

ATTRIBUTES OF CHURCH LEADERS (1 TIMOTHY 3)

1 Timothy 3:1-7. About Elders. Now here's something you can trust, something to remember: if anyone aspires to be an overseer (elder, bishop, pastor), he aspires to noble work. Now the overseer must:

1. Be above reproach.
2. The husband of one wife.
3. Temperate.
4. Self-controlled.
5. Respectable.
6. Hospitable.
7. Able to teach.
8. Not given to drunkenness.
9. Gentle, not violent.
10. Not quarrelsome.
11. Not a lover of money.
12. Manage his own family well.
13. Sees that his children obey him with proper respect (After all, if he can manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)
14. Not a recent convert (i.e., not a novice); otherwise he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.
15. Possess a good reputation with outsiders, so he won't fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-XX

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, [ἐπισκοπῆς, traditionally bishop] he desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

- Q Do you view these attributes as ideal or finitely required? For example (see verse 4), must a bishop (overseer, elder, pastor) have children (as in more than one) in order to "qualify" as a candidate for elder?
- Q Which attribute do you see most important? Least important?
- Q Which attribute do you believe would be the most difficult to assess?
- Q Which attribute do pastors have the most difficulty possessing and maintaining?
- Q When does a person stop being a pastor/elder/overseer/bishop?

1 Timothy 3:8-13. *About Deacons.* Similarly, deacons (aka waiter, servant, minister) are to be men who are:

1. Worthy of respect.
2. Sincere.
3. Not indulging in much wine.
4. Not pursuing dishonest gain.
5. Keeping hold of the deep truths of the faith, with a clear conscience.
6. Tested, and if nothing against them arises, let them serve as deacons.
7. Have wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, but temperate, trustworthy in everything.
8. Husband of one wife, and also must manage his children and household well.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

¹¹In the same way, their wives [some mss. read *way*, *deaconesses*] are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

¹²A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

¹³Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Note: those who have served well achieve an excellent standing and assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

- Q Which attribute must an elder have that is not necessarily an attribute a deacon must have?
- Q Should an elder/pastor/bishop/overseer be required to serve as a deacon first?
- Q Why did Southern Baptists eliminate deaconesses in the early 20th century? Why did we have deaconesses in the early church?
- Q Do the wives of deacons have a higher level of expectation than their husbands or elders?
- Q Why does deacon service improve a deacon's standing and assurance in their faith in the Christ?
- Q When does a person stop being a deacon?

1 Timothy 3:14-16. *A Personal Note.* I'm hoping to come to you soon, so I'm writing these instructions so that if I'm delayed, you'll know how people should conduct themselves in God's household—the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the Truth. Beyond all question, the secret of godliness is mega!

God appeared in the flesh.

God was vindicated by Holy Spirit.

God was seen by angels.

God was preached among the pagans.

God was believed on in the world.

God was taken up in glory.

- Q So what is the purpose of listing these attributes of church leaders and servants?
- Q How is the church the pillar and foundation of Truth? What aspects of truth does the church overlook the most?

1 TIMOTHY 3:14-16

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:

He [some mss read *God*] appeared in a body [some mss read *in the flesh*], was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.