

Distinctives for Shepherds

Cornerstone's three Distinctives should have a huge impact on the way our leaders lead. All of us wander like lost sheep without good shepherds in our lives. Our small groups provide the structure for a growing number of people have access to good shepherding. Since our Distinctives are not intuitive, leaders are responsible for explaining how they relate to real life.

The Gospel

Shepherds help people to understand the basic truths of the Gospel. However, the common error is to assume the Gospel (underemphasize it) or to consider the Gospel as a mere introduction to Christian faith. Instead...

- Shepherds draw people into frequent reminders and celebrations of the Gospel.
- Shepherds explain how the Gospel relates to daily life, particularly as it relates to loving difficult people (Eph. 5:2), enduring suffering (1 Peter 2:19-23), killing sin (Rom. 8:13), and rejoicing in hope (Romans 7:24-25).
- Shepherds encourage people to boldly and tactfully explain the Gospel to lost people.

The Greatest Commandment

We all have a tendency to like God instead of loving Him. Shepherds help people to worship God instead of idols.

- Shepherds urge people to love God above all earthly treasures (Psalm 63), particularly during times of trial. Shepherds teach how to evict false saviors.
- Shepherds help people work through the anxiety, anger and escapism that come from inordinate affection for worldly things.
- Shepherds display contagious awe for God's glory.
- Shepherds help people to love others. They take advantage of real-life conflicts to apply biblical definitions of love to sinful hearts.

The Whole Counsel of God

Each shepherd has unique qualities and quirks, but the unmistakable mark of every leader is this: other people depend on this person to understand the Bible.

- Shepherds heal people with the Bible. Other advice is helpful, but only the Bible has the authority and purity to truly and deeply heal our wounds and empower righteousness.
- Shepherds explain the basic storyline and themes of the Bible instead of pulling phrases and tips out of context.
- Shepherds lead people through the whole counsel of God instead of just the safe and familiar sections and themes.
- Shepherds help people to savor and hunger for God's Word (vs. reading the Bible as mere discipline). *"You won't believe the amazing thing I read this week..."*
- Shepherds exhort people to live under the authority of God's Word.
- Shepherds teach people how to study and interpret the Bible.

Reading to equip shepherds:

The Gospel

- Book: *The Bookends of the Christian Life* by Jerry Bridges and Bob Bevington
- Book: *How People Change* by Lane/Tripp
- Book: *The Gospel for Real Life* by Jerry Bridges
- Book: *Living the Cross-Centered Life* by C.J. Mahaney
- Book: *The Truth of the Cross* by R.C. Sproul
- Book: *The Cross and Christian Ministry* by D. A. Carson
- Book: *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People* by Will Metzger
- Book: *Jonathan Edwards on Revival*

The Greatest Commandment

- Article: *Keeping Destiny in View: Helping Counselees View Life from the Perspective of Psalm 73* by Paul Tripp.
- Book: *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters* by Tim Keller
- Article: *Suffering and Psalm 119* by David Powlison
- Book: *Desiring God* by John Piper
- Article: *For the Sick and Afflicted* by C. H. Spurgeon
- Book: *Religious Affections* by Jonathan Edwards

The Whole Counsel of God

- Book: *Knowing Scripture* by R.C. Sproul
- Book: *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem
- Book: *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* by Plummer & Merkle
- Book: *Dig Deeper: Tools for Understanding God's Word* by Beynon & Sach
- Book: *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* by Robert H. Stein
- Book: *An Introduction to the New Testament* by Carson, Moo, Morris
- Book: *An Introduction to the Old Testament* by Longman and Dillard
- Book: *Eat This Book* by Eugene Peterson