

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Hebrews 13:7, 17, 20–21: Shepherds Under the Great Shepherd

Preaching Date: September 6, 2026

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Understanding the Text

1. According to Hebrews 13:7, what is the defining characteristic of faithful church leaders, and why does the phrase “who spoke the word of God to you” establish both the source and the limits of pastoral authority?
2. Hebrews 13:17 commands believers to “obey” and “submit” to their leaders. How does the sermon distinguish biblical submission from blind obedience, and what limits does Scripture place upon the authority of elders?
3. What does it mean that elders “keep watch over your souls,” and how does this description help us understand pastoral ministry as more than preaching sermons, organizing ministries, or managing church affairs?
4. Hebrews 13:17 says that elders keep watch “as those who will give an account.” To whom will elders ultimately give this account, and how should this truth shape both their courage and their humility in ministry?
5. How do Hebrews 13:20–21 provide the theological foundation for everything commanded earlier in the chapter? What comfort is found in the fact that Jesus is “the great Shepherd of the sheep” and that God Himself equips His servants to do His will?

Personal Reflection & Application

1. Hebrews 13:7 tells us to remember faithful leaders and “imitate their faith.” Who has God used in your life to model faithful Christianity, and what specific aspect of that person’s faith would be worth imitating?
2. The sermon emphasized that biblical submission becomes especially meaningful when our personal preferences differ from the decisions of faithful leaders. How do you normally respond when church leadership makes a lawful decision that you would have made differently?
3. A faithful pastor must sometimes confront sin, error, misplaced priorities, or cherished opinions. When biblical correction makes you uncomfortable, are you more inclined to examine yourself by Scripture or to resist the person bringing the correction?
4. Hebrews 13:17 says that a congregation can make the work of its elders either joyful or grievous. What attitudes or actions within a church make faithful shepherding unnecessarily difficult, and what can you personally do to encourage your elders in their work?
5. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that the church ultimately belongs to Christ and that Jesus, not any human elder, is “the great Shepherd of the sheep.” How should this truth guard us both from placing too much confidence in pastors and from failing to value the shepherds Christ has given to His church?