

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(28)

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)

⁴He 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?),

It is not enough for a leader in the church to teach the truth, he must also model it.

Richard Baxter writes,

“It is not likely that the people will much regard the doctrine of such men, when they see that they do not live as they preach. They will think that he doth not mean as he speaks, if he do not live as he speaks. They will hardly believe a man that seemeth not to believe himself.” (*The Reformed Pastor* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1979], 84)

Integrity is living what you teach and preach. That is why all the qualifications for leaders given in this passage describe their moral character. It is not the typical list a corporate analyst might come up with, because the issue is not leadership skills, but spiritual example.

One who would lead people to Christlikeness must be a pattern of godly behavior for his people to follow. He must be above reproach in his moral life, home life, spiritual maturity, and public reputation.

The Home Life of a Godly Leader

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?),***

It is *not enough* for the overseer to have an *exemplary personal life*; he must also have an *exemplary home life*. He must not be, like **Talkative in Pilgrim's Progress**, "a saint abroad, and a devil at home" (**John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* [reprint; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976], 76**).

The family is the proving ground for leadership skills.

Throughout history, there have been those who advocated celibacy for spiritual leaders. Such a faction existed in Ephesus (cf. **1 Timothy 4:3**).

1 Timothy 4:3 (NASB)

³ ***Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.***

In contrast, however, the Word of God assumes that a leader will be married and have a family. Although that does not eliminate single men, it is nevertheless the norm. Spiritual leaders are to be successful leaders in the family.

1 Timothy 3:4 (NASB)

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

Manages means "presides," or "has authority over." The same word is translated "rule" in **1 Timothy 5:17**, showing the link between leading the home and leading the church.

1 Timothy 5:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ ***The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.***