Shepherd-King ascended to

the Father, he extended his care to his people as “the chief Shepherd” by providing the gift of “under-shepherds”—elders or overseers who would direct, discipline, and defend local communities of believers (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1-7). The apostle Peter commended these church leaders to “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet. 5:1-2).

Peter warned elders about those who abandon the sheep rather than leading and protecting the sheep, just as Jesus before him had warned about those who were “a hired hand and not a shepherd” while establishing the fact that he was “the good shepherd” (John 10:12-14). Peter wrote that elders were to honor the good shepherd by “exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:2b-3).

Likewise, the apostle Paul referred to the church at Ephesus as “the flock” and described how he counted his ministry among them as more dear than his own life (Acts 20:17-38).⁸ His intent was that the Ephesian elders—and, by extension, that all pastors—would follow his example.⁹ Pastors bear the weighty responsibility to reflect Jesus, the good shepherd, by leading, guiding, directing, teaching, disciplining, and defending the flock of God gathered in local churches.

But the application of the shepherding imagery does not end with the call for elders to reflect the ministry of the good shepherd in the local church. Scripture also draws parallels between the responsibility of Christian fathers to pastor their families and the responsibility called men to shepherd the local church.¹⁰ Paul had this to say about anyone who might become an elder: “He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” (1 Tim. 3:5).

SHEPHERDING THE “LITTLE FLOCK”

“Leaders must be good shepherds of their little flocks at home before they are qualified to serve as shepherds of God’s flock, the church.”¹¹ Every man in a local church should be able to look to his pastor’s ministry as a model of faithful shepherding to be imitated on a smaller scale in his own home. If the congregation’s

pastor is shepherding the church but not his family, his influence is muted and his model is one of tragic hypocrisy.

A family is not a church; every Christian believer, as an individual, functions under the authority of the congregation. Yet the principles of directing and caring for the church and the household are the same.¹² Paul called local churches “the household of God” (1 Tim. 3:15) and uses family imagery to exhort these congregations (1 Tim. 5:1-2; 1 Cor 4:15-16; 1 Thess 2:11). The interplay in the Scripture between the household of God and familial households, as well as the interplay between pastors and fathers, should arrest the reader’s attention.

“The church is the family of God,” Randy Stinson asserts, “and family relationships represent a divinely-ordained paradigm for God’s church—which is why it is so important for our relationships in the family and in the church to reflect God’s ideal.”¹³ It is common today for families to have the mentality that the church exists to serve the family. In reality, such a view needs to be turned on its head. Our households exist to portray to the world the church, the household of God. The congregation, then, is to be conformed to the Word of God and be determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified—and to call families to do the same. The Scripture makes an unequivocal and vital link between an elder’s calling to pastor a local church and a man’s responsibility to pastor his family. Pastors reflect Jesus in the church by directing, disciplining, and defending the flock of God, and fathers must do likewise with the little flock God has entrusted to them.

If you are a pastoral leader, honestly ask yourself, “Am I doing what I am asking my congregation to do? Do I disciple my children? Am I consistently guiding my wife toward Christian maturity?” If you are a church member, consider this question: “Does my congregation provide our pastoral leaders with sufficient family time to disciple their families?”

THE WELL-EQUIPPED FATHER AND THE FAMILY-EQUIPPING CHURCH

A family-equipping church desires every father in the congregation to acknowledge and to embrace his role as the shepherd of his family. To live out this role every father must begin to see himself as a rugged, shepherd-warrior who leads his family like a flock—enduring whatever sacrificial hardships are necessary for his family’s provision, protection, and care. A father’s oversight is costly—but this is to be expected, because he is a shepherd.

A father is the head of his home, the spiritual leader, who has the responsibility to feed his family the Word of God on a daily basis. He also must know that, even though he is the shepherd of his little flock, “the chief Shepherd” has graciously placed him under the authority of the church and its shepherds, “the flock of God” (1 Pet 5:2, 4). Therefore, each father leads his family to the church as a vital partner as he guides his family. He should be able to say, with the apostle Paul, that he ministers night and day with tears, declaring the whole counsel of God and refusing to count his life more dear than his ministry to his family (Acts 20:17-38). The church that implements coordinative-comprehensive family ministry must have fathers who understand these shepherding responsibilities not as preferential matters but as essential spiritual warfare.

