

2 A Caring Church (October 27th). I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10.11).

The model of our Lord as the good shepherd seeking out the lost and bringing them back, rejoicing, to the flock has deeply marked our understanding of ministry in the Church. We have sought to care for people throughout the course of their lives, from birth, in marriage, in the care and education of children, in sickness and death. Anglican parishes try to be places of welcome for the whole community, and our clergy offer support to anyone who asks. As a result, we often have fuzzy boundaries. Many people think of themselves as belonging, even if they rarely worship with us. We are involved in schools, prisons, hospitals, and these chaplaincy ministries are deeply valued.

John's gospel also offers another model of what it is to care. Jesus kneels at the feet of his friends, and washes their feet. This may be an image we can relate to more directly than the image of shepherd. Few of us will ever have handled sheep, but many of us will have washed the feet of a child or perhaps a frail relative.

- **Which image speaks more directly to you: The Good Shepherd or The Washer of Feet? Why?**
- **Much of our ministry and activity at St Timothy's builds on the idea of seeking out / bringing back the lost. Would we do things differently if we put "washing people's feet" at the centre of our hearts and minds?**
- **Can you name any prominent Christians whose lives were built on (a) Jesus the Good Shepherd; (b) Jesus the Washer of Feet?**
- **Does anything need to change for St Timothy's to become a place where we wash the feet of our friends?**
- **How do you react to this image? Positively, or not? Why might this be?**
- **How might holding on to an image of Jesus, as Good Shepherd or as Washer of Feet, sustain us as we try to minister to others in our daily lives?**