

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

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.

This opening verse suggests six facets related to the call to ministry:

- It is an
- 1) important calling,
 - 2) a limited calling,
 - 3) a compelling calling,
 - 4) a responsible calling,
 - 5) a worthy calling, and
 - 6) a demanding calling.

An Important Calling

1 Timothy 3:1a (NASB)

¹ **It is a trustworthy statement:** if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.

When Saul failed to be a godly king over Israel God sought out David, “a man after His own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14).

1 Samuel 13:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ “But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”

In Ezekiel 22:30 (NASB) God cries out, “I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.”

George Liddell wrote,
Give me a man of God—one man,
Whose faith is master of his mind,
And I will right all wrongs
And bless the name of all mankind.

Give me a man of God—one man,
Whose tongue is touched with heaven's fire,
And I will flame the darkest hearts
With high resolve and clean desire.

Give me a man of God—one man,
One mighty prophet of the Lord,
And I will give you peace on earth,
Bought with a prayer and not a sword.

Give me a man of God—one man,
True to the vision that he sees,
And I will build your broken shrines,
And bring the nations to their knees.

(Cited in **J. Oswald Sanders**,
Spiritual Leadership, rev. ed.
[Chicago: Moody, 1980], 17-18)

That is the kind of man God seeks to lead His redeemed people. Such men are **“those who are willing to suffer for the sake of objectives great enough to demand their wholehearted obedience”** (Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 20).

Such a man was **Samuel Logan Brengle**, one of the early leaders of the **Salvation Army**. He wrote,

[Spiritual leadership] is not won by promotion, but by many prayers and tears. It is attained by confessions of sin, and much heart searching and humbling before God; by self-surrender, a courageous sacrifice of every idol, a bold, deathless, uncompromising and uncomplaining embracing of the cross, and by an eternal, unfaltering looking unto Jesus crucified. It is not gained by seeking great things for ourselves, but rather, like Paul, by counting those things that are gain to us as loss for Christ. That is a great price, but it must be unflinchingly paid by him who would be not merely a nominal but a real spiritual leader of men, a leader whose power is recognized and felt in heaven, on earth and in hell. (*The Soul-Winner's Secret* [London: The Salvation Army, 1918], 22)

The call to lead the church is so important that only the noblest need apply.