Far too often, Christian fathers define success according to self-generated standards, forsaking their role as the shepherds of their home in an ambitious pursuit of power or achievement, material possessions or personal acclaim. Other fathers, typically young adults in what has been appropriately dubbed “Generation Me,”¹⁴ simply forsake their role as the family shepherd in the quest for self-pleasure and trivial pursuits. While it is common for evangelical pastors to bemoan the passivity of men in their congregation—passivity exhibited through a lack of paternal leadership in the home—too often the passivity they critique is nurtured by the very leadership model they present to families in the congregation! When the pastor of a church possesses an aggressive mentality in leading his congregation—one in which he will do whatever it takes to cultivate measurable success at the church—but then takes a second-

ary role in shepherding his own family—as though he is his wife’s helper—his poor example effectively drowns out his homiletic rhetoric. Likewise, when a pastor organizes his life around golf outings and college sporting events in the name of “ministry”—all while his wife raises the children—then the men in the church hear that daily “sermon” delivered with far greater clarity than the one delivered from the pulpit on Sunday.

For a church to move toward a family-equipping model of ministry, the pastor of the church must daily equip his own family. Every elder has the responsibility to lead by example. Sadly, this means that many churches will not move toward a family-equipping model of ministry simply because they cannot do so with integrity. The pastor of such a church is unable to say with authenticity, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1) when he calls men in the congregation to become genuine family shepherds.

I do not mean, of course, that a pastor must have a perfect home—or that he must pretend to have such a home—in order to lead the church toward family-equipping ministry. He *must*, however, be an intentional shepherd who “manage[s] his own household well” (1 Tim. 3:4). In fact, the way a God-called elder manages the challenges of home life will be invaluablely instructive for the other fathers in the congregation. In the pastor, the men of the congregation must see a father who makes no excuses as he intentionally feeds, leads, serves, and sacrifices himself for his household, declaring with Paul that “I die every day!” in self-sacrificial service for his home, as well as the church (1 Cor. 15:31).

“The Bible says the ‘husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church’ (Eph. 5:23). Paul most emphatically does *not* say that husbands *ought* to be heads of their wives. He says that they *are*.”¹⁵

Douglas Wilson

THE CENTRALITY OF JESUS IN A FAMILY-EQUIPPING CHURCH

What must not be overlooked in all of this, however, is that the most important reality in the life of the family is not the family but Jesus Christ. The entire cosmos was created by Christ and for Christ (Col. 1:16-18). All Scripture testifies of him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39); he is the final Word (Heb. 1:2); all the promises of God find their “yes” and “amen” in him (2 Cor. 1:20). It is God’s eternal plan to sum up all things in him (Eph. 1:10).

The shepherd of the church who is also the shepherd of a family has the responsibility to “sum up” both family and church in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His family must be one in which this Gospel is central to every facet of life. Any family movement in the church that fails to focus on the Gospel will produce family-Pharisees who settle for behavioral change, isolation from the world, and idolatrous focus on their own families. Family problems are, however, deeper than behavior; they are issues of the heart for which the only answer is the Gospel.¹⁶ A home full of well-behaved, well-mannered children whose obedience is not understood through the lens of the Gospel is not holy but hellish.

The pastor’s family should function as a daily model of the centrality of the Gospel. An elder who is more concerned with the fact that his children’s behavior might sometimes embarrass him in public than he is concerned for the condition of their hearts is merely using his family as a prop in his personal public relations campaign. Such prideful obsession proclaims to the congregation what many already believe—that mere external changes are an acceptable goal for their families and their Christian lives. Likewise, the pastor who allows the whims of his children to determine his direction of his family perpetuates the prideful exaltation of self that is already too rampant in the pews.

The root problem with both scenarios is not that they lead to disastrous practical consequences; the problem is that they work against the Gospel. The Gospel deals with the internal transformation of the heart and demands self-sacrificial humility before the Lord Jesus Christ. If a pastor desires to lead a church in family-equipping ministry, he must not trade a segmented-

programmatic approach to church ministry—one in which the desires of each individual stand at the center—for an approach in which the family become the center. The cross of Jesus must stand at the center both of church ministry and of family life; anything more or less is idolatry.

