

Sermon Notes 6/12/22

“The Ministry of Elders”

What is the ministry of elders?

1. It is being an overseer and a _____.

1 Timothy 3:1
Acts 20:17, 28

2. It is a _____ work.

1 Timothy 3:1
Ephesians 4:11-12

3. It is being above _____.

1 Timothy 3:2
1 Peter 5:2-3

4. It is _____ God’s church.

1 Timothy 3:2-3
1 Timothy 5:17

5. It is _____ God’s church.

1 Timothy 3:4-5
Hebrews 13:17



Jesus is the Chief Shepherd of the Church (1 Peter 5:4).

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 7: June 12-19

1 Timothy 3:1-7

All churches need competent and trustworthy men to serve as leaders. There was a problem in the church at Ephesus because some men were teaching false doctrines (1 Tim. 1:3). These people wanted to be recognized as teachers, but they were not qualified (1 Tim. 1:7). Six years earlier, Paul warned the elders that this would happen (Acts 20:29-30). In 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Paul gave Timothy a detailed list of qualifications for elders. In Titus 1:5-9, Paul gave Titus a very similar list. These passages are important for us today. Every church must understand what the Bible says about the ministry of elders.

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7

1. What did Paul say about a man who wants to be an overseer? (3:1)

While overseers should have a desire to lead God's people, Paul is not stating this as a qualification. The list of qualifications starts after the phrase "the overseer must be" in verse 2. There were many people in Ephesus who wanted to be leaders in the church. Paul was telling Timothy that this is a good problem have, but before he starts appointing men to leadership, he must make sure they are qualified.

2. What does it mean to be "above reproach"? (3:2)

This does not mean that the person is perfect or sinless. Rather it means that no one can bring a valid accusation against the character of this person. C. Michael Moss writes,

These "qualifications" fall under the general rubric of the first qualification: he "must be above reproach." In the section which follows, Paul is simply clarifying what it means to be above reproach... Paul will repeat this call for being above reproach in his discussion of widows (5:7) and in his plea for Timothy himself (6:14).¹

¹ C. Michael Moss, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy and Titus* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 69.

There are three different Greek words the New Testament uses to describe the ministry of elders. *Presbuteros* is the word for “elder.” *Episkopos* is the word for “overseer” or “bishop.” *Poimen* is the word for “shepherd” or “pastor.” All three of these words are used to refer to the same ministry (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

3. What is the first qualification Paul mentions after “above reproach”? (3:2)

The phrase “a husband of one wife” literally means “a one-woman man.” The emphasis is on the character trait of marital faithfulness (see also 1 Tim. 5:9). William Mounce observes,

The historical assumption, continued from 2:12, is that the overseers are male... That it is first on the list after “above reproach” as it is in Titus 1:6 (beyond reproach), suggests that marital faithfulness is a serious problem in the Ephesian church. Paul repeats this same qualification in Titus 1:6 and in 1 Tim 3:12 (to deacons).²

4. Why do church leaders need to be temperate, self-controlled, and respectable? (3:2)

Most of the qualifications in this passage are the same character traits that God wants all Christians to develop and demonstrate. Being temperate means being sober, clear-headed, and balanced. Being self-controlled means thinking carefully before acting or reacting. Being respectable means being orderly, dependable, and virtuous.

5. Why is it important for church leaders to be hospitable? (3:2)

6. Why is it important for church leaders to be able to teach? (3:2)

7. What do you think the NIV means when it says “not given to drunkenness” in verse 3? What do other translations say?

² William Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2016), 170.

8. How can we know if a man is violent or quarrelsome rather than gentle? (3:3)

9. Why must church leaders not be lovers of money? (3:3)

Like many religious leaders today, the false teachers in Ephesus were looking for an easy way to get rich (1 Tim. 6:3-10). Being free from greed is often mentioned when the Bible talks about church leadership (Acts 20:33; 1 Tim. 3:8; 2 Tim 3:6-7; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2).

10. How must church leaders manage their own families? (3:4)

William Hendriksen writes,

The so-called “progressive” idea of permitting the child to do as he pleases finds no support in Scripture. But though authority must be exercised, this must be done “with true dignity,” that is, it must be done in such a manner that the father’s *firmness* makes it *advisable* for the child to obey, that his *wisdom* makes it *natural* for the child to obey, and that his *love* makes it a *pleasure* for the child to obey.³

11. Why is good family management a qualification for being an overseer? (3:5)

12. Why shouldn’t the overseer be a new convert? (3:6)

13. Why must an overseer have a good reputation with outsiders? (3:7)

14. If you applied the list of qualifications for this passage to yourself, how would you measure up?

15. How can you improve your reputation with the unbelievers in your life?

16. What quality from the list in this passage will you work on this week? How?

³ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1957), 127.