

# Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(7)

## 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,

4. The deacon must not be greedy of worldly gain (see note above, Minister, pt.10—[1 Timothy 3:2-3](#) for discussion).

A deacon must also not be **fond of sordid gain**. He must not use his office as a means to make money. That was an important quality in the early church, since deacons would routinely handle money as part of their official duties.

They would distribute money to widows, orphans, and others in need. The temptation would always be there to steal from those funds, as did Judas ([John 12:4-6](#)).

[John 12:4-6 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said,

<sup>5</sup> "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor *people*?"

<sup>6</sup> Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.

It was essential, then, that deacons be free from any love of money that could compromise their honesty.

## 2. (1 Timothy 3:9-10) Deacon— Church, Officer of: deacons must meet three very important spiritual qualifications.

### 1 Timothy 3:9-10 (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> **but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.**

<sup>10</sup> **These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.**

1. Deacons **must hold to the mystery** of the faith and hold it in good conscience. The mystery of the faith is given in 1 Timothy 3:16:

### 1 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)

<sup>16</sup> **By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.**

“By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness”:

- 1) “God was manifest [revealed] in the flesh”
- 2) “Justified [vindicated] in the Spirit”
- 3) “Seen by angels”
- 4) “Preached [proclaimed] unto the Gentiles”
- 5) “Believed on in the world”
- 6) “Received [taken] up into glory.”

A deacon must believe in the incarnation, in the glorious gospel that God has come to earth in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ to *preach* the love and salvation of God for man. In fact, note what this verse says: **a deacon must** hold within his own heart the mystery of the faith. **He must** possess and cling to it, and **he must** hold it in good conscience. **He must** believe the *whole gospel (mystery)* and not deceive the church by being hypocritical about his belief.

Paul uses the word **mystery** frequently in his writings. It refers to revealed truth previously hidden, but now manifested (cf. Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 15:51; Ephesians 3:3-6; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 1:26).

### Romans 16:25 (NASB)

<sup>25</sup> **Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past.**

### 1 Corinthians 15:51 (NASB)

<sup>51</sup> **Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.**

### Ephesians 3:3-6 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> **that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.**

<sup>4</sup> **By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,**

<sup>5</sup> **which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;**

<sup>6</sup> *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

**[Ephesians 6:19 \(NASB\)](#)**

<sup>19</sup> And *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

**[Colossians 1:26 \(NASB\)](#)**

<sup>26</sup> *That is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints.

**The mystery of the faith** is the New Testament revelation. Such truth was not revealed in the Old Testament.

It encompasses:

- 1) the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ ([1 Timothy 3:16](#)),
- 2) of the indwelling of Christ in believers ([Colossians 1:26-27](#)),
- 3) of the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ ([Ephesians 1:9](#); [Ephesians 3:4-6](#)),
- 4) of the saving gospel ([Colossians 4:3](#)),
- 5) of lawlessness ([2 Thessalonians 2:7](#)), and
- 6) of the rapture of the church ([1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#)).