

Study Guide: Shepherding the Flock

Based on 1 Peter 5:1-10

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you went through a difficult season but someone walked alongside you through it. How did their support impact you?

Sermon Summary (5 minutes)

Pastor Chip taught from 1 Peter 5:1-10, addressing both church leaders and the entire body of believers. The sermon emphasized that suffering is part of the Christian journey, but God promises to restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us through it all. The message called leaders to shepherd willingly and humbly, while encouraging all believers to cast their anxieties on God because He cares for them.

Key Takeaways

1. **Suffering produces endurance and draws us closer to God**
 2. **Leaders are called to serve willingly, not lord over people**
 3. **Humility and mutual submission are essential in the church community**
 4. **We must cast all our anxieties on God because He cares for us**
 5. **Our hope is in eternity, not in temporary earthly things**
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Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding Suffering (15 minutes)

1. Pastor Chip mentioned that "suffering is part of the Christian faith." How does this challenge the modern idea that following God should make life easier?
 2. Read 1 Peter 5:10 together. What are the four things God promises to do after we've suffered for a little while? How have you experienced any of these in your own life?
 3. Why do you think people often drift away from God when blessed but draw closer during suffering?
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Section 2: Leadership and Service (15 minutes)

4. The sermon emphasized that leaders should shepherd "willingly and eagerly," not for gain or to lord over people. What does healthy spiritual leadership look like in practical terms?
5. How can we as a church body better honor and support our leaders without creating an unhealthy hierarchy?
6. Pastor Chip said, "You want to be the greatest? You got to be the least." How does this kingdom principle challenge worldly values?

Section 3: Casting Anxiety on God (15 minutes)

7. What does it mean to "cast" your anxieties on God rather than just "lay" them down? Why is this distinction important?
8. Share (if comfortable): What anxieties are you currently carrying that you need to throw off the cliff and release to God?
9. The sermon mentioned that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." How does pride keep us from casting our anxieties on God?

Section 4: Living with Eternal Perspective (10 minutes)

10. Pastor Chip reminded us that "this world is like a puff of smoke." How can we maintain an eternal perspective while still being responsible in our daily lives?
11. What are some "temporary" things you've been holding onto too tightly that need to be released?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: The Casting Exercise

- Write down your top 3 anxieties on paper
- Find a private place and physically crumple the paper
- Throw it away while praying: "God, I cast this anxiety on you because you care for me"
- Each time the anxiety returns, remind yourself you've already given it to God

Option 2: Honor Your Leaders

- Write an encouraging note or text to a church leader
- Pray specifically for your pastors and elders this week
- Ask a leader how you can support them (without creating extra work for them)

Option 3: Practice Humility- Identify one area where pride is preventing you from submitting to God or others

- Confess this to a trusted friend or mentor
- Take one concrete step toward humility in that area

Option 4: Eternal Perspective Reset

- Spend 15 minutes daily this week reading about heaven (Revelation 21-22)
- Journal about how eternal realities should change your current priorities
- Identify one temporary thing you're over-investing in and redirect that energy

Memory Verse

1 Peter 5:6-7 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you."

Prayer Focus (10 minutes)

Break into pairs or groups of 3-4 and pray for:

1. **Those suffering** - For God's restoration, confirmation, strengthening, and establishment
2. **Church leaders** - For wisdom, humility, and strength to shepherd willingly
3. **Mental health struggles** - For release from anxiety and peace that flows like a river
4. **Eternal perspective** - That we would live with heaven in view

Before Next Week

- Read 1 Peter 5:1-10 daily and journal one new insight each day
- Practice your chosen application challenge
- Be prepared to share how God met you in your anxieties this week

Closing Prayer

Father, thank you that you care for us deeply. Help us to truly cast our anxieties on you rather than carrying burdens you never intended us to bear. Give our leaders wisdom and strength to shepherd your flock willingly. Help us to live with humility, supporting one another in love. Fix our eyes on eternity, knowing that after we've suffered a little while, you will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

