

The Qualifications of Elders (1)

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Introduction: The Lord expects every church to appoint qualified men to be elders!

- A. It is the Lord's will that elders oversee a local church!
 - 1. This was a major focus of the apostles. (**Acts 14:23**)
 - 2. This is a God given obligation of an evangelist. (**Titus 1:5**)
- B. Jesus equipped His church with these men. (**Eph 4:11-13**)
 - 1. Another term for an elder is a pastor or shepherd.
 - 2. As a shepherd works with sheep, the elder works with people! (**Acts 20:17; 28**)
- C. Where do elders come from?
 - 1. They come from men who build a strong Christian character!
 - 2. They come from men who have spent their lives working and serving others!
 - 3. I could title these lessons: "The Christian's Character". Every Christian needs to examine their lives in this study.
 - 4. In a few weeks you will be asked to apply this material. Are you ready?
- D. We will consider these qualifications in six categories: character, reputation, domestic relations, experience, habits, and ability. (**1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9**)

I. The Character of an Elder

- A. He must desire the office. (**1 Tim 3:1**)
 - 1. To desire means: "to stretch one's self out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire"
 - 2. Why does he have this attitude? Because he loves God and the great work involved in serving Him! Our children need to be taught this.
 - 3. In this desire there must not be worldly ambition. If you desire this work what will you do if the brethren decide you are not qualified at this time?
- B. He must be holy. (**Titus 1:8**)
 - 1. There must be a hatred of sin and a love for righteousness. (**Heb 1:9**)
 - 2. If a man does not have this within his character, he will quickly be moved to make decisions based upon what the brethren wants! How many men have caved in to the statement: "If we do not do this then several families are going to leave!" (**2 Tim 4:3**)
- C. He must be just. (**Titus 1:8**)
 - 1. This is defined as: "1) in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God 2) rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them."
 - 2. By learning the character of God this man strives to be like Him.
 - 3. Elders will often be called upon to judge others without partiality. (**1 Tim 5:21**)
- D. He must be gentle. (**1 Tim 3:3**)
 - 1. This means he is: "equitable, fair, mild, gentle."
 - 2. This gentleness will go a long way in helping another face some hard truths!
 - 3. Do others often become angry with you to your puzzlement? Consider learning

the quality of gentleness! (Ex. Dentist) **(2 Tim 2:24-26)**

E. He must have good behavior. **(1 Tim 3:2)**

1. This carries the ideal of modest behavior, that which is well arranged.
2. This eliminates the flamboyant lifestyle that draws attention to self!

II. The Reputation of an Elder

A. He must be blameless. **(1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6, 7)**

1. This means that no blame or reproach can be proved against him.
2. This does not mean that he is sinless but rather he can no longer be held to blame before God or men! He has made things right.
3. This does not allow for others to bring out old "skeletons in the closet" and use it against him. Why have you waited until now to bring it up?
4. This is another reason why it is important to make confession of sin that others know about throughout your life!

B. He must have a good testimony from those who are outside. **(1 Tim 3:7)**

1. This is what others see concerning your character!
2. How many times have I know of a man to have a good reputation at church but later find out how he acted at work and at home! I was shocked after I became a Christian at some who I previously worked with who were 'members of the church.'

C. He must be hospitable. **(1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)**

1. This means "one who is generous to guests, loving towards guests and having a love of strangers."
2. How many in this church regularly open their homes or seek to arrange occasions to be with other Christians? How many here are hospitable?
3. A man cannot be involved with others without spending time with them outside services. Until he can do this, he cannot be an elder.

D. He must not be violent. **(1 Tim 3:3)**

1. He must not be quick to fight or strike back in words.
2. Here is where you learn if a man has learned how to forgive. If a man cannot deal with bitterness he will often lose control of himself. **(Eph 4:31-32)**

E. He must not be greedy for money. **(1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Pt 5:2)**

1. A man will either give his life for money or for serving God. We must not view a successful businessman as automatically being a good elder!
2. Some men will cheat the IRS, take advantage of others unfairly for a dollar!

F. He must not be covetous. **(1 Tim 3:3)**

1. This literal means