

Commentary: 8 ways to wound a minister

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Shepherds play an important role in the biblical narrative. Shepherds appear frequently in both the Old and New Testaments, often in reference to leaders.

One of my favorite images of a shepherd is that of a caregiver. It is common for a shepherd to examine sheep for wounds as they gather in a pen or cove after a day of grazing. The shepherd cleans the wound and applies an ointment to it before bedding the sheep down for the night.

Congregational ministers are trained to be good shepherds. Identifying and binding wounds are significant parts of a minister's job. This was certainly true for Jesus.

Instead of conducting his ministry in the temple in Jerusalem like many of his colleagues, Jesus chose to walk down dusty Palestinian roads where he could interact with people from all walks of life. He listened to their stories so he could respond to their needs with mercy and grace.

Being the good Shepherd did not prevent Jesus from being wounded. Nor does it keep today's ministers from being wounded.

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