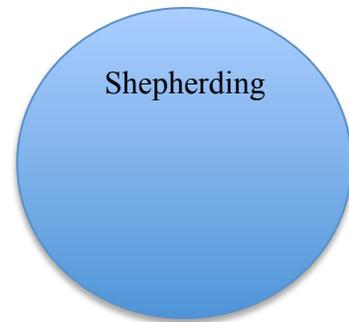


The care of souls within the body of Christ is an urgent and central matter in order for us to be the church of Jesus Christ expressed locally. He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-15), the Elders are called to be faithful under-shepherds (1 Peter 5:1-3), and we are all sheep in need of direction. The loving, truth-filled, and steadfast tending to the flock of God will not happen by accident and cannot be merely reactionary to needs as they arise. Care takes on various roles and looks different in each situation, but the Biblical principles remain our guide in every instance. Here is a succinct summary of our framework for the care and leading of God's people at Leroy Chapel.

Shepherding

We have a responsibility to each and every person who calls LCC his or her home church. This is the general category of care, encouragement, availability, prayer, and inviting them to participate in the "one-anothers" of the body of Christ.

Who: Members are encouraged to engage in the body-life of their church. The members have responsibility for each other and our aim is to equip them to practice the "Body-Life Principles" of LCC reflecting the many "one-another" statements of the Bible. The congregation of LCC is divided into Shepherding Groups assigned to Elders who have deacons, deaconesses, and callers serving with them to know, pray for, and meet the practical needs of the flock of God. Members of each Life Group are kept together within the shepherding lists as we see Life Groups as a central tenet of the shepherding of the body.

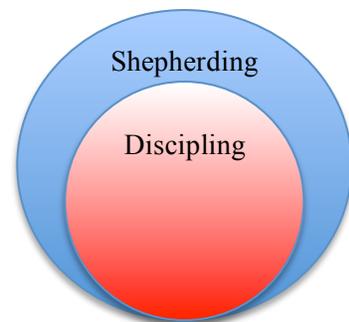


What: The general category of shepherding involved a minimal "keeping tabs" on our families, being aware of their particular situations, praying for them regularly, and responding to spiritual and practical needs as they arise.

Discipling

The Lord gave his disciples a command to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). This involved the sharing of the Gospel with the lost, and then the raising them up in the Gospel. It is captured in the instruction Paul gave to Timothy to "entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Who: We want to see the more mature disciple the less mature in the body regardless of ministry position. But generally the mature are serving in positions of ministry leadership and therefore the ministry leaders are entrusted with the ongoing task of discipleship both through the formal and informal ministries of the church. In our Life Groups, Bible Studies, and other regular programming, we keep discipleship as the aim of what we do. At times the Pastors/Elders will help connect people for discipleship.

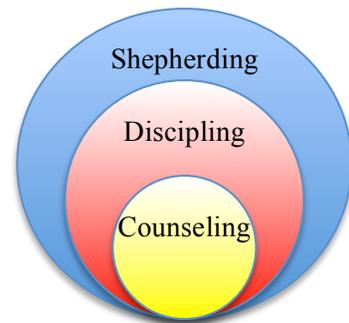


What: Discipleship involves the intentional passing on of Biblical truth, addressing heart issues leading to transformation, and the developing of one's gifts for use in the mission of the Kingdom. There is no discipleship program per se, because we want all of our ministries to be about discipleship – people wanting to grow in Christ being helped to grow in Christ. We would aim at a church like Paul describes that is “able to instruct one another” (Romans 15:14).

Counseling

Within the call to discipleship there are often issues that arise needing greater wisdom and discernment to help people deal with their own sin or the sin committed against them. This is the Biblical category of “admonishing one another in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16), and the grace and truth to know how to “admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, and help the weak” (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Who: We are all counselors giving input to one another as to the stuff of life, so we all need to be constantly more and more equipped to give wise and Biblical counsel. But it is also true that situations and circumstances require more experience and understanding to be a help to people in walking through their identities as sinner, sufferer, and saint. So we need an ever-growing group of equipped lay men and women to come alongside of the staff in the counseling of the body. These are not professional therapists or mental health professionals, nor do we intend them to take the place of that. We minister the Word to specific difficult situations as Biblical counselors. Part of that counsel is to consult with medical professionals for the biological and psychiatric needs of the whole person. So there will be plenty of times where the counsel is to consult with those outside the body, but we also recognize the need for the body to be engaged in the Biblical counsel and care of those in need and we should not relinquish that responsibility.



What: Life is hard, sin has wreaked havoc on relationships, and people live with the damage of those things both from the past and in the present. The church is called to engage in the life of its members as we have laid out, through the general shepherding of the body, the intentional discipleship of individuals, and the giving of specific counsel in difficult circumstances of life. Our aim in counseling is to help them process the events of their life through the lens of the Gospel, so that they can see the sufficient work of Christ, and move forward understanding their identity in Christ in obedient ways that bring Him glory and give them a greater freedom and joy in living.

The Framework

The diagrams under each section show the interrelatedness of these “disciplines”. I firmly believe that they must be held together for the building of the body, and recognized as distinct to see the people of God truly be transformed by the Word.