

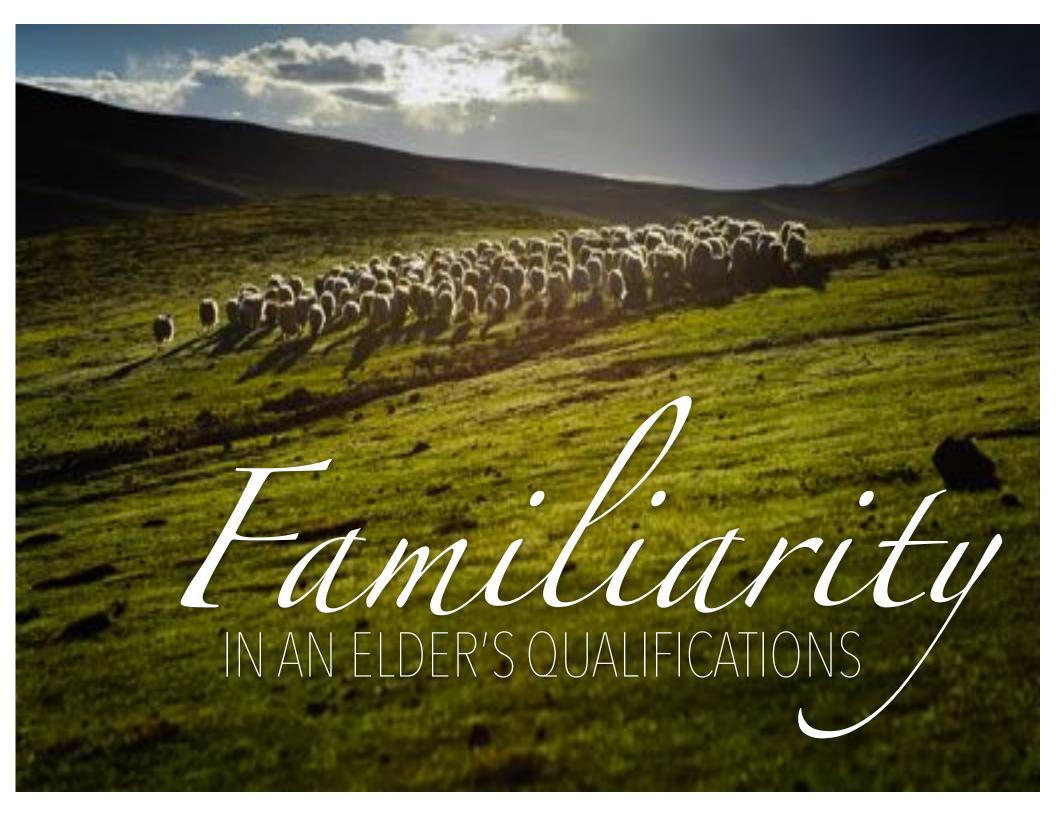
- John 10:1-5, 11-15 Familiarity is the theme that runs through these verses. Jesus' relationship to His flock is never impersonal, or merely professional. He is not the cold, distant dictator of our lives, but the intimate companion who shared in human affliction (Hebrews 2:9ff, Philippians 2:5ff).
- The good shepherd endures the same conditions as his sheep. When they face the weather, so does he. When they are deprived, he gives of himself to secure their sustenance. When they are threatened, he stands between them and danger (vv. 11-13).
- Most of all, they "know" each other. It is a two-way relationship (v. 14) based on trust.

## A Good Shepherd



## MEMBERSHIP

The good shepherd knows his sheep "by name" according to Jesus. The sheep will not follow "a stranger" because they do not share a relationship with him. Add to that the fact that the shepherd in Luke 15 is able to positively identify exactly one hundred sheep in his flock and knows when one goes missing. His flock was not open-ended, but had a defined membership. Similarly, a Christian is not allowed to just wander around from flock to flock, or follow his or her whims. Our elders are shepherds, and should know who is committed to this flock.



- There are many dangers to a flock wolves (Acts 20:28-30) and lions (1 Peter 5:8), sheep getting lost (Luke 15:4), thieves (John 10:1), inept leadership (John 10:12-13), malnourishment (1 Peter 5:2, KJV says "feed the flock"), etc.
- Threats are real, so we shouldn't bristle at the notion of our elders holding us accountable. If they know us as well as the scriptures indicate they should, then we need to trust them this includes criticism they offer, setting boundaries, and showing restraint with new ideas and projects.
- Psalm 23 Good leadership fosters confidence, contentment, and the ability to focus on what we need to do feed on the word and find others who want to be part of the flock of God.

A flock that rests safely



## Applications

- Do we really know each other? Have you welcomed the elders into your life, or do you keep them at arm's length?
- An elder's imperfections only mean he is human. Rather than contempt, this should foster a sense of relatability and an appreciation for how hard the job is.
- How an elder handles failure is as important as how he handles success. We only know this through familiarity/relationship.
- Familiarity should be "updated" regularly, as people and their situations change.