

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(5)

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)

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

In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Paul lists those qualifications for both male deacons and female deacons (deaconesses). He then closes by mentioning the reward for those who serve faithfully.

Likewise is a key transition word that serves to introduce a new category within the overall topic of church leaders. Having discussed elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Paul now gives five areas in which a deacon must be qualified.

Personal Character

1 Timothy 3:8 (NASB)

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

1. Deacons must be “grave” (*semnous*): serious, honorable, worthy, revered, highly respected, noble.

It is being serious-minded, the very opposite.....

1. of being flippant.
2. of dishonoring oneself.
3. of being shallow by being over-talkative.
4. of having little respect because one is not grave or serious enough.
5. of having a surface religion only.

Men of dignity translates *semnous*, which could also be translated “serious,” or “stately.” *Semnous* contains the idea of being serious in mind as well as in character. It comes from a root word (*sebomai*) that means “to venerate,” or “to worship.”

Those characterized by it have a majestic quality of character that makes people stand in awe of them. A synonym of *semnous*, *hieroprepēs*, “expresses that which beseems a sacred person, thing, or act” (Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 348).

A deacon must not be a silly, flippant person, one who makes light of serious matters. Although not a cold, joyless person, a deacon understands the seriousness of life.

However, note that this does not mean that the deacon is to walk around with a long face, never smiling, joking, or having fun. It simply means that he is serious-minded and committed to Christ and to the mission of the church: the mission of reaching the lost and meeting the needs of the desperate of the world.

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 (NASB)

⁶ So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

⁷ For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

⁸ But since we are of *the day*, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

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 3:11 (NASB)

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

Titus 1:8 (NASB)

⁸ but [A bishop-deacon must be] hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

Titus 2:2 (NASB)

² Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.

Titus 2:5 (NASB)

⁵ *to be sensible*, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

Titus 2:11-13 (NASB)

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

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.

1 Peter 4:7 (NASB)

⁷ The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.