

## Time for God – Take 2

**Purpose:** To assist the congregation with further reflection on the theme of the Sunday service and in particular with the Congregational Bible passage.

## Week beginning Sunday 7 May Gateway to Life

**Pray** Pray that we would have a greater sense of God caring for us, guiding us, protecting us and leading us. He is still the Good Shepherd today.

**Read** Read the passage (preferably in an easy to understand version). John 10:1-10. You may wish to look at Psalm 23 as well.

**Background** I am the Good Shepherd. The first of several “I am” passages in John’s gospel each of which seek to expand our understanding of the nature of Jesus character and ministry. The context should be taken into account – there was clearly a concern that there were religious leaders around who, for all their claims, were not primarily interested in the well being of their followers. John is concerned to warn his readers and to encourage them to see Jesus as the one who has put his life on the line for his people and whom they may trust.

### Possible questions/points to consider

1. You don’t have to go far from Montrose to see the countryside, open space, and yes sheep! In a world that is becoming increasingly urban we are in the fortunate position of being closer to the pastoral setting of John 10. Are there factors to life in a rural setting which might assist us in living out our lives as Christians? If so, what might they be? How does care for animals differ from the care people might take of their car or motorbike?
  2. His Master’s Voice – by all means share any experience you have of an animal’s relationship with its “owner”. What does it mean for us as people to know our Master’s voice? How can we encourage one another to be in tune with Jesus?
  3. People can have different impressions of God/Jesus. For example, some people might think first of God as being bossy, telling them what to do, might see him as a “threat”. Others might not sense God as being particularly close and will tend to think of him as being somewhat remote, distant. Others will have a strong sense of his care. First impressions can stick – but how might we assist people to see Jesus as the Good Shepherd as someone who is close, who cares deeply, who was willing to die for us, who is risen and present with us today?
  4. In the midst of a world which is full of conflict we are apt to play down the conflict that we as individuals might come up against – and particularly in the Church. What does this passage say about the existence of those who might lead God’s people astray? Where the “threat” may come? How Jesus can be a reliable protector and carer? How do we hold on to Jesus while keeping a look out for opposition/conflict?
  5. The passage paints Jesus as having a really close bond with his “sheep” and they with him. While recognising that we are more than sheep how important is the idea of relationship with Jesus? How do we foster that? We become Christians not by “joining the Church” but by being in a loving relationship of faith with the Son of God. How might we encourage others to participate? How do we develop the skill to talk about it – without being pushy or insensitive?
  6. If you have had any dealings working with sheep is there anything you can add?
  7. Anything else that arises from the passage or the service?
- Prayer** Thank you for your deep love for us, your willingness to lay down your life to set us on the path to fellowship with your heavenly Father. Help us to be open to a deeper relationship of love with you and to be content to accept your care and guidance. Amen.