



## Discovering Your Design:

*Preparing Christ's followers to change the world*

# PASTOR - TEACHER/ SHEPHERDING

**DEFINITION: SPIRIT-GIVEN ABILITY TO NURTURE AND CARE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, USING GOD'S WORD TO GUIDE THEM INTO CHRISTIAN MATURITY.**

- It is hard to say for sure what Paul is describing - a spiritual gift, a church office, or both. If this is a gift, distinct from the office, it would be open to men and women and might be better defined by the word shepherding (the literal meaning of the word pastor). (cf. Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:34).
- The word pastor only occurs one time in the New Testament cf. Ephesians 4:11.
- Ephesians 4:11-16 has edification of the body as its goal, this is consistent with the purpose of gifts (cf. I Corinthians 12-14).
- It is the word which Jesus used to describe Himself, "I am the good shepherd" (Jn 10:14).
- most scholars agree that the words pastor-teacher refer to one gift.
- This gift is closely tied to the office of Elder and the gifts of teaching, administration and leadership. The verb form of the word shepherd shows up several times in the New Testament and is used to describe the ministry or function of an elder (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-4).
- Every pastor should have the gift of teaching, but not everyone with the gift of teaching is a pastor!

**Biblical References:** Ephesians 4:11; see also Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:1-4

**Contribution:** this gift builds up the body by preparing God's people to serve using their gifts to build up the body. Shepherds protect and care over their "flock" (John 10:14). Shepherds lead, teach and apply the Word presenting each one mature in Christ.

**Biblical Examples:** Jesus (the great shepherd); Paul (I Thessalonians 2:7-12); Timothy

**Characteristics** - People with this gift :

- use God's Word to guide and "feed" their "flock" - the use of the Word is central to shepherding!
- equip others to do ministry
- protect those they are shepherding
- pray with and for these people concerning their needs
- enjoy working with people over an extended time
- develop long term relationships

**Cautions:**

- keep the focus on Christ
- watch "spans of care" - you can only shepherd so many people at a time - develop a team approach to the ministry
- don't use your position (authority is implied) for your own gain
- since you are an example to the people - don't forget that they are watching your life and conduct
- remember the stricter judgment

**Christian Responsibility:** this gift reminds us that we are "responsible" in certain ways for other Christians. We are to care for each other (I Corinthians 12:25) and we are often put in situations where others look to us for shepherding and teaching (especially parents).