

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(19)

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.

- 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)

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

The Moral Character of a Godly Leader (continuation)

6. The minister or bishop must be given to “**hospitality**” (*philoxenon*): **to have an open heart and home; “showing love or being a friend to the believers, especially strangers or foreigners” (Amplified New Testament).**

The minister helps and entertains as much as he can. He does not open his heart, home, time, or money to the things of the world; **but he uses what resources he has to help and minister to people.**

Sixth, church leaders must be **hospitable**. That word translates *philoxenos*, a compound word from the Greek words for “**to love,**” and “**strangers.**” The word thus literally means “**to love strangers.**” It is a frequently commanded Christian virtue (see

below cf. [Romans 12:13](#); [Hebrews 13:2](#); [1 Peter 4:9](#)). It does not refer to entertaining friends, but showing hospitality to strangers. Our Lord said in [Luke 14:12](#),

[Luke 14:12-14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and *that* will be your repayment.

¹³ But when you give a reception, invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,*

¹⁴ and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Persecution, poverty, orphans, widows, and traveling Christians made hospitality essential in New Testament times. They had no hotels or motels, and the inns were notoriously evil. Often they were brothels, or places where travelers were robbed or beaten.

William Barclay wrote of them,

“In the ancient world, inns were notoriously bad. In one of Aristophane’s plays Heracles asks his companion where they will lodge for the night; and the answer is: “Where the fleas are fewest.” Plato speaks of the inn-keeper being like a pirate who holds his guests to ransom. Inns tended to be dirty and expensive and, above all, immoral. The ancient world had a system of what were called *Guest Friendships*. Over generations families had arrangements to give each other accommodations and hospitality. Often the members of the families came in the end to be unknown to each other by sight and identified themselves by means of what were called *tallies*.

The stranger seeking accommodation would produce one half of some object; the host would possess the other half of the tally; and when the two halves fitted each other the host knew that he had found his guest, and the guest knew that the host was indeed the ancestral friend of his household.

In the Christian church there were wandering teachers and preachers who needed hospitality. There were also many slaves with no homes of their own to whom it was a great privilege to have the right of entry to a Christian home. It was of the greatest blessing that Christians should have Christian homes ever open to them in which they could meet people like-minded to themselves.” (*The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975], 82; italics in original)

The door of the Christian home, as well as the heart of the Christian family, ought to be open to all who come in need. That is especially true of the overseer. Elders are not elevated to a place where they are unapproachable. They are to be available. A pastor’s life and home are to be open so that his true character is manifest to all who come there, friend or stranger. ([Romans 12:13](#); [1 Timothy 3:2](#); [1 Timothy 5:10](#); [Titus 1:8](#); [Hebrews 13:2](#); [1 Peter 4:9](#))