

# Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(22)

## 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.

### Official Public Recognition

#### Acts 6:5-6 (NASB)

<sup>5</sup>The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

<sup>6</sup>And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

### The Apostles Solicit Congregational Involvement

The conflict between the Hellenistic and Hebrew Jews in Jerusalem could have turned into an ugly church division that lasted for decades. Instead, acting in humble accord with one another and the congregation, the apostles peacefully resolved the highly explosive situation. Acts 6 magnificently illustrates that the apostles had learned (after numerous failures of fighting among themselves for name and position) the distinctive principles of Christ like leadership (Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 9:30-35; 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-27). They had learned to be humble and loving shepherds.

As a wise pastoral body, the Twelve knew the importance of involving the entire congregation in solving this problem. The apostles could have acted without the whole congregation, but they didn't, for several key reasons.

First, the apostles knew that they needed to treat the congregation as brothers and sisters in Christ who were indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. The apostles were not the people's priestly clerics, and the people were not their disciples.

Second, the apostles knew that the money belonged to the people, and the widows were the people's responsibility. So the problem was everyone's problem. The

congregation had to share in the responsibility of planning and administering its charitable business.

Third, the apostles sought to protect themselves from potential, sinister charges regarding money and power. The apostles were all Hebrews, not Hellenistic Jews. According to the apostles' plan, the congregation could pick administrators who represented them more equitably. In this way, the apostles could not be accused of partiality.

This was important because, in all likelihood, even the apostles were financially supported by the congregation. If the apostles picked their own men to administer the relief efforts, people could accuse the apostles of controlling the money. The apostles, however, were not concerned about money and control. They were not greedy. Their decision to delegate the responsibility of handling the church's charitable funds to others should be an example to Christian leaders today who think they must control everything, especially the money.

### ***The Congregation Selects Seven Men***

The congregation responded to the apostles' plan with unanimous approval: **“The statement found approval with the whole congregation.”** The congregation immediately proceeded to choose seven men. Luke writes, **“They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.”**

Exactly how the congregation in Jerusalem selected seven of its men is not recorded. It would not have been difficult for the congregation to organize itself for such a selection, for they had ample examples to follow. When feeding massive numbers of people, for instance, our Lord quickly organized them into manageable groups **“of hundreds and of fifties”** for orderly distribution ([Mark 6:40](#)). From its earliest days, the nation of Israel was organized into precisely defined, manageable groups for communication, war, service, and travel ([Exodus 13:18](#); [18:13–27](#); [36:6](#); [Numbers 2:2](#); [7:2](#); [1 Kings 4:7](#)). Congregational decisions and operations were conducted primarily through representatives or heads of clans and towns (**Compare [Leviticus 4:13](#) with [4:15](#); [Exodus 3:15, 16](#); compare [Exodus 4:29](#) with [4:31](#); [Exodus 19:7, 8](#); [Deuteronomy 21:1, 2, 6–9](#)**). So it is quite possible that the congregation in Jerusalem was already organized into similar manageable units. Such organization would enable issues to be decided and information to be passed along quickly ([Acts 12:12, 17](#); [Acts 15:4, 6, 22](#); [Acts 21:17-18](#)).