

Signing Off

Read 1 Peter 5.12-14

16. How can the things we have learned as we have gone through 1 Peter help us to “stand firm” in the “true grace of God” (v12)?

17. Are there other particular things that you have learned from these studies either about the letter itself, or what it means to follow Christ, that you have found helpful?

Pray

Pray for church leaders as elders, overseers and shepherds of the flock remembering not only the responsibilities but also the dangers.

Pray for those in leadership in our nation, society and the workplace. Pray that Biblical teaching about values would be valued by others, and ourselves. (If you are feeling festive you could sing Good King Wenceslas which is supposedly based on Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia, who had a reputation as a godly and humble king.)

Pray again for the tracts we are posting through doors in the parish and for the Christmas services.

*David Phillips
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1 Peter

Week 10 : Stand Firm

1 Peter 5



Shepherds

Read 1 Peter 5.1-4

In the Old and New Testament “elders” were leaders of Jewish society, synagogues and churches. The original Greek is presbuteros (presbyter) which in Old English was prest or priest and had nothing to do with the idea of someone who performed sacrifices.

1. What qualities of leadership do you think are most evident in modern political elections and television programmes like the Apprentice?
2. What roles are mentioned which Presbyters (elders) were to fulfil?
3. How does this compare to what Paul said to the elders of the Ephesian church (v17) in Acts 20.28?

The presbyters (priests) of Ephesus were also overseers (bishops). We can see in the letters to Timothy and Titus how the two men had oversight of fellow elders, including appointing elders, which, as the church grew, developed into a distinction between priest and bishop.
4. What dangers does Peter highlight about how the role can be abused?

5. What is the importance for Christian leaders in Peter calling Jesus the chief shepherd?

6. How had Peter himself come to see his own ministry as that of a shepherd? (See John 21.15-17.)

The Latin word for shepherd is pastor, someone who led the sheep to pasture. We still speak of Pastors and pastoral ministry.

7. If you had to draw up a list from this passage of qualities required in church leaders what would be on it?

8. There has been a tendency in recent years for the church to borrow ideas of leadership from the world around us. What might be the benefits or dangers in this.

There has been a wider criticism, particularly in the USA, that in worship, evangelism and ministry the churches have simply used the methods of the business and commerce and alongside this played down things that might put people off like repentance and the cost of discipleship.

Humble Yourselves

Read 1 Peter 5.5-11

9. Was humility among the qualities of leadership you came up with in question 1?

10. There is quite a lot about humility in the New Testament. What different reasons are given in these verses as to why we should humble ourselves?

11. Why is humility particularly important in church life?

12. When had Peter learned humility, but not at Jesus' feet? (*The answer is not in this passage*)

13. We have previously seen the exhortation to be sober-minded in 1.3 and 4.7, what does Peter particularly say we need to be watchful of this third time?

14. Left to ourselves we might well fear the devil but since Christ has won the victory we have the means to resist him. How does Peter say that we should do that? What encouragement can the example of others give us?

15. Several times in this chapter there is mention of what we might call rewards where, as we endure through suffering, God blesses His faithful people, whether in this life or the next. Which promises can you find?

We tend to think of the devil tempting us to sin, and that may be the meaning here, but the context here is more to do with suffering, and it may therefore be about the danger that suffering leads us to doubt and despair and then to being devoured.