

## Shepherd

*“Shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God.”*

### 1 Peter 5:2

**Shepherd**—Here is a thought that is directly related to Jesus’ command to Peter. When Peter uses this word in his letter, he must have had a chilling memory of Jesus’ conversation on the seashore about being a shepherd. **(John 21)** Both Jesus and Peter make word plays with this Greek word since the same root word is found in “shepherd” and “flock.” The Shepherd shepherds the sheep.

“What does it mean to “shepherd?” This is not a verb we use often, but in the First Century land of Palestine, it was quite a common activity. I am sure that both Peter and Jesus often saw men traveling with flocks across the hills. So when they told followers to act as shepherds, everyone knew exactly what that meant.

First, a shepherd was the one ultimately responsible for every sheep. They were in his charge and care. He was accountable. If something happened to one of the sheep, he had no excuses. They belong to him.

Secondly, a shepherd lived a life of commitment to his task. It wasn’t a part-time job. Shepherds lived with the sheep 24-7. It was a full time deal. Wherever they were, that’s where he was.

Thirdly, shepherds not only protected the sheep, they find pastures for the sheep. It was “room and board” for everyone in the flock. Anyone who has ever been around sheep know that sheep are basically leaderless animals. Without the direction of a shepherd, they just wander all over and get lost. They require direction in order to survive. They need to be taken to a safe place to eat.

Do we take seriously our calling to “shepherd” our own flock? We all have sheep to care for. Family, friends, children, colleagues, church members, students, those under our management we have lots of responsibilities given to us by God Himself. If we are going to fulfill God’s command to care for our flock, we will need to be leaders, caretakers, protectors and providers. We are accountable for a full time commitment before God. Fortunately, we also have a Shepherd. Our job is to just do what He does.

We can make a word play of our own lives. We can be Shepherd and sheep at the same time. We play “Follow the leader”, just like the sheep in our care. Don’t get lost. Keep your eyes on the Shepherd and you will know just how to follow. Then your sheep will know how to follow you.