

June 08, 2025



CHURCH

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Week Two:
The Qualities
of Leaders

Central Church of Christ
Dalton, GA



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the qualities of leaders

week two

Last week, we began discussing the topic of church leadership. As we identify additional men to serve, it's helpful to pause and consider the kind of person we have in mind.

If you were to spend a few minutes browsing ministry job listings online, you'd likely see education and experience at the top of the requirements. But in ancient times, leadership was rooted more in character than in credentials.

Onasander, a writer from the same era as Paul, offered a character sketch of the ideal general. In *Strategikos I*, he described such a leader as "prudent, self-controlled, sober, frugal, enduring in toil, intelligent, without love of money, neither young nor old, if possible the father of a family, able to speak competently, and of good reputation."

Like Onasander's sketch of a general, the apostle Paul wrote two character sketches that outline the traits and qualities of church leaders. While these lists differ, they capture the kind of man Paul envisioned as a leader in the church.

Here are three general qualities of church leaders:

Approachable: Men who are easy to talk to, relatable, and can offer sound, biblical guidance.

Stable: Men who have demonstrated steady spiritual maturity in their homes, relationships, and daily life.

Invested: Men who work well with others, handle pressure, and are committed to serving and solving problems sensibly.

Shane Robinson
shane@ccocdalton.org

Sermon Outline

This lesson focuses on what church leaders look like and briefly touches on the primary passages that discuss church leaders.

Who Are Church Leaders?

- From the early days of the church, men with proven Character were appointed to positions of church leadership (Ac. 6:1-7; 14:23; 20:17-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9).
- These leaders, commonly known as elders and deacons, were Entrusted with different levels of responsibility within a local congregation (Phil. 1:1; cp. Mt. 16:21; Ac. 22:5).
- Although there are differences in Function, both roles require a commitment to serve the church in ways that honor Christ and strengthen the body (1 Pet. 5:3).

What Do Church Leaders Look Like?

- Sketch 1: Someone you feel Comfortable turning to in time of need (Prov. 11:14). Who is someone I would naturally turn to for help, advice, or prayer?

Parakaleo (Tit. 1:9): to encourage, comfort, give instruction

- Sketch 2: Someone who is Reasonable and moderate in their behavior (Prov. 17:27). Who do I know that consistently lives out their faith in public and private life?

Sophrona (1 Tim. 3:2): sensible, level-headed, not impulsive

- Sketch 3: Someone who works Well with others and is a team player (Prov. 15:18). Does this person work well within a system and remain steady in the midst of conflict?

Amachos (1 Tim. 3:3): able to resolve, not create, conflict

bible class info

An Intro to Church Leadership (2)

Primary Text: Titus 1:5-6a

Appointing Church Leaders

“... and appoint...”

While Titus had a specific role to play, appointing leaders also involved *participation* from the congregation.

Example 1: Church leaders Proposed men who met the qualifications (Acts 1:21-23).

Example 2: Church leaders told the Church to propose men who met the qualifications (Acts 6:3-6).

Example 3: Church leaders Appointed elders with prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23).

Approaches to Church Government

“..elders in every city...”

Episcopal Model – One individual over multiple churches.

Presbyterian Model – A group over multiple churches.

Congregational Model – Authority within local congregation.

We follow the congregational model of church governance. In this model, the biblical terms elder, bishop, and pastor are understood to refer to the *same* role (Ac. 20:19-28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Elder: older, mature, experienced, wise (1 Tim. 3:6; 5:17).

Bishop: take care of or superintend (Lk. 12:42; Heb. 13:17).

Pastor: to shepherd, watch, protect, or lead. (Mk. 9:36).

Congregations are overseen by a Plurality: of elders, and often assisted by deacons and evangelists (Phil. 1:1; Eph. 4:11).

Qualities of Church Leaders

"If a man is..."

Is anyone Truly blameless? There is a difference between ongoing *progress* and *persistent* disqualifying behavior. Leaders are not expected to be perfect, but their lives should consistently reflect spiritual maturity.

Which traits are Flexible and which are non-negotiable? Some qualities, like hospitality, show different *degrees*. Others, like being free from drunkenness, are moral absolutes that must be *consistently* demonstrated.

How do we Avoid being either too lenient or too strict in evaluating potential leaders? This issue often surfaces when discussing family qualifications. For instance, what does "having faithful children mean" or "husband of one wife"? We must seek a balanced approach that neither *excuses* clear disqualifications nor *adds* expectations not found in Scripture.

scripture reading

1 Timothy 3:1-7

"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (1 Timothy 3:1-7, NKJV)

* The New King James Version. Thomas Nelson, 1982.