

Pleasant Valley  
Church of Christ

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# Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

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January 31, 2010

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## Schedule of Services

### **Sunday**

Classes . . . . . 9:30 am  
Worship . . . . 10:30 am  
Evening . . . . 6:00 pm

### **Wednesday**

Classes . . . . . 7:30 pm

## The pastor

by David King

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11).

This is the only time we find the word "pastor" in the English New Testament. However, the Greek word used here (*poimen*) is found 17 times elsewhere, where it is always translated "shepherd." A pastor, therefore, is simply a shepherd, one who watches over the flock entrusted to his care.

So the role of pastor in the New Testament church has a biblical basis. However, the implementation of this role in modern Christianity is a corruption of the original model. When most people hear the word "pastor" today, they immediately think of the preacher. But that's not how the word was used originally.

To get the confusion sorted out, we need to carefully review what the New Testament says about pastors and preachers.

Although the noun "shepherd" is used only once to describe a leadership role in the church, the verb form of the same word is used twice elsewhere. "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to **shepherd** (*poimaino*) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Ac. 20:28). "**Shepherd** (*poimaino*) the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers" (1 Pet. 5:2).

In both passages, the men being addressed were the **elders** of the church, not the preacher (see Ac. 20:17; 1 Pet. 5:1). Notice also that both passages use another synonym, "overseer". These elders/overseers/

shepherds have the responsibility of caring for the flock. They are the pastors of the church, the primary decision-makers who determine the direction the church should go.

In our opening text, notice that "evangelist" is listed as a separate role from pastor. The evangelist is the preacher, the minister, the one who declares the word of God. Timothy, for example, was to "**preach** the word . . . do the work of an **evangelist**" (2 Tim. 4:2, 5). Paul wrote, "how shall they hear without a **preacher** . . . How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who **bring glad tidings** (*euangelizo*) of good things!" (Rom. 10:14-15). So the preacher is a spokesman for God, one who, to the best of his ability and without partiality, studies and proclaims God's message to humanity.

Pastors and preachers, therefore, are different but complementary roles in the church. The **preacher** is the conscience of the congregation, the independent voice that pricks and prods people to follow God's standard. The **pastors** are the ones who know the flock, and take an active role in helping everyone implement what they are learning about their faith. If both parties are aligned in their loyalty to Christ, they make a strong team that plays a big role in helping people get to heaven.

The modern practice of designating the preacher as the pastor of the church concentrates too much power in one man, and sets up the church for a bitter disappointment when that power is abused. God's way is best, and we would do well to follow it.

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.