“I fear that the cross, without ever being disowned, is constantly in danger of being dismissed from the central place it must enjoy, by relatively peripheral insights that take on far too much weight. Whenever the periphery is in danger of displacing the center, we are not far removed from idolatry.”¹⁷

D.A. Carson

CO-CHAMPIONSHIP IN THE FAMILY-EQUIPPING CHURCH

One’s commitment in all things to the centrality of Jesus Christ, the head of the church, should naturally lead to a love of the church, which is his body (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:22, 5:23; Col. 1:18, 24). In fact, Christ so closely identifies himself with the church that Paul writes that the church is Jesus’ “body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph 1:23).

A family-equipping church seeks to champion both family and church. Marriage pictures the relationship between Christ and the church, and the family unit pictures the family of God—the church, the household of faith (Eph. 2:19, 5:22-33; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17). The following observations from Steve Wright and Chris Graves, although aimed primarily at student ministry, are applicable to all church ministries:

God created the family. God created the church. And in His wisdom, He created the two to function together. The biblical ideal is one of the family supporting the church and the church supporting the family, but it’s not happening today. It has reached such extremes that some parents want to stop all student ministries, and some student pastors want to stop trying to partner with

parents. What God has joined together man has separated over time.¹⁸

CHILDREN AS BLESSINGS IN THE FAMILY-EQUIPPING CHURCH

Soon after I accepted the call to become the pastor of one particular local church, my wife began hearing comments that disturbed her greatly. Church members mentioned how the previous pastor's wife repeatedly mentioned that she hoped none of her children would ever follow in her husband's footsteps by going into vocational ministry and that her pastor husband felt the same way. My wife was horrified that a pastor's wife would broadcast such negative attitudes toward the church.

Negative attitudes toward the church create a separation between the church and the family that makes family-equipping ministry impossible. Negative attitudes toward the family have the same effect. When a church member mentions the possibility of having more children and the pastor rolls his eyes and says, "Not for my wife and I! We've had enough. We are just glad this church has a nursery," the consequences are tragic. Anti-child, anti-family jargon sounds more like the words of Pharaoh about the Hebrew children than the Word of Christ (Gen. 1:28; Exod. 1:8-22; Ps. 127, 128; Matt. 19:14). God refers to children as a blessing and to the church of Jesus Christ as the community of the blessed. It is dangerous, even jokingly, to call a curse what God has declared a blessing.

The shepherd who delights in weekly standing before a congregation of Christ's sheep, lovingly preaching the glorious Gospel of Jesus in corporate worship, is to be the same shepherd who possesses the same delight before his little flock at home in family worship. In fact, there is a primacy to his responsibility to pastor his family with the Word of God. If he does not shepherd his family, he is not fit to shepherd the household of God (1 Tim. 3:5; Titus 1:6).

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PASTOR IN CALLING PARENTS TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITY

The pastor who desires to lead a family-equipping

church must sound a clear note in his own home that he understands it is not the church but parents—and fathers in particular—who are given the primary responsibility for calling the emerging generation to hope in God (Ps. 78:1-8). The church serves a supplementary role, reinforcing the biblical nurture that is occurring in the home. It is not the job of professionals at the church to train believers' children in the fear of God. The family-equipping pastor who is also a family shepherd will not allow Sunday schools, children's ministries, or youth ministries to become substitutes for the household discipleship of his children. This commitment provides a solid platform to call Christian fathers who have abdicated their God-given responsibility to repent and to embrace their role as family shepherds.

WHAT IF PARENTS FEEL INADEQUATE?

When God established Israel as his covenant people, he also established responsibility for parents to nurture their children in the faith. This is a clear charge given by the Lord God to fathers and mothers in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. This text is known in Jewish tradition as the *Shema*, after the first Hebrew word in verse 4, an urgent command that is typically translated "hear" but that might also be rendered as "listen," or "obey."

