



Love, Feed, and Tend **John 21:15-16**

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” (John 21:15-16—ESV).

Everyone who has owned a pet and every farmer and rancher knows there is a vast difference between feeding an animal and tending an animal or herd. Consider the vast difference between a petting zoo where your children can feed sheep and chickens to going home and caring for their pet sheep or chicken.

When Jesus appeared to Peter, He asked him if he loved Him enough to feed and tend His sheep. Tending sheep requires more than taking sheep out to graze. When Jesus taught about planting seed, He compared it to preaching, teaching, and sharing the Word of God in words and actions. In the beginning, the disciples learned how to tell others about Jesus. Later, they learned how to care for or tend His followers. In another of Jesus’ parables, He taught about the types of soil that bear fruit and those that do not. Jesus’ seed were the Words of God. Sowing the Words of God is the first and most important thing we can do as Jesus’ followers to lead others to faith in Jesus. We can’t lead anyone to faith in Jesus without teaching them the Truth about Jesus and the Truths He taught. The Holy Spirit uses the Truth that we share to lead others to faith in Jesus Christ. The second thing Jesus asked Peter to do was tend His sheep. Tending is everything a parent does for the true benefit of their children to meet their real physical and spiritual needs. Tending is what the church does for everyone in the church. Church leaders, like Peter, bear a large responsibility for feeding and tending Jesus’ followers, but every Christian can do something through their words and deeds to care for one another as they also feed and lead unbelievers to trust in and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Jesus wants all of us to love, feed, and tend His sheep as much as we prayerfully and wisely can as the Holy Spirit leads us.