

Dear Shepherd

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Dear Shepherd,

I am one of your sheep. Being a sheep, I possess certain “sheeply” characteristics, as well as certain needs common to sheep. For instance, I can’t do much in the way of defending myself. I’m not completely helpless, but there is a reason why the specific task of guarding the sheep has been given to you. I need you. I don’t have the time or the expertise to keep up on all of schemes that the wolves are constantly coming up with in order to destroy me. I need you to do that. I need you to protect me. I need you to be in your study. I need you to read. I need you to be aware of the dangers. The wolves are here. Sometimes they get right in among the flock. I need you to do your job.

I’m a sheep. That means I need to be watched over so that I do not stray from the rest of the flock. That’s when I can really get into trouble. I am prone to wander. I move along, living my life, and before I know it I’ve been separated from the rest of the sheep. I find myself out there on my own, and that’s no place for a sheep to be. Will you keep watch over me? When you see me begin to wander, will you come after me, and lead me back to the safety of the flock?

I’m a sheep. Being a sheep, I need to eat. That is, I need to be led to the food. You need to do that for me. As the Great Shepherd said, “If you love Me, feed my sheep.” You serve Him by serving me. But you’ve got to serve Him in the way He has instructed. Shepherds don’t serve the sheep by acquiescing to their every whim and desire. Shepherds serve the sheep by doing what shepherds are supposed to do. Shepherds serve the sheep by guarding, by leading and by feeding. Frankly, if left to myself I’ll eat anything I can find. I may come across good grass now and then, but I’m more likely to come across that which will not nourish me, or perhaps will even do me harm. I don’t know the difference between good grass and poison. That’s why I need a shepherd to lead me to food that will strengthen me and not kill me.

I’m a sheep. Being a sheep, in addition to those things I need, there are some things that I don’t need. I don’t need to be entertained. I certainly don’t need to be entertained by my shepherd. When you try to entertain me, you’re not doing what the Great Shepherd has told you to do. And if I can be blunt, shepherds aren’t very good entertainers, anyway. When you try to be an entertainer you usually just look silly. Neither do I need you to “spice up” my diet. What the Great Shepherd provides for my nourishment is all I want and all I need.

Your sheep don’t need you to be spending all your time focusing on ways to bring more sheep into the flock, either. If you are faithful to being the kind of under-shepherd that the Great Shepherd has called you to be, He’ll take care of growing the flock if that’s what He wants to do. But frankly, some of these sheep you’ve been pulling in are a little peculiar looking. Some of them look less like sheep and more like...wolves.

I beg you. Be a shepherd to me. I don’t need a celebrity and I don’t need a CEO. I just need a shepherd. Can you be content with that? From what I can see, the Great Shepherd considers the work of a shepherd to be a very high calling, indeed. How do you see it?

On behalf of the flock,

a sheep