International Fellowship of Christians
For Christ and His Kingdom · Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Home Fellowship Outline
WEEK 35 · 2026

2026 THEME
Transformed to Bear Much Fruit

THIS WEEK'S STUDY

The Sacred Mandate

Serving and Shepherding the Flock of God

1 Peter 5:1–4 · Mark 10:42

I Introduction

The call to shepherd God's people is not a career choice, a title bestowed by a committee, or an administrative appointment. It is a divine trust, issued from heaven itself, and only ever recognised, never created, by the church that receives it.

That trust immediately confronts the world's picture of leadership. Where the world measures greatness by authority exercised over others, Jesus overturns the order entirely: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43–45).

> THE TOWEL, NOT THE SEAT
>
> *True leadership is proven not by the seat one occupies but by the towel one is willing to pick up: a readiness to do the smallest, most unnoticed acts of service without waiting to be asked or thanked.*

II Peter's Charge to Shepherds

Peter's charge is precise (1 Peter 5:2–3):

Willingly

Watch over the flock willingly, rather than because you must.

Eagerly

Serve eagerly, rather than for personal gain.

By Example

Lead by example, rather than by lording authority over others.

Woven through that charge is a sober warning about the temptations of power, money, and moral compromise, the very things that have brought many a shepherd down, and a call to flee rather than negotiate with them.

III What Faithful Shepherding Looks Like

Drawing from Psalm 23, faithful shepherding means **feeding** the flock with the true Word of God, **guiding** them with integrity of heart and skill of hand, and **protecting** them from wolves such as division, false teaching, and despair.

Above all, shepherds are never owners, only stewards, of a flock that belongs to God. He will one day call every under-shepherd to give an account, and He promises an unfading crown of glory to those who serve faithfully rather than for the applause of others (1 Peter 5:4).

IV Discussion Questions

1. Where has God quietly entrusted you with the care of others, whether at home, at work, or in ministry? How might seeing that as a "sacred mandate", not just a duty, change how you carry it?
2. Jesus says greatness is found in serving, not being served (Mark 10:43–45). When did you last choose between asserting yourself and quietly serving instead, and what did that choice reveal about your heart?
3. Peter warns against serving grudgingly, greedily, or proudly (1 Peter 5:2–3). Which of these three pulls at you most right now, and what is one practical safeguard you could set this week?
4. Who has "fed, guided, or protected" you spiritually, and what made it feel like shepherding rather than managing? Who might God be asking you to shepherd that same way now?

MEMORY VERSE

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; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

1 PETER 5:2–3 (NIV)

✷ ACTION POINT

Look for one relationship or responsibility where you can quietly serve without seeking credit, and encourage, pray for, and thank someone who shepherds you. Examine your heart for the pull of power, money, or pride; feed daily on Psalm 23 and 1 Peter 5:1–4; and take one concrete step to guide whoever God has placed in your care.

Conclusion

Every believer is entrusted with some flock, however small: a family, a team, a friendship, a small group. We are called to lead like servants and shepherd like stewards, feeding, guiding, and protecting those in our care while resisting the pull of power, money, and pride. We tend what belongs to the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep and will one day reward faithful service with a crown that never fades (John 10:11; 1 Peter 5:4). Serve, then, for His "well done", not for applause, and shepherd well whoever He has placed in your care.