

# Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(14)

## 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)

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

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

### The Overarching Requirement of a Godly Leader

In Titus 1:6, the same idea of being above reproach is conveyed, but a different term (*anengklētos*—“unreprovable”) is used. The present participle *einai* (be) indicates he is in a present state of being above reproach.

**Titus 1:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> *Namely, if any man (must be-KJV) is above reproach (blameless), the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.*

Obviously, it does not mean he has not committed sins in his life. What it does mean is that his life has not been marred by some obvious sinful defect in character which would preclude him setting the highest standard for godly conduct. He must be a model for the congregation to follow (cf. [Philippians 3:17](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:9](#); [Hebrews 13:7](#); [1 Peter 5:3](#)). He also **must not** give the enemies of the church reason to attack its reputation.

**Philippians 3:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> Brethren, **join in following my example**, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

**2 Thessalonians 3:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> not because we do not have the right *to this*, **but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you**, so that you would follow our example.

**Hebrews 13:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> **Obey your leaders and submit to them**, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

**1 Peter 5:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, **but proving to be examples to the flock**.

Pastors must take great care to remain above reproach for several reasons.

**1) First**, they are the special targets of Satan, and he will assault them with more severe temptation than others. Those on the front lines of the spiritual battle will bear the brunt of satanic opposition.

**2) Second**, their fall has a greater potential for harm. Satan knows that when a shepherd falls, the effect on the sheep is devastating.

**3) Third**, leaders' greater knowledge of the truth, and accountability to live it, brings greater chastening when they sin.

**4) Fourth**, elders' sins are more hypocritical than others' because they preach against the very sins they commit.

Leaders need an abundance of God's **grace** and **power** because of their greater **responsibility** and **visibility**.

To protect themselves leaders must spend in-depth time in the study of God's Word. They must be **"constantly nourished on the words of the faith [Scripture] and of the sound doctrine"** ([1 Timothy 4:6](#)).

**1 Timothy 4:6 (NASB)**

**<sup>6</sup>In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.**

The psalmist wrote, **“Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11 (NASB))**. A leader must continuously expose his life to the light of the Word of God. He must also be a man of prayer, and be accountable to others in spiritual fellowship.

The church is called to be committed to maintaining leadership that is godly. The church is responsible to measure men by the standard of **above reproach**. The all too common practice today is to forgive a leader who sins and immediately restore him to his ministry. The church, like God, must not hesitate to forgive those who truly repent.

To immediately restore them to the ministry, however, lowers the standard that God expects leaders to follow. And since leaders serve as the pattern of holiness and virtue for the congregation, the standard for the entire church is lowered.