

## 1 Timothy 3 Introduction

- What are some of the qualifications you've needed in order to apply for a job?
  - Experience?
  - Education?
  - Personal references?
  - Good interviewing skills?
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- One of the tasks that Timothy had before him was to assess potential candidates for ministry, so Paul outlined some qualifications for those who desired to lead.
  - These credentials, along with those given to Titus, comprise the biblical standard for designated leaders within the body of Christ.

## 1 Timothy 3 Outline

- I. Qualifications for Pastors.....3:1-7
- II. Qualifications for Deacons.....3:8-13
- III. Paul's Purpose in Writing.....3:14-16

## Qualifications for Pastors 3:1-7

- **3:1 bishop *epískopos*** literally, "overseer" This term is used more or less interchangeably with elder and pastor (shepherd).
  - Refer to Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1-4.
- **a good work** It is the *work* that is good, not necessarily the position.
- Again, the words pastor, overseer and elder are used more or less interchangeably by Paul.
- Despite the clear fact that the church needed leaders, it's not very certain how those leaders functioned within their respective church environments.
- No clear model for church government becomes obvious from Scripture alone.
- Church history has, therefore, given rise to multiple forms of structure within the church, each having strengths and weaknesses:
  - Hierarchical or Episcopal was the earliest.
  - Presbyterian or Representative came next.
  - Congregational followed that.
- Almost all churches today either fall into one of these categories or exist as a hybrid of these basic forms.

- Importantly, all of these forms have been extremely successful at one time and place or another.
- All of them have also failed tragically at times.
- It seems that no form of church government can be better than the people who fill the positions or make up the church.
- Therefore the Bible is right in that it highlights personal character more than form.
- **3:2 blameless** literally, “that cannot be laid hold of”
- **husband of one wife** literally, “man of one woman”, the sense being “a one-woman kind of man”.
- This is a much-debated expression.
- It seems tidiest if we view it as a *character trait* rather than *detail* regarding marital status.
- By any definition, this would rule out the polygamist from holding a position of leadership
  - Practiced among some Jews in Europe right through the Middle Ages and beyond.
  - Practiced in the Middle East right through the present day.
  - Under biblical standards, the LDS Church (Mormons) under Joseph Smith and Brigham Young would never have gotten off the ground.
- It also rules out the typical Greco-Roman male who didn’t prize marital fidelity.
- We also don’t have to explain away:
  - A single man who, like Paul or Timothy, seems quite qualified for ministry.
  - A remarried widower.
  - A man divorced and remarried in the distant past who might be a safer bet in ministry than a never-divorced believer who has more recently been guilty of marital infidelity.
- **3:2 of good behavior** “orderly” the same Greek word translated as “modest” in 2:9 where it refers to women’s clothing.
- **hospitable** *philóxenos* loving strangers, generous to guests.
- Consider that an elder can never be very effective in hospitality unless his “one wife” shares a vision for hospitality along with him.
- **Able to teach** This is the primary thing that differentiates the overseers from the deacons (servants) who come next.
- Both need to have godly character.
- The overseers have the added responsibility of equipping others by means of their teaching to do the work of the ministry.
  - See Ephesians 4:11-12

- Warren Wiersbe, quoting Phillips Brooks:
- “‘Apt to teach – it is not something to which one comes by accident or by any sudden burst of fiery zeal.’ A pastor must be a careful student of the Word of God, and of all that assists him in knowing and teaching the Word. The pastor who is lazy in his study is a disgrace in the pulpit.”
- **3:6** **novice** *neophyte*
- literally “newly planted”, referring to a new believer or a man lacking essential experience.
- This experience will best be gained by serving under someone else, as Timothy learned from Paul.

#### Qualifications for Deacons 3:8-13

- **3:8** **deacon** *diákonos* a servant, one who executes the commands of another. Also in 3:12.
- Acts 6:1-7 gives us the first example of this ministry position.
- **reverent** means “serious”
- **3:8** **not greedy for money** Deacons may be responsible for church finances.
- **3:11** **wives** literally “women”, which can also mean “women who are deacons.” That is how we interpret it here.
- **slanderer** or “malicious gossip” Greek *diábolos* or, literally, “devil”
- **3:13** **boldness** freedom, confidence or unreservedness in speaking.

#### Paul’s Purpose in Writing 3:14-16

- **3:15** is a key verse to the three pastoral epistles. These books give us the clearest instructions available as to how the ministry of the church should be organized and then carried out.
- The church should *uphold the truth*, as a pillar, buttress or support. It is not our position to *decide what the truth is*, but rather to declare the truth which God has revealed.

## Final Thoughts

- Christians are not applying for a job, we are preparing for an eternity in God's service.
- Each of us will benefit learning and demonstrating the characteristics listed here.
- The church will also benefit by having a large pool of individuals qualified and prepared to take on the responsibilities within the church.
  
- No form, pattern or model of church government will ever be any better than those who hold the leadership positions.
- If we focus first on our character, God can teach us how to be more effective in our ministry, whatever that ministry is.
- Lastly, let's listen to 1 Timothy 3 as it reads in the New Living Translation.

**Acts 20:17(NKJV)** From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

**Acts 20:28(NKJV)** Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

**Titus 1:5(NKJV)** For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

**Titus 1:7(NKJV)** For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

**1 Peter 5:1-4(NKJV)** The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

**Ephesians 4:11-12(NKJV)** And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

### **1 Timothy 3:1-16(NLT)**

This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder [overseer], he desires an honorable position." So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap.

In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money. They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience. Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do. A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

I am writing these things to you now, even though I hope to be with you soon, so that if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth. Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory.