



ESGOBAETH LLANELWY

TYFU **FFYDD** • DOD Â **GOBAITH** • DANGOS **CARIAD**

GROW **FAITH** • BRING **HOPE** • DEMONSTRATE **LOVE**

DIOCESE OF ST ASAPH

Skilful Shepherds

And David shepherded them with integrity of heart;
with skilful hands he led them.

(Psalm 78.72 – a Psalm of Asaph)

Skilful Shepherds

You will be aware that 2023 has been declared a Year of Jubilee – a year in which we ‘re-centre’ and take ourselves and those ‘in our charge’ to the living water.

But how?

Priests in the Church of God are called to work with their bishop, their fellow priests and all the people of God as servants and shepherds.

(The Church in Wales, Alternative Ordinal 2004)

By remembering the Biblical metaphor of being shepherds; leading God’s flock for whom we have been given responsibility.

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. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. (1 Peter 5:2-4)

So:

- What are we called to be? - Shepherds of God’s flock
- Who do we shepherd? – The flock under our care
- How? – By being willing, eager, humble
- For how long? – All our life or until Jesus returns (note – there is also accountability to the Chief Shepherd)

The Priestly/pastoral ministry is a call to shepherd the flock. Have we today lost sight of this?

- We are overwhelmed by burdens
- The pressures of our culture
- We want to pursue other aspects of ministry
- We are driven by:
 - Entertainment
 - Pragmatism and Cynicism
 - Business methodology

Our goal should be to know and care for the flock. To:

- Lead the flock
- Feed the flock
- Protect the flock

It will be messy. It will involve labour. It will be lonely. It will not be glamorous,

We will end up smelling like the sheep, but chief shepherd has called to it.

Asaph tells us how to do it – Psalm 78:72

And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skilful hands he led them.



Two things are required:

- **Integrity of heart - Inward – look after yourself spiritually.**
- **Skilful hands – Outward – how we treat others.**

But again how?

1. **Guard the Truth – 2 Timothy 1:13-2:2: What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you— guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.**

What we have has been entrusted to us (do our own reading and thinking) and we are to entrust it to others (by training)

2. **Faithfully administer the sacraments – Hebrews 10:25:** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

This is the nature and purpose of our gatherings on a ‘Sunday morning’ and so should be our priority ensuring care, time and attention.

3. **Preach the Word – 2 Tim 4:1-5:** In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

We are to persevere in preaching and teaching even in the face of opposition and seemingly without results. It tends to take several years to see true spiritual fruit.

4. **Pray for the flock – Acts 6:1-7, James 5:13-16, Hebrews 13:17:** Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

We are to pray for people before we can care for them. And we must be prepared to give an account for them. God will ask us why Mrs X stumbled, went astray or joined another flock.

5. **Set an example - 1 Tim 4:11-16, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Hebrews 13:7:** Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

We are to model godliness whilst embracing our own brokenness, sin and imperfection.

6. **Visit the sick – James 5:13-16, 1 Peter 5:1-4:** Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

We must visit and pray for the sick.



7. **Comfort the grieving – 1 Thess 4 13-18:** Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

We need to connect with the sad and the hurt so we can care and help them find peace and healing.

8. **Care for widows – Acts 6 1-7, James 1:27:** Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

These are often the most neglected groups in the church.

9. **Confront sin – Matt 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:** If your brother or sister[a] sins,[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'[c] If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

We need to be prepared to confront sin in our own life and lives of the members of the church as well as being willing to practice church discipline.

10. **Encourage the weak – 1 Thess 5:14:** And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

This is about prioritising the care of our weaker brothers and sisters. It requires, though, time and energy.

11. **Identify and train new leaders – Acts 13:1-3, 2 Tim 2 1-2:** You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

This is our responsibility alone. No one else can do it.

12. **Do the work of an evangelist – 2 Tim 4:1-5:** But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

We need to realise this is part of shepherding souls, and people's greatest need is to enter into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

13. **Life events – John 11:1-44:** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

Make the good news the centre of our occasional offices.

14. **Exercise oversight – 1 Peter 5:1-4:** To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 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. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Good administration is part of the shepherding process, not separate from it.

15. Steward church finances – 1 Cor 16:1-4: Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

This will protect and advance the church's health, vision and mission.

Important Note

As Anglican shepherds, we operate on two levels and the above roles apply to both levels.

- **Macro level – the Diocese, Mission Area, Individual congregation**
- **Micro level – our work and care for Individuals**

How do we fulfil our calling at both levels?

You may like to have a go at the matrix below to channel your own thoughts.



Skilful Shepherds - Matrix

Task	Micro	Macro	Question for reflection	Notes	Future Training needs	How will you meet this need?
Guard the truth			How does this bring you joy and suffering?			
Preach the Word			What is your greatest joy in preaching and teaching?			
Administer the sacraments			How does how we treat our gatherings reveal about our view of God?			
Pray for the Flock			What have you seen God do as you pray for the flock			
Set an example			What one area of your life do you provide an example to others			
Visit the sick			What is your greatest fear that stops you visiting the sick in hospital?			
Comfort the grieving			How comfortable are you with experiencing personal sadness and facing your own mortality			
Care for widows			What is the one unique joy you have experienced in caring for a widow.			
Confront sin			How willing are you to face confrontation as you confront sin?			
Encourage the weak			What is the most difficult part in caring for weaker sheep?			
Identify and train leaders			What is the biggest obstacle that keeps you from			



			training and raising leaders?			
Do the work of an Evangelist			What is your greatest fear in doing the work of an evangelist?			
Life events			Where are you most tempted to 'water' down the gospel and why?			
Exercise oversight			What keeps your church or Mission Area from running smoothly?			
Steward church finances			What is the largest hurdle to using your church's money to help vision and pursue health?			

