

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(10)

1 TIMOTHY: DUTIES AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH, 1 Timothy 2:1-3:13 The Deacons of the Church, 1 Timothy 3:8-13

(1 Timothy 3:8-13) **Introduction:** this passage discusses the second officer of the church, the deacon. The office of deacon is so important that the qualifications required are just as high as those demanded of a minister or bishop. In this day and time, when worldliness, immorality, and lawlessness are running so rampant, the qualifications for deacons need to be studied, heeded, and guarded ever so diligently.

1. Personal qualifications (v.8).
2. Spiritual qualifications (v.9-10).
3. Family qualifications (v.11-12).
4. Results: reward reaped (v.13).

3. (1 Timothy 3:11-12) Deacons— Church, Officer of: deacons must meet several family qualifications.

1 Timothy 3:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

¹² Deacons must be husbands of *only* one wife, *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households.

Therefore, the deacon's wife must be as strong in the Lord as he is.

1. The deacon must have a wife who is as committed to the Lord and to the church as he is.
 - a. The wife of a deacon must be “grave [dignified]” (*semnos*): serious-minded, honorable, respected, and noble (see note above, pt.1—1 Timothy 3:8 for discussion).
 - b. The wife of a deacon must not be a “slanderer” (*mē diabolous*): a talebearer, gossip; a person who goes about talking about others, stirring up mischief and disturbance.

Qualifications for Deaconesses

1 Timothy 3:11 (NASB)

¹¹ Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

- c. The wife of a deacon must be sober (see note above, pt.4—1 Timothy 3:2-3 for discussion).

Whether the **women** in view here are deacons' wives or a separate order of female deacons has been much disputed. The following points show that women in general, not necessarily deacons' wives are in view here.

First, the use of likewise (cf. [1 Timothy 2:9](#); [1 Timothy 3:8](#); [Titus 2:3, 6](#)) argues strongly for seeing a third and distinct group here in addition to elders and deacons.

[1 Timothy 2:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ Likewise, *I want* women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments.

[1 Timothy 3:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain.

[Titus 2:3 \(NASB\)](#)

³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good.

[Titus 2:6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶ Likewise urge the young men to be sensible.

Second, there is no possessive pronoun or definite article connecting these women with deacons.

Third, Paul gave no qualifications for elders' wives. Why would he do so for deacons' wives?

Fourth, Paul did not use the word “deaconesses” because there was no such word in the Greek language; the masculine form of *diakonos* was used of both men and women (cf. [Romans 16:1](#)).

[Romans 16:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea.

A different term, *diakonissa*, was used for “deaconess” in postbiblical Greek (Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946], 3:176).

Using the term **women** was the only way Paul could distinguish them from the male deacons.

Finally, their qualifications parallel those of the male deacons.

[1 Timothy 3:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹ Women *must* likewise *be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.*

Women who serve the church must first be **dignified**. Paul uses the same word here that he used in [verse 8](#) to describe male deacons.

[1 Timothy 3:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ Deacons likewise *must be* men of [grave] dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain.

Female deacons, like their male counterparts, must lead serious lives. People should hold them in awe because of their spiritual devotion. They are **not** to be **malicious gossips**. *Diabolos* (malicious gossips) means “slanderer.”

It is often used to describe Satan, and is translated “devil” (cf. [Matthew 4:1](#)).

[Matthew 4:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Deaconesses must control their tongues. Like elders ([v. 2](#)) and male deacons ([v. 8](#)), the women are to be **temperate**.

[1 Timothy 3:2 \(NASB\)](#)

² **An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,**

[1 Timothy 3:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ **Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,**

They are not to be drinkers, but sober in judgment.

[1 Timothy 3:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹ **Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.**

Finally, they must be **faithful in all things**. They must be absolutely trustworthy. That qualification may include the idea of not being “fond of sordid gain” (cf. [v. 8](#)).

[1 Timothy 3:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ **Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain.**

Like male deacons, females would have occasion to handle money while performing their duties. Women who were not **faithful** in every dimension of responsibility could not be trusted with this privileged service.

d. The wife of a deacon must be faithful in all things: completely trustworthy as a wife and mother and as a believer.

She must be faithful to the Lord.....

- 1) in her personal devotion and loyalty to the Lord.
- 2) in her call as a wife and mother.
- 3) in her commitment to the church and its services and ministry.
- 4) in her ministry in serving with her husband.

[Luke 9:23 \(NASB\)](#)

²³ **And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.**

[1 Corinthians 15:58 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵⁸ **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.**

[Galatians 6:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ **Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.**

[1 Peter 1:13 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³ **Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

[Joshua 23:8 \(NASB\)](#)

⁸ **But you are to cling to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day.**