

Pastoral Care in Scripture

Pastoral Care in the Old Testament.

Pastoral Care in the Old Testament was focused on Israelite society. The Ten Commandments, and laws flowing from it, were given to enable society to be shaped in such a way that those in need were cared for. Some of these laws may seem strange to our 21st century selves, such as the requirement for a man to marry his brother's widow, but these laws were intended to reflect the loving God with whom the Israelites had a covenantal relationship. The book of Ruth is a good example of how Pastoral Care was lived out.

What are some of the key themes in Pastoral Care?

Does this surprise you?

How is pastoral care creative? Relational?

To what extent is Pastoral Care part of God's mission?

Pastoral Care in the Gospels

In the Gospels, Jesus invites people to come live life to the full in God's Kingdom. He uses familial language to describe relationships within this new community and through his own life and death models what it means to love others.

What does Jesus say about caring for others in the following passages?

- Matthew 18:1-6 (the greatest in the kingdom of heaven)
- Matthew 18:15-20 (how to deal with a brother who has sinned)
- Luke 5:17-26 (four friends bring a paralysed man to Jesus)
- John 13:34-35 (a new commandment)
- John 21:15-19 (feed my sheep)

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Pastoral Church in the Early Church

In the first few years after Jesus' resurrection his followers believed that his return was imminent. This shaped their Pastoral Care e.g. there was little interest in changing unjust structures in society like slavery. As time went on, and the Parousia (Jesus' return) did not occur, coupled with the growing practical needs of the community Pastoral Care started to evolve and take on a more formal role.

Have a look at the following passages

- Acts 1:12-26 (Matthias is chosen to replace Judas)
- Acts 6:-17 (organising of care for widows by deacons)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (encourage and build up one another)
- Ephesians 5 (how to live as a Christian)
- Hebrews 3:13 (encourage one another so you are not hardened by sin)
- Romans 12:1-2 (offer yourselves as living sacrifices)

What were the pastoral concerns for the early church?

Where does the emphasis lie?

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