



## **Shepherding the Flock**

### **1 Peter 5:1-4**

### **Study Guide**

1. Peter now addresses the leaders of the house churches scattered throughout the provinces of Asia Minor (1:1-2). Take note of the logical connection in the word “therefore.” What is the connection to what has just been said (4:17, 19)? Peter exhorts his readers. The Roman Catholic Church believes that Peter was the first Pope. How do Peter’s words about himself contradict such a teaching?
2. The word “elder” is of special importance in relationship to the governance of a local church. Who were these elders (Acts 20:17; 1 Tim. 3)? What was their responsibility in the local church? Peter calls attention to the fact that he was a “witness of the sufferings of Christ.” How does this serve as an excellent introduction to what follows (vv. 2-11)? The sufferings and glories of Christ have already been mentioned in this epistle (1:11; 2:21-25; 3:18-22). How is encouragement for suffering saints bound up in this reference to Christ (4:13)?
3. In verse 2 comes another imperative (review the imperatives of 4:13-19). Elders are to “shepherd the flock of God.” What is involved in the work of shepherding (Jn. 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:3; Acts 20:28)? The Greek word for “oversight” is *episkopeo*. It is used five other times (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:15). What does this word add to an understanding of the job description for an elder?
4. What kind of service does God want from an elder (“not under compulsion”)? In answering this blend together the issues of desiring to be an elder, the need for church officers, and the demands of the office. Another concern is that an elder must be careful with regard to money (v. 2). Does Peter mean that those who are involved in church-related work should be paid for it? Why could this not be true (1 Tim. 5:17-18)? If a church leader is remunerated for serving what are some temptations that have to be dealt with?
5. An elder is to lead the sheep, not beat the sheep (v. 3). What are some of the dangers that go with having authority in a church (or in any place)? What would be some dictatorial methods that could be used by leadership (Ezek. 34:4-5)? What is the difference between being a loving, kind shepherd of the flock and one who is authoritarian? What can be done to keep this from happening?
6. One day the Chief Shepherd is going to come (v. 4). His coming is related to a promise of reward. What is this reward (“the unfading crown of glory”)? Is this a crown the faithful elder will wear on his head in heaven? How is this promise an encouragement to all who serve Christ?