

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(9)

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.**

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).

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).

Home Life

3. 1 Timothy 3:11-12 Deacons— Church, Officer of: deacons must meet several family qualifications.

1 Timothy 3:11-12 (NASB)

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

¹² Deacons must be husbands of *only* one wife, *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households.

Paul reiterates another key element from the qualifications given for elders. Deacons, too, must **be husbands of only one wife**. The Greek text literally reads “**one-woman men**” (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2).

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.

They must not be unfaithful to their wives either in their actual conduct with other women, or in their minds. As with elders, the issue is moral character, not marital status. They are models of sexual purity.

The Greek of this verse allows the verse to refer to women in the church who served as deaconesses, and indeed, many translators and commentators translate it as referring to deaconesses.

However, this position seems most unlikely, for all the other verses of this passage deal with the deacons of a church. It is much more likely and logical that Paul is talking about the wives of deacons. The greater weight of the context certainly lies with this position.

As a deacon visits and ministers to the women of the church, he needs his wife with him if she is able to accompany him. A strong picture of marital and family love and commitment to Christ are needed.

Therefore, the deacon’s wife must be as strong in the Lord as he is.

1. The deacon must have a wife who is as committed to the Lord and to the church as he is.

- a. The wife of a deacon must be “grave [dignified]” (*semnos*): **serious-minded, honorable, respected, and noble** (see note above, pt.1—1 Timothy 3:8 for discussion).
- b. The wife of a deacon must not be a “slanderer” (*mē diabolous*): **a talebearer, gossip; a person who goes about talking about others, stirring up mischief and disturbance.**

Deacons, like elders, must prove their spiritual character in the home. They are to be **good managers** not only **of their children**, but also of their money, possessions, and everything associated with **their own households**. As with elders’ children, the children of deacons must be believers.

Ephesians 4:31 (NASB)

³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

2 Thessalonians 3:11 (NASB)

¹¹ For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work [serving] at all, but acting like busybodies.

1 Timothy 5:13 (NASB)

¹³ At the same time they also learn *to be* idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper *to mention*.

James 1:26 (NASB)

²⁶ If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man's religion is worthless.

James 3:6 (NASB)

⁶ And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell.

James 4:11 (NASB)

¹¹ Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*.

1 Peter 2:1 (NASB)

¹ Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,

1 Peter 3:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ For, "THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

Psalm 101:5 (NASB)

⁵ Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.

Proverbs 11:9 (NASB)

⁹ With *his* mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.

Proverbs 16:28 (NASB)

²⁸ A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends.

Proverbs 26:22 (NASB)

²² The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.