



Shepherding is care.

Here are the 7 B's of care that will help you as you seek to know, lead, feed, and protect your sheep. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but, rather, one which covers the basics of care.

1. Be Present

a. "Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shutite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment to come to show him sympathy and comfort him." Job 2:11

b. One of the most important aspects of care is your presence. In Job, his friends started out great by traveling from afar to come and sit with Job. In the New Testament, Paul longs to be with people who are hurting for various reasons. Often, your presence communicates care more effectively than even your words.

2. Be Authentic

a. "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." 1 Cor 2:1-5

b. In other words, trust the Lord and don't say things you don't really mean or be someone God didn't create you to be. People who are in need of care don't need the extra burden of trying to figure out if what you are saying is real or not. In the end, you are in danger of compounding the hurt making it more about you than what the Lord is doing in the person's heart.

c. There are times when you may even say the wrong thing to someone, but when it is communicated by a caring, pure, loving heart, it is like a balm to the soul.

3. Be Aware

a. "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1

b. People are unique. Every person rejoices uniquely and grieves uniquely. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to care. Therefore, it is extremely important to be aware of not only your own approach to care, but also to how it is being received.

c. Watch the person's body language and tone of voice. Are they shutting you out with continual one- word answers? Do they sound despondent? Look in their eyes. Does the person's body language and voice communicate the same thing you see in their eyes? This will communicate if the person is willing to engage more in the conversation. Sometimes people need to come up for a breath of air. In these moments it's OK to talk about things that seem surface level. No one can stay in the deep end emotionally for very long.

d. Consider your own body language. Lean forward. Look them in the eye when they are talking. Be aware of your own emotions and thoughts.

4. Be Quiet

a. "And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great." Job 2:13

b. In most circumstances, you can't fix it. Most people are inclined to try and fix a problem right away when all someone really needs at the time is a good listener. Quietness communicates sympathy to the hurting one and your desire to know and let them express their thoughts and feelings. It also communicates a confidence in God's steadfastness.

SEVEN B'S

5. Be Prayerful

a. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:6-7

b. Prayer prepares your heart for care. Prayer sustains you in the midst of care and guards you from burnout. Simply put, prayer reminds you that God is the One in control. It reminds you of your position of weakness and inability to ultimately solve another's problems. God is the cure-giver; you are the caregiver. You will know that you are being an effective shepherd when you spend more time praying for the member outside of your conversation with them than when you are face to face.

c Familiarize yourself with the different prayers in scripture. Reading prayers in scripture will show you the language of prayer. Psalms can be considered the prayer book of the Bible.

i. Adoration

1. Speaking God's attributes back to Him
2. "The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Psalm 145:8

ii. Confession

1. Surrendering to God
2. "For I know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psalm 51:3, 10

iii. Thanksgiving

1. Showing gratitude to God in all things
2. "I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds." Psalm 9:1

iv. Supplication

1. Humbly asking God to act
2. "Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace. Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth." Psalm 86:6,11

v. Lament

1. Crying out to God
2. "My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?'" Psalm 42:3

d. Arrow prayers

i. While most of the prayer happens before care, remember to have a prayerful disposition while engaging in care.

ii. When Nehemiah found himself in front of the King, wanting to rebuild the wall in Jerusalem, the king asked him, "What are you requesting?" In that very moment the text says, "So I prayed to the God of heaven." And then he proceeded to answer the King. These are arrow prayers. In the middle of care, it is as if you shoot an arrow of prayer to heaven asking for God's help in this specific moment.

6. Be Grounded

a. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither." Psalm 1:2-3

b. Your care will bring life to people when you plant yourself near the streams of living water by meditating on His word day and night. The Holy Spirit will use this time to connect the person's story with God's story, bringing an encouraging word. This will also have the effect of reminding you afresh where the power to heal resides.

c. Remember not to use the Bible as a tool to tear down the person but, rather bring an encouraging word to their soul. The aim should always be love, whether it is confronting a sin or comforting a grief.

d. Marinate on God's promises in scripture as they will help you from becoming overwhelmed in your care.

7. Be Bold

a. "It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." Deut 31:8

b. Fear is a common response of a shepherd to tough caring situations. The Bible reminds us that we can be bold because we know the Lord is the One who is going before us, who is ministering through us, and who will continue to work in the member's life long after us. This frees us to go boldly, without timidity, into any caring situation.