It is interesting to note that it is Moses who is God's instrument to convey this command to his people. When God first called him to speak his words to the children of Israel, Moses responded, "I am slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Exod. 4:10). God quickly reminded Moses that the one who gave him the command was also the one who created his mouth (Exod. 4:11). Many parents need to be reminded that it is God who commands them to teach their children divine truth. All of the excuses—"I'm not smart enough," "I don't speak well," or "the pastor is more qualified"—fade in light of the one who gives the command. This truth should call parents to ask themselves, "Who created me? Who is calling me to disciple my children? Who gave me these children in the first place?"

Deuteronomy 6:7 makes it clear that the commands of the Lord, which are to be on the hearts of the parent, should be passed on to the children to be on their

hearts as well. “You shall teach them diligently to your children” (Deut 6:7). The Hebrew word translated “teach them diligently” is a word that implies “piercing,” “carving,” or “whetting.” The word-picture is graphic. Parents are to engrave God’s truth into their children’s hearts like an engraver chiseling words into a solid slab of stone.¹⁹ This work of parents’ piercing their children’s hearts with God’s Word should take place when the family is sitting, walking, touching, seeing, coming, and going (Deut 6:7-9)—in other words, all the time.

One essential starting point in the carving of God’s Word into children’s lives is a set family worship time that centers on the Word of God and prayer. Just as the larger flock of God needs consistent corporate worship to live God’s Word in their daily lives, so too the little flock at home needs consistent family worship as a catalyst to cultivate constant conversations about God. If family worship is established as a priority in the home, then perhaps all of family life can be transformed into a pursuit of God.

WHAT IF PARENTS FEEL TOO BUSY?

The pastor of a family-equipping must teach parents the dangerous consequences for their children if family worship and daily conversations about God are not established as a priority. What if you think that you are too busy for such things? Then perhaps you should ask yourself: do you eat? do you provide meals for your family? If so, you have just admitted that physical food is more important to you than spiritual food. Do you watch television? If so, then you have declared entertainment a higher priority than worship. Do you partake in extra-curricular activities? If so, you are saying that recreation is more important than your children’s spiritual well being. Do you sleep? If so, you are telling your children that comfort has a higher priority than godliness. These are dangerous messages to communicate to children.

CALLING ALL MEN

The call for churches to embrace a family-equipping ministry vision begins with a call for men to embrace biblical manhood. In the very beginning, the man received a divine mandate of dominion, to rule the earth

under God’s authority as his vice-regent, his warrior-shepherd (Gen. 1:28). The woman was a partner in the dominion mandate (Gen. 2:18), but the man was given a unique responsibility to lead in taking dominion. The man’s responsibility was to subdue the created order and to lead, to protect, and to provide for those within his care—all to the glory of God (see also 2 Cor. 11:8-9).

The Fall into sin represented Adam’s familial failure as a leader, protector, and provider. He did not provide his wife with the Word of God in her time of need, he led her into rebellion by his passivity, and he left her unprotected from the serpent. And thus, God held him accountable (Gen. 3:9; see also Rom. 5:12-14). Thereafter, the promise of a male seed from the woman who would someday crush the serpent’s head only intensified Satan’s assault, even as it also ensured his defeat (Gen. 3:15).

That is why pastors must minister to men not simply as one more special-interest group but as heads of households and future heads of households:

Pastors must ... find a way to encourage and equip men, as the heads of their respective households, to function in a pastoral way in their homes. The duties of a Christian father are clear in Scripture, and they are *pastoral* in nature. This does not mean setting up a pulpit in the living room or administering the sacraments around the dinner table. But a father *is* to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A husband *is* to nourish and cherish his wife, loving her as Christ loved the Church. These duties cannot be performed by anyone else in the church, and their performance (or lack of performance) directly relates to the health of the church. Sound households are the key to a sound church.²⁰

The most fundamental way that a pastor can lead his church toward family-equipping ministry is to ensure that his family is a model of what he desires in the families of the church. This does not mean that the pastor holds his family up as a model of perfection, but his family must represent as a model of submission to God’s design. Attempting to embrace God’s design will lead to frequent repentance for everyone who follows this

part. This is not the path of least resistance—far from it! The evil one despises well-ordered, Gospel-saturated families. Shepherds must sacrifice and suffer for the sake of their flocks, but the flock is worth any amount of suffering and sacrifice (John 10:14-15).

