

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(12)

1 TIMOTHY: DUTIES AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH, 1 Timothy 2:1-3:13

The Overseers of the Church, 1 Timothy 3:1-7

(1 Timothy 3:1-7) Introduction: the office of *bishop* is probably the same office as elder or presbyter or minister in the New Testament. All three words refer to the same person, to the minister of the gospel and of the church (see below Deeper Study #1, Elder—Titus 1:5-9 for more discussion).

- 1) What are the qualifications of the minister?
- 2) Who should be preaching the gospel and filling the pulpits of the Lord's church?
- 3) Who should be considering the ministry—what kind of person?

Before discussing the individual qualifications against which all pastors are to be measured, however, Paul gives some helpful insight into the call to spiritual leadership.

1. The office of minister or bishop (v.1).
2. Personal qualifications (v.2-3).
3. Family qualifications: the minister or bishop must rule his own home (v.4-5).
4. Spiritual qualifications (v.6).
5. Community qualifications (v.7).

2. (1 Timothy 3:2-3) Minister— Bishop— Elder: the minister or bishop of God must be qualified; he must meet some personal qualifications; he must be a person of great Christian character.

1 Timothy 3:2-3 (NASB)

² An overseer, then, **must be above reproach**, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

1. The minister or bishop must be “blameless” (*anepilēmpton*): **above reproach; not open to attack; not able to be criticized by the enemy at all** (*The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol.21, p.50). He must be completely blameless.

Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery was perhaps Britain's greatest military leader during World War II. He was thus eminently qualified to list the qualities necessary to a leader in war. According to Montgomery, such a leader should see the big picture and not become bogged down in details. He must not be petty. He must choose

men well. He should trust those under him and let them get on with their jobs without interference. He must have the power of clear decision. He should inspire confidence. Finally, he must have a proper sense of religious truth and acknowledge it to his troops (**Bernard L. Montgomery**, *Memoirs of Field-Marshal Montgomery* [Cleveland: World, 1958], 74-83).

From a different perspective **John R. Mott**, a world leader in student circles in the early part of this century, gave the following list: Does he do little things well? Has he learned the meaning of priorities? How does he use his leisure? Has he intensity? Has he learned to take advantage of momentum? Has he the power of growth? What is his attitude toward discouragements? How does he face impossible situations? What are his weakest points? (**Basil Matthews**, *John R. Mott: World Citizen* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1934], 332-98).

The Overarching Requirement of a Godly Leader

1 Timothy 3:2-3 (NASB)

² An overseer, then, **must be above reproach**, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

Those lists, and many others like them, contain qualities every church overseer should possess. But pastoring God's people demands far more because the issue is not just leadership, but moral and spiritual example. Summing up that realm of requirement, Paul demands that **an overseer** in the church of Jesus Christ **must be above reproach**. The Greek particle *de* (**must**) emphasizes that this is an absolute necessity. **A life without blame is the overarching requirement for leadership in the church.**