

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13 (8)

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).

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

1 Timothy 3:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ **but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.**

¹⁰ **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)

¹⁶ **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.**

The faith is the content of New Testament revealed truth. A deacon must hold to it **with a clear conscience**, that is, a conscience that does not accuse him. It is not enough merely to believe the truth (cf. James 2:19), deacons must also live it.

James 2:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ **You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.**

And the stronger the theological and biblical knowledge and obedience, the stronger the affirmation of conscience. Every deacon (and every Christian) should strive to be able to say with Paul, **“For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you”** (2 Corinthians 1:12 (NASB)).

The conscience is a human faculty given by God to every person, which is designed to warn each person when they have violated moral law (cf. [Romans 2:14-15](#)).

Romans 2:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴ For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.

It either accuses or excuses. It either produces guilt, shame, fear, remorse, and despair over sin, or assurance, peace, and joy due to righteousness. The deacon who has a clear conscience is enjoying the latter three.

There is another point about conscience as well: the deacon **must have** a good conscience about living and sharing the mystery of the faith. **He must** not accept the call and office of deacon and then shirk his duties. **He must** hold the mystery of the gospel of the faith in all good conscience, that is, in sharing it faithfully with both believers and unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 1:12 (NASB)

¹² For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

1 Timothy 1:5 (NASB)

⁵ But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1 Timothy 1:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

1 Peter 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ And keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

Christian Service

1 Timothy 3:10 (NASB)

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

2. Deacons must first be proved or tested before they are called to the office of a deacon (see note above, Proven—[1 Timothy 3:6](#) for discussion).

Dokimazō (let [them] be tested) means “to approve after testing.” The present tense of the verb indicates an ongoing test, not a one-time test, or probationary period.

Deacons are to be continually tested before they officially **serve as deacons**. The test in view here is the general assessment of a believer’s service by the church.

Once they become officially recognized as deacons, this evaluation goes on. **Also** refers to the discussion of elders in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#). They, too, are to be continually evaluated by the church.

Moral Purity

[1 Timothy 3:10 \(NASB\)](#)

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

3. Deacons must be “blameless” (see note above, pt.1—[1 Timothy 3:2-3](#)).

Deacons, no less than elders, must be **beyond reproach**. *Aneklētos* (beyond reproach) means “not arraigned” (as in a court), or “unblamable.” In other words, guilty as charged for the offense he is being charged with. They differ in function from elders in that elders are the primary teachers of the church, while deacons help in applying their teaching. Nevertheless, the spiritual requirements for both are the same. Deacons must not have any blot on their lives, nothing for which they could be accused, arraigned, and disqualified.