

Qualifications of Elders and Deacons of the Church.

Read 1st Timothy 3:1-7

- Here is the second time Paul has said “the saying is trustworthy”. He first said it back in 1:15. This expression is to call out the importance of what is about to be said. It should be followed very closely. Christians not only during the time of Ephesus, but today in churches all over the world.
- The “office of overseer” – “As goes the leaders, so goes the church” - [Peter Scazzero, The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives](#)
 - The word translated “overseer” in the ESV is episkopos meaning watcher, patron, or protector. Athenians used the term for state officials. [Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus \(Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary\) pg.83.](#)
 - Paul saw this as a noble task for someone to oversee the church and its goings on, but an overseer had to be different than the others within the Church. Had to be disciplined and focused on the Holy Spirit and as we know or experience in our own Christian walk we do not always walk by the Spirit.
- An Elder had to be a husband of one wife, sober minded, self-controlled, respectable, and hospitable. Must be able to teach which means teachable, not a drunkard (does not mean he can't drink alcohol but must have self-control and not abuse it). Not violent (easily angered) nor argumentative (quarrelsome). And, above all must not put money first.
 - Hospitable means to love strangers and treat them as his own.
- An Elder within the church must manage his house well. Meaning, provider, loving husband and disciplined children. Paul says look at how they manage themselves and their household. If they can't do that, how are they going to manage a church (the body of Christ, not a building).
- Elders must not be a recent convert.
 - New converts are brimming over with fire for God. Soaking up scripture and sharing all their newfound truth with anyone who will listen. But "for all their authenticity and enthusiasm, they cannot offer stable leadership." [Insights on 1](#)

[& 2 Timothy, Titus \(Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary\)](#)
[pg.89.](#)

- The ability to be like Jesus and lead others cannot develop overnight. New believers often allow their enthusiasm and idealism to carry them headlong into trouble. Pride begins to rear its ugly head and that is the "devil" Paul is talking about.
- Elders must be respected by non-Christians as well as Christians. The worst thing a Christian can do is alienate the Pagan world with their haughty and “holier than thou” attitude. They must be humble in and outside of the church and carry the respect for others as others respect him. Paul ends verse 7 with warning of Pride again. That snare of the devil.

Read 1st Timothy 3:8-13

- Deacon is translated from the Greek term diakonos meaning servant or one who waits tables. “The Christians living in Jerusalem during the earliest days of the church selected this lowly term to designate a highly esteemed role within the congregation.” [Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus \(Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary\) pg.95.](#)
- Paul here turns from Elder to Deacon using the Greek word hosautos meaning likewise or in like manner. [Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus \(Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary\) pg.97.](#)
 - In time these Deacons could become Elders (Overseers) over time, so their character and name had to mirror the Elders, but with maybe a little less experience.
 - Paul begins by explaining these young Deacons should first understand to have discretion and be without duplicity. Double- tongued meaning you are one way in the world and another way at church.
 - Be not addicted to wine. Again, wine consumption is fine, but drinking too much and putting it above all else is what Paul is stating hear. Paul is not saying to abstain from drinking wine but keep it in perspective.
 - Do not be greedy for dishonorable gains but be humble and not a lover of money.

- Deacons must hold the mystery of the faith. This means they must understand the truth of Christ and of redemption and the truth of the Gospel. It could be that other Deacons within the Ephesus churches were teaching false doctrine and leading people astray. A clear conscience meaning a Deacon had to follow the Gospel and teach the Gospel and nothing else.
 - The key Greek term in the phrase, "these men must also first be tested" is imperative form of the verb dokimazo to test or examine. This verb is based on the word doke meaning watching. the verb dokimazo and the adjective dokimos "tested" were commonly used in the trade and crafting of metals. The most reliable means of determining the worth of a coin or ingot is to heat it to the point of melting and see what it is made of. The term is used figuratively of warriors in battle and leaders in adversity. Deacons must be tested and examined to see how they respond to difficulties. [Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus \(Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary\) pg.100.](#)
- Deacons' wives must conduct themselves with dignity and not be gossips or slanderers and be sober minded. Meaning keeping their emotions in check when it matters. They must only have one wife and no divorces and manage their children with discipline and their own household just as Elders.
- Those who serve well in this role will be in good standings with the community and the church and will have great confidence in the faith that is in Christ.
 - I believe the Holy Spirit strengthens those that do these things.

Read 1st Timothy 3:14-15

- We don't know if Paul ever made it to Macedonia; Timothy's crisis in Ephesus persuaded him to reverse course. Whatever the circumstances, he clearly sent this letter ahead to buoy Timothy's confidence, to establish an enduring charter for the church in Ephesus, and to reinforce Timothy's authority as their spiritual leader. [Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus \(Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary\) pg.107.](#)

- Church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth. We as Christians have a role in publicly presenting the truth before the world. The truth of the Gospel is found in and proclaimed to the world by God's church which is us.

Read 1st Timothy 3:16

- Here is what many scholars believe is a hymnal to the deity of Christ and His life and death. Verse 16 could be a fragment of an early Christian hymn or creed.
- Chronological progression of the hymn -[Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus \(Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary\) pg.112.](#)
 - Incarnation – He was manifested in the flesh.
 - Resurrection - Vindicated by the Spirit.
 - Ascension – Seen by Angels.
 - Evangelization – Proclaimed among the nations.
 - Affirmation – Believed on in the world.
 - Accession – Taken up in glory.