

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(26)

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).

3. (1 Timothy 3:4-5) Minister— Bishop— Elder: the minister or bishop must meet one very significant family qualification.

1 Timothy 3:4-5 (NASB)

⁴ He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all [gravity] dignity

⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

The minister or bishop must rule his own household and rule it well. The home is a miniature of the church; the home is the proving ground for leadership in the church. The husband is the head of the home. This does not mean that he is the dictator, tyrant, or bully of the home. It means that he is the leader of the wife and children.

He leads them all.....

1. in the building of a loving, joyful, and peaceful home.
2. in the fulfillment of their life calling and task upon earth.

It means that the man is not bossed about or dominated by his wife; that he does not allow his children to disobey, rebel, or talk back to him or their mother; that he takes the lead in controlling his home for Christ and His kingdom.

Note the word “gravity” (*semnotēs*). It means dignity. The minister must rule his home with dignity, respect, and love. As the *Amplified New Testament* says: “With true dignity, commanding their respect in every way and keeping them respectful.”

As Scripture says, “(But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)”, [1 Timothy 3:5 \(NASB\)](#)

The most important qualities leaders can demonstrate are not intelligence, a forceful personality, glibness, diligence, vision, administrative skills, decisiveness, courage, humor, tact, or any other similar natural attribute. **Those all play a part, but the most desirable quality for any leader is integrity.**

While integrity is most desirable in secular leadership, its absence is fatal to spiritual leadership. Underlining this, **John Stott** writes,

“Communication is by symbol as well as speech. For “a man cannot only preach, he must also live. And the life that he lives, with all its little peculiarities, is one of two things: either it emasculates his preaching or it gives it flesh and blood” [J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presb. & Ref., 1960), 93].

Charles Spurgeon writes,

“We cannot hide what we are. Indeed, what we are speaks as plainly as what we say. When these two voices blend, the impact of the message is doubled. But when they contradict each other, even the positive witness of the one is negated by the other.

This was the case with the man Spurgeon describes as a good preacher but a bad Christian: he “preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit everybody said he ought never to come out again, and when he was out of it they all declared he never ought to enter it again.” [*Lectures to My Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 1:12-13].

It is at this point that a practical problem presents itself to us. Pastors are told to be models of Christian maturity. (*Between Two Worlds* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 264)

All leadership seeks to accomplish one goal: influence. Leaders seek to influence people to achieve their objectives. Influence is a direct result of teaching and example.

What a man is will influence his followers to be fully committed to what he says. Teaching sets the nails into the mind, but example is the hammer that drives them in deep.

Not surprisingly, the Scripture has much to say about the power of example to influence behavior, both for good and for evil. In [Leviticus 18:3\(NASB\)](#) God warned Israel not to follow the example of their pagan neighbors: “**You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes.**”

[Deuteronomy 18:9\(NASB\)](#) repeats that warning: “**When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.**”