Shepherding according to God

I. In His heavenly ministry Christ is shepherding people, and we need to cooperate with Him by shepherding people; without shepherding, our work for the Lord cannot be effective—Heb. 13:20-21; John 21:15-17.

II. Peter charged the elders to shepherd the flock of God according to God—1 Pet. 5:1-3:

A. According to God means to live God.

B. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition.

C. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes—Rom. 9:15-16; 11:22, 33; Eph. 2:7; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:12.

D. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function—John 1:12-13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4:

1. We need to be filled to the brim with the divine life, enjoying the Triune God as the fountain, the spring, and the river to become a totality of the divine life, even to become the divine life itself—John 4:14; Rom. 8:6, 10-11.

2. We need to become God in His attributes of love, light, righteousness, and holiness—1 John 4:8; 1:5; 2:29; 1 Pet. 1:15-16.

3. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities—John 1:18; Heb. 1:3; 2:10; Rom. 8:29.
4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy—Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
5. When we are one with God, we become God and are God in our shepherding of others.

III. If we would shepherd according to God, we must be persons in resurrection—John 10:11; 11:25; 2 Cor. 1:9:

A. John 10 is on shepherding, and John 11 shows that shepherding must be with resurrection life.
B. If we are natural, full of the natural view, philosophy, and logic, we cannot feed others.
C. To be in resurrection is not to live our natural life but to live the divine life—Gal. 2:20.
D. If we are persons in resurrection, we are in life, and we become those who can shepherd others—John 11:25; 21:15-17.

IV. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to flock the saints together—10:16; Luke 12:32; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-3; cf. Isa. 40:11:

A. The proper shepherding is to flock the saints together.
B. In John 10 and 21 the Lord used three words concerning shepherding: feed, shepherd, and flock; we all need to learn to feed, to shepherd, and to flock together.
C. Christ’s feeding us with Himself as the pasture is for us to be flocked together with God’s other sheep to be His one organic Body to arrive at the ultimate goal of God’s economy—the New Jerusalem—Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
D. All the churches should learn how to flock together so that they can be blended together; in an atmosphere of flocking we are subdued, convinced, nourished, and stirred up by the Lord.

V. We need to shepherd the flock of God according to the Father’s loving and forgiving heart and according to the Son’s seeking, finding, and shepherding spirit—Luke 15:4-24, 32:

A. We should follow the steps of the processed Triune God in His seeking and gaining fallen people—vv. 4-6, 8-9, 18-24, 32.
B. Our natural tendency is not to shepherd others but to criticize them and regulate them:
   1. Whenever we criticize someone, we lose the position to take care of that one.
   2. Our natural tendency is to regulate others and place demands on them according to ourselves, not to cherish and nourish them according to God.
C. We need to have a change of concept through being discipled to have the divine concept, the concept that is according to the Father’s loving heart and the Son’s shepherding spirit.
D. Our shepherding should be according to God’s love toward the fallen human race; the fallen human race is joined with Satan to be his world in his system, but God has a heart of love toward these people—John 3:16.
E. We need to be shepherds having the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God in His divinity and the seeking, finding, and shepherding spirit of our Savior Christ in His humanity.
F. “If this kind of fellowship is received by us, I believe there will be a big revival on the earth, not by a few spiritual giants but by the many members of Christ’s Body being shepherds who follow the steps of the processed Triune God in seeking and gaining fallen people” (The Vital Groups, p. 40).

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