The Role of Pastors in the Church

1 Timothy 3:1-7



"What does this passage have to do with my life? I'm not a pastor."

That is a good question. If you are not a pastor, you might be tempted to think these verses are only for the men who stand behind the pulpit. But the truth is that the leadership of the church affects every member of the church.

The church is not made up of lumber, steel, bricks, and mortar. The church is made up of people—people purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. The spiritual health of a congregation is greatly influenced by the character and leadership of its pastors.

Should a pastor ever be casual about God, holiness, the Word of God, missions, or the Gospel? Absolutely not! These are matters of eternal significance. That is why God has given His church qualifications for its leaders.

The Bible uses the terms overseer, elder, and pastor to describe complementary aspects of the same pastoral office. The pastor oversees the work, provides spiritual leadership, and shepherds the flock. Deacons serve the congregation by meeting practical needs and supporting the ministry of the church.

Overseers/Pastors/Elders are servant leaders
Deacons are leading servants
Both offices require godly character.

1 Pastors Must Lead Under the Authority of Christ

Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy3:1

Colossians 1:18 reminds us that Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the church. That truth establishes the foundation for everything we believe about pastoral leadership.

- The church belongs to Jesus Christ, not to the pastor.
- A pastor is a servant of the One who purchased the church with His own blood.
- Pastors remain accountable to Scripture and should lead with humility, wisdom, and a willingness to receive godly counsel.

2 Pastors Must Care for the Body of Christ

1 Peter 5:2–3

That gives us a beautiful picture of pastoral ministry. A pastor is a shepherd who cares for people.

- He leads the sheep to pasture.
- He provides nourishment.
- He protects them from danger.
- He searches for those who wander.
- He cares for those who are injured.

He does not simply count the sheep and walk away. He stays involved in their lives.

3 Pastors Must Model the Character of Christ

1 Timothy 3:2–7 (see also Titus 1:5–9)

This is the heart of Paul's instruction. When Paul describes the qualifications of an overseer, he focuses heavily on the man's character.

A. In His Personal Life

1. To be **above reproach** does not mean to be sinless. It means his life should not be characterized by a pattern of conduct that brings legitimate disgrace upon his ministry. His character and behavior should be consistent with his profession of faith.
2. He must be **temperate and prudent**—sober-minded, self-controlled, and capable of making wise decisions. He must not be controlled by alcohol, anger, selfish desires, or other destructive habits.
3. He must **not be violent or quarrelsome.** He must be gentle and peaceable without compromising the truth.
4. And he **must be free from the love of money.** His heart must be devoted to Christ, not the accumulation of wealth.

B. In His Family Life

Paul writes that an overseer must be the husband of one wife, manage his household well, and see that his children obey him with proper respect.

- The pastor's home should provide credible evidence of his character, faithfulness, and ability to exercise loving, responsible leadership.
- Ministry must not become an excuse to neglect one's family.

C. In His Spiritual Life

- He must be able to ***teach*** and must not be a recent convert.
- He must explain Scripture accurately, teach sound doctrine, and help the congregation understand how God's truth applies to everyday life.
- He must demonstrate spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity takes time. It develops as a believer walks with Christ through joy and hardship, learns to depend on God's grace, receives correction, and grows in obedience.

D. In His Social Life

- He must be **hospitable.** He should be willing to welcome people, show genuine concern, and make room in his life for others.
- He must have a ***good reputation*** with those outside the church. His life should not be marked by dishonesty, hypocrisy, arrogance, or scandalous behavior.

No one can live these out perfectly. No pastor can. Don't let that be your expectation. You will be greatly disappointed if it is... because all of us have numerous sins to confess and repent of every single day. Every pastor is a fallen servant in need of grace. But you should expect good repent-ers, and men that have the character of Jesus that you can and should imitate and follow.

Please understand this is a standard we all should strive for as men. V. 1 "aspire to"

Young men, you should strive for maturity and the characteristics of a pastor. Whether the Lord ever calls you to that or not.

Please understand that Satan sets his sights on such a man. He baits the trap in these qualities to destroy your pastor and to destroy your church. They need your prayers.

4 The Challenge to the Shepherds of Christ

Acts 20:28-31

Sense the gravity and the responsibility and the accountability of these verses. God has established a high standard for pastoral leadership.

- Every pastor is a sinner who needs the grace of God.
- We should not expect perfection, but neither should we use human imperfection as an excuse to ignore biblical qualifications.
- There is a difference between a man who struggles against sin, confesses it, and pursues repentance and a man who persistently excuses sin, refuses correction, and brings reproach upon the name of Christ.

God protect us!