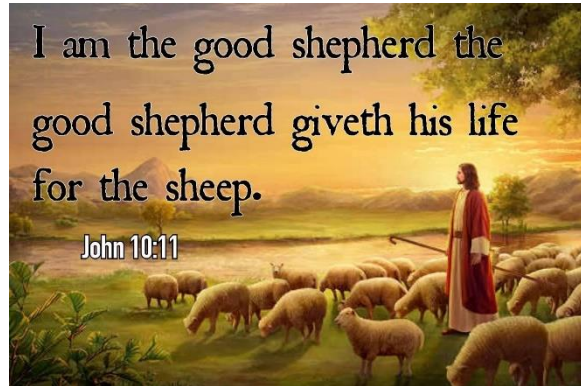


# GOOD SHEPHERDS

If a pastor or elder asked, “Ken, what do you really expect of us?”, I’d say, “Jesus expects you to shepherd the flock.” That’s simpler when you don’t prioritize managing an institution.

In addition to giving regular care, a good shepherd will be alert for wolves and will have a plan to protect the sheep even at risk to himself. In our case it might mean risking the approval of some members - - and his salary.

If they wanted me to explain myself, I’d go to John 10:1-18 and especially vv11-13 where Jesus describes the good shepherd. And to Acts 20:28-31. And to Lk. 14:33, “In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.” niv



Covid-19 could have inspired the Church to be its best, but we have instead allowed wolves to enter through unguarded gates. Sheep have been scattered, some killed, and wolves even more savage are approaching.

## THE DIFFERENCE

Here’s some criteria to help discern between good shepherds and hirelings in our Day:

- 1) Are your leaders alert to and informing you of changes in American politics and society and how they will affect you?
- 2) Are they equipping the flock with scriptures that can comfort and encourage you, and help you accept hardship and endure persecution?
- 3) Are they ready to reformat the church as needed to enable life as the Body of Christ without your present programs, buildings, and management systems?
- 4) Are they accelerating strong interpersonal relationships within the flock?
- 5) Are they exhorting you to rethink what is important in life and modeling that for you?
- 6) Bottom line - - are they urging you toward greater intimacy with and dependence upon Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, to find an identity in Him that empowers you to be faithful regardless of what happens?

If “yes,” they are Biblical pastors and elders and worthy under-shepherds of Jesus’ flock. Please honor, affirm, pray for, and support them.

In whatever measure you answer “no” you must take humble but bold action, hopefully in partnership with others, to prepare spiritually, emotionally and physically to protect yourself and those you love.

Are these reasonable expectations? Those who want to “wait and see” can wait but they won’t see.

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June 5, 2021