

# Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(2)

## 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).

### 1. (1 Timothy 3:8) Deacons— Church, Officer of: deacons must be qualified; they must meet some personal qualifications.

1 Timothy 3:8 (NASB)

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

The apostle Paul described his conduct among the Thessalonians as devout, upright, and blameless (1 Thessalonians 2:10). It is such men, men of integrity, purity, and virtue, that God chooses to lead His people.

1 Thessalonians 2:10 (NASB)

<sup>10</sup> You are witnesses, and *so is* God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

Having discussed such spiritual qualifications for elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Paul now turns to those of deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The standard for deacons is in no way inferior to that required of elders. Elders who lead and deacons who serve perform different functions, **but the spiritual qualifications required for both are essentially identical.** There is *no drop-off in spiritual quality or maturity* from overseers to deacons. The only difference is that overseers are “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2).

*Diakonos* (deacon) and the related terms *diakoneō* (“to serve”), and *diakonia* (“service”) appear approximately 100 times in the New Testament.

Only here and in Philippians 1:1 are they transliterated “deacon” or “deacons.” The rest of the time they are translated by various English words.

**1 Timothy 3:8 (NASB)**

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

**Philippians 1:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the **overseers** and **deacons**:

Only in those two passages is the deacon elevated to official status. The rest of the time the terms are used in a general, nonspecific sense.

The original meaning of this word group had to do with performing menial tasks such as waiting on tables. That definition gradually broadened until it came to include any kind of service in the church.

The word group's versatility can be seen in its divergent usage in the New Testament. *Diakonos*, *diakoneō*, and *diakonia* are variously translated "administration," "cared for," "minister," "servant," "serve," "service," "preparations," "relief," "support," and "deacon," among others.

The root idea of serving food comes across in [John 2:5](#), where *diakonos* (deacon) is used of the waiters at a wedding.

**John 2:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

*Diakoneō* ("to serve") is used in the same sense in [Luke 4:39](#), where Peter's mother-in-law served a meal.

**Luke 4:39 (NASB)**

<sup>39</sup> And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.

[Luke 10:40](#); [Luke 17:8](#); and [John 12:2](#) also use this word group to refer to serving food.

**Luke 10:40 (NASB)**

<sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

**Luke 17:8 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup> "But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'?"

**John 12:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup> So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining *at the table* with Him.

