

APPOINTED BY THE SPIRIT

Ordination Service June 12, 2026

Acts 20:28 (NLT) So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock, his church, purchased with his own blood over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.

Introduction: It is amazing to see that on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit not only empowered believers and gave birth to the church, but also began establishing the leadership that would shepherd, protect, and care for God's people.

Leadership wasn't an afterthought it was part of God's plan.

One of the clearest examples of this is found in our passage.

On his way to Jerusalem, Paul made one last stop at Ephesus to meet with the elders he had helped raise up during his three years of ministry there.

Knowing that he would no longer return to Ephesus, Paul instructed the elders to make sure that they watched over the flock entrusted to their care.

There are four key responsibilities that stand out from these instructions. While they were given specifically to elders and church leaders, they also apply to anyone who has influence in the lives of others.

I. Watch Your Own Life

"Acts 20:28 (NLT) So, guard yourselves...

Before we can guard others, we must first learn to guard our own heart.

The greatest danger in leadership is not a lack of activity, but a lack of intimacy with Christ. We cannot effectively care for others if we are neglecting our own spiritual health.

There is no better way to guard our heart than by spending time in prayer and the word with the One who knows us better than we know ourselves.

As we seek Him through prayer and the word, He examines our motives, strengthens our faith, renews our passion, and keeps us close to His heart.

Proverbs 4:20-23 (NLT) My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words.

²¹ Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, ²² for they bring life to

those who find them, and healing to their whole body. ²³ Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

Psalm 139 23-24 (NLT) Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Our inner life of holiness takes priority over ministry.

This responsibility doesn't just apply to elders but to all believers.

Character is more important than gifting.

As elders and believers, we must guard our guard our walk with God, marriage, family doctrine and integrity.

The greatest gift an elder can give the church is a healthy relationship with Jesus.

The same is true for all of us. If you want to be a better parent, spouse, friend, leader, or servant, start by deepening your relationship with Jesus.

II. Care for God's People

Acts 20:28 (NLT) So guard yourselves and God's people. **Feed and shepherd God's flock, His church...**

The church is frequently described as a flock and leaders as shepherds.

The role of an elders goes way beyond just showing up at meetings to make business decision for the church. As a shepherd it involves caring for people by serving, encouraging, advising, teaching, protecting, correcting and helping the believers to mature in Christ and fulfill their ministry.

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NLT) Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

The church does not belong to us.

We must never take ownership of what has been entrusted to us in stewardship. The people we lead are not ours; they belong to God.

The same is true of our children and anyone entrusted to our leadership. In the Kingdom of God, we do not own people; we serve people. They are not beneath us; they are alongside us. They are not called to serve us; we are called to serve them.

This is the kind of leadership Jesus modeled. He didn't come to be served but to serve. Peter learned this firsthand from Jesus. Years later, when writing to elders, he echoed the same principle:

Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care but lead them by your own good example.
1 Peter 5:3 (NLT)

The church belongs to God.

III. Remember the Church's Value

Acts 20:28 (NLT) So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock, **his church, purchased with his own blood**

The value of something is determined by the price paid for it. The price paid for the church was the blood of Jesus Christ.

Every person has value.

When we remember that the price Jesus paid for the church was His own blood we will treat people differently. We will lead with humility, compassion and the fear of the Lord.

IV. Remember Who Called You

Acts 20:28 (NLT) So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock, his church, purchased with his own blood over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.

The office of elder is not merely a position given by men; it is a calling and appointment of the Holy Spirit.

We see this principle clearly in the church at Antioch. As the leaders gathered to worship, pray, and fast before the Lord, they sought His direction for the future. In that atmosphere of devotion and dependence upon God, the Holy Spirit spoke:

"One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.'" (Acts 13:2, NLT)

Notice that the Holy Spirit did not ask the church to choose a work for Barnabas and Saul. Rather, He instructed the church to recognize and set apart those whom He had already called.

The calling originated with the Holy Spirit; the church simply affirmed and commissioned what God had initiated.

The same principle applies to elders today. While we as leaders and congregation may recognize, appoint, and publicly affirm elders, it is ultimately the Holy Spirit who calls and raises up overseers for His church.

As elders and leaders, we must never forget who assigned us this responsibility. We were not called by personal ambition or merely appointed by men. The Holy Spirit has entrusted us with the care of His church.

And church, this truth applies to all of us. Every believer has been appointed by the Holy Spirit to be a light in the world and a witness for Jesus Christ wherever God has placed them.

As elders are appointed to shepherd the flock, every believer is appointed to live as a faithful witness to the grace and truth of Christ.