

Sunday Assembly Reflection

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REFLECTION: On Sunday, John (and Carroll) Thornton announced he was stepping down from his role as elder for Lake Highlands Church. Based on John and Carroll's 40-years as shepherd-servants (the last nine at Lake Highlands), Jim spoke on how they have exemplified what shepherding really is, and why it is so important. The Thornton's faithful, committed service has extended into the "winter season" of their lives and continues to bless countless others coming behind them.

We read in John 10 how Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, as opposed to the "disembodied" shepherds who misdirect and even frighten sheep using social media, the internet, radio and TV. Real-life, personal, shepherding is important to keep us from going over the cliff, and to help us mature as God intended. Shepherd servants go before us and gain wisdom about the road ahead, and then turn back to help us along the same road. They know the roars of the lions along the way, but shepherds know from experience that the lions are chained down and cannot hurt us.

I'm guessing many of you like I, didn't grow up with good shepherding in the church, with someone always having your back. It took me a while to get and trust it, but the body at Lake Highlands has taught me what shepherd-servants are like. They really do care about others and do the hard work despite the pressure to run away when it gets tough and messy. I am so grateful for our elders, our lifegroup leaders, the church staff and so many other shepherds who are committed to helping us grow up. But I am also convicted of how I am shepherding others. Am I taking time to turn back and help guide others along the way? Am I just a consumer and a taker, looking out only for myself? I don't want to be.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *Please pick one of the questions below to answer in your small groups; more if you have time. Be sure to pray for each other at the end.*

1. Whose voice are you listening to for spiritual guidance? Real-live shepherds of the flock who know you, and are physically there to help you, or the random faceless voices barking through radio, TV, internet, or social media?
2. In what ways are you shepherding others either at church or elsewhere? If you are not, ask God for the desire and opportunity to do so.
3. How have you defined success - a certain amount of money, the dream job, an ideal relationship? And, what are your plans for the "winter season" of your life?

Think of a shepherd who has taken an interest in your spiritual well-being, and helped you grow up or navigate through hard times. Take time this week to let them know how you appreciate them, and also thank God for them.

Sunday Assembly Reflection is written by Lake Highlands Church members for Lifegroups and individuals to receive more from the spoken Sunday Assembly message through reflection and quick discussion. It is published on the first three Monday's of the month. If you are interested in knowing more about a Lifegroup or have a question about the reflection, please contact Donjalea Crane, donjalea@lakehighlandschurch.org or contact one of our Lifegroup leaders by going to lakehighlandschurch.org/Lifegroup-listings.

Lake Highlands Church Sunday Assembly Sermons are published weekly as a podcast. They are available on iTunes and lakehighlandschurch.org.