Jesus once said to his disciples, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). What was Caesar’s was indicated by means of an image stamped on the coin; God’s image is stamped on our children. As the shepherd of my family, I must constantly render my children to God. Anything less turns family-equipping ministry into one more borrowed strategy or program and will yield only short-term interest in the church—or no interest at all. If no attempt is made to partner with parents and to equip them to disciple their children, the very ministry structures that appear successful outwardly will sabotage authentic effectiveness. When the church partners with parents and equips them to disciple their children, generations yet to come will learn to hope in God.

ENDNOTES

¹ The conversation was predominately taking place in youth ministry circles. The youth ministries were the most radically segmented from the church as a whole and often functioned as a completely separate entity with its own worship, leader, name, and ministry focus. For a seminal early volume in this movement, see Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994).

² From a pragmatic perspective, it might be difficult to call a segmented-programmatic approach a failed ministry philosophy because of the numerical success that has so often accompanied the approach. The failure instead is seen when the fruit of the approach is examined. Two of the more odious fruits of the segmented-programmatic approach are (1) parents who are subtly taught that they are not the primary people responsible for the discipleship of their children, as well as (2) the cultivation of a narcissistic preoccupation with age and cultural preferences. When catering to individual preferences becomes a methodological presupposition, the casualty is a call to self-sacrificial spiritual maturity; however, it must also be noted that

some family ministry advocates have had an unhealthy response to these problems and have cultivated an equally self-oriented attitude in the opposite direction by failing to acknowledge the unique authority of the local church. This attitude of anti-ecclesiastical authority can produce an almost idolatrous attitude regarding familial authority.

³ The Greek words *poimenas* (pastor), *presbyteros* (elder), and *episkopos* (overseer) are used interchangeably to refer to the same office in the church (Acts 20:17, 28; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). While the Bible indicates that it is normative for a local church to have a plurality of pastors (Acts 16:24, 20:17, 21:18; Titus 1:5; James 5:14), the primary focus of this chapter is the pastor who is called to the congregation’s preaching ministry.

⁴ David E. Prince, *Family Worship*, Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood [on-line], accessed 12 March 2010, <<http://www.cbmw.org>>.

⁵ For an extensive treatment of the biblical use of the shepherd language and imagery see, Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006).

⁶ Tremper Longman III, Leland Ryken, and James C. Wilhoit, “Sheep, Shepherd,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 782.

⁷ Leon Morris is correct to note the uniqueness of Jesus’ role as shepherd in that his death for the sheep did not mean disaster for them, but rather life through his resurrection. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, New International Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 454.

⁸ Ben Witherington notes that the reference to “the flock” makes it clear that “The Ephesian elders are not being called to shepherd the church universal, but to oversee all of the flock of which the Spirit has made them leaders.” He also points out that Ezekiel 34 seems to lie in the background of the warnings of those who would harm the flock of God from within. See Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 624.

⁹ David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI:

Eerdmans, 2009), 568.

¹⁰ For an excellent lecture on the parallels between pastoring the local church and pastoring a family, see D.A. Carson, *The Pastor as Father to His Family and Flock* (Desiring God Conference for Pastors, 2008) [on-line], accessed 15 March 2010, <<http://www.desiringgod.org>>.

¹¹ Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader*, 164.

¹² Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart*, 233. Laniak writes, "Authority is a feature of the shepherd's role, but one comprehensively qualified by the reminder that elders are caring for the flock . . ." Likewise, the elder must exercise the same sort of caring authority in the home as he leads his little flock for God.

¹³ Randy Stinson, "Family Ministry and the Future of the Church," in *Perspectives on Family Ministry*, ed. Timothy Paul Jones (Nashville: B&H, 2009), 3.

¹⁴ Jean M. Twinge, *Generation Me: Why Today's Young*

Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable than Ever Before (New York, NY: Free Press, 2007).

¹⁵ Douglas Wilson, *Reforming Marriage* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1995), 23-24.

¹⁶ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherds Press, 1995).

¹⁷ D.A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 26.

¹⁸ Steve Wright with Chris Graves, *ReThink: Is Student Ministry Working?* (Raleigh, NC: InQuest, 2007), 105-06.

¹⁹ Eugene Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 167.

²⁰ Douglas Wilson, *Mother Kirk: Essays and Forays in Practical Ecclesiology* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2001), 237.