



## Helping Shepherds Support Mission

by Brandon Kelly  
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Throughout this year we've been walking through a significant aspect of ministry and leadership in the Church. Often referred to as the Five-Fold Ministry, or APEST, it's the description of roles given by God to equip and build up the Church for its mission which is found in Ephesians 4. This month and next, we'll look specifically at shepherds.



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You can read the initial article about shepherds, *Shepherds: Caring for Community*, in the Advocate here <http://bit.ly/ShepherdsAdvocate>

In the latest issue of the Advocate, we took time to explore the latest vocation of the Five-Fold Ministry—the shepherd. The shepherd is someone who builds community. They are caregivers, nurturers, and healers who help those who are broken, hurt, and worn out to mend for the sake of being on mission and/or seeking Jesus. Shepherds want to create a place of safety and belonging where people feel like community and family. This sense of family and community acts as a “home base” from which Christians are sent on mission and return to be built up and sent back out.

As with all of the Five-Fold Ministries, a shepherd will land somewhere on the spectrum between immature and mature. As shepherds are just discovering their gifting, they most likely will lean towards the immature side. This means we have to disciple them, walk with them, and pair them with mature shepherds to help them grow. Below are three key signs of an immature shepherd. Use these as a tool to help the shepherds grow, but be cautious not to use these as a weapon the tear them down.

3 Keys Signs of Immaturity in Shepherds:

1. **Only Wanting Safety and Comfort.** Perhaps the greatest issue of immaturity for shepherds is just wanting a community of safety and comfort. Shepherds can have a tendency towards avoiding risk because risk can cause hurt and pain. And, of course, hurt and pain is what shepherds naturally fight against as healers. To move towards maturity, shepherds need to see

the necessity of risk as God calls His people into mission. They play a unique role in being healers for those who have taken daring action for the sake of God. Their mandate is not one, necessarily, of protection, but instead healing and rereleasing into mission. A change of mindset here can be a powerful tool.

2. **Caring for Too Many.** Another issue for shepherds is the desire to care for *all* people. This is an admirable desire and indeed flows from their giftedness. However, no single person can care for a whole community. It takes a team to nurture properly and to heal a group of people and shepherd will run themselves ragged trying to do it all. In the process, they'll not adequately care for anyone and burn themselves out. To be effective, shepherds should identify the few people they can care for really well, help them to the point of restoration, and then take on another person.
3. **Lacking Personal Mission.** Similar to the first aspect of only want safety and comfort for their community, shepherds can also lack a personal mission. All Christians are called to be on mission, extending the Kingdom and making new disciples, for the Lord. In their effort to care for and build community, shepherds can forget about their own personal call to be on mission. They may also have a lack of vision in how their natural ability to care can be used for mission. One of the ways I've seen shepherds operate well on mission is to bring their desire to care and nurture to the people of peace in their communities. When someone new moves into the neighborhood, how can a shepherd show them that they're welcome and create a place of belonging? When someone down the road is hurting, how can a shepherd display the love of Jesus through care and healing? When shepherds see their gifting as a useful tool for mission, it will help take on their own personal mission.

How can you help walk with the shepherds in your life to see them grow into maturity? If you are a shepherd, what's the particular area of challenge for you and how might you step forward to overcome it?

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## Check out the new "Contagious..." CGGC Online Community



**Contagious...**

*Collaborating for Kingdom Impact*

Check out "Contagious...", an online "commons" where CGGC folks will have the opportunity to interact about issues common to us all. All comments and postings are moderated. Throughout the rest of this year, we want to address our need for corporate confession and repentance, focusing on "I" and "we"

rather than “you” and “they.” As you read, please partner with the Holy Spirit in examining your heart.

If you would like your thoughts and comments to be considered for postings, or even would like something the Lord has laid on your heart to be considered as a posting, email Michael Martin ([comptech@cggc.org](mailto:comptech@cggc.org)) and request contributor status.

Don't forget, our ultimate purpose is to build the kingdom of God by aligning ourselves more closely with God, hearing his voice, and knowing his will. An essential component of this is rightly judging ourselves.

But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. (1 Corinthians 11:31)

May the body of Christ call within the body for a move of the Spirit in us.

<https://blog.cggc.org/>

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