

Father's Day 2012 **"The Good Shepherd!"**

Thank you dad... for Laboring tirelessly! Praying endlessly! Leading fearlessly! Giving selflessly! Loving unconditionally! WOW! All at once?

When it comes to Father's Day it seems there's no relief in being compared to Him...! But it's okay because we're learning that whatever He asks us to do to be like Him, we can do...

The Good Shepherd...

The sheep hear his voice and *he calls them by name and leads them out and when he puts them to pasture, he goes before them* and they follow him because they know his voice. *I am the door* of the sheep... I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd *gives his life* for the sheep. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees: and the wolf catches them, and scatters the sheep. The hireling flees, because he is a hireling and cares not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine... *and I lay down my life...* **John 10.1-15**

Attributes of the good shepherd...

Familiar! They are his/knows them by name! Knows them by their *personality*/deals with them *individually*! May all be "kids" but he knows each has a character and quirks! They know him/his voice! To be near is a blessing: peace, safety, provision!

Leader-Feeder! When he comes for the sheep he knows what they need... When one field becomes barren he guides them into a new one! Goes before them/in "it" w/them! "Sheep w/o a shepherd" soon die: lack of food, wrong food, wandering into bad situations; can follow each other off a cliff!

(Learner!) Knows that his leadership is a "quality of life" issue! If he lacks skills he searches/ listens/reads/ observes/hones! *What the shepherd doesn't know has the power to hurt the sheep in his care!*

Doorkeeper! He provides the sheepfold... and lays across the doorway/is the doorway! He knows who is coming into fold! Able to keep the predators out! Within the pen, he isolates/bad behavior!

(Discipliner!) When they butt heads w/each other he restores the order! When they butt heads with him he corrects/takes hold of them! The "kids" must respect the shepherd! *"If sheep grow up w/o fear of the shepherd they will grow up w/o respect for others!"*

Doorkeeper! He provides the sheepfold... and lays across the doorway! He knows who is coming into fold! Able to keep the predators out! Within the pen, he isolates/bad behavior! Double checks the gates! Boundaries are essential to the sheep!

From the sheep's perspective the gates and pens represent a lack of freedom, a restriction from getting to "greener grass," but the fences keep the sheep safe, the predators out and keep them from wandering away to an ill fate!

Protector! Willing to give his life for the sheep! Defends against wolves! But he also checks for parasites/ wounds/infections/changes in behavior, treats sickness... Restores order in chaos/struggle... Comforts/holds them in times of anxiety, agitation, fear... Life is on hold while the sheep are down!

Bonus: Good Shepherds step lively! Know that sheep leave behind a lot of... "fertilizer!" *And it's okay! It all washes off!* God made us tough and we can handle a little earthiness!

Happy Father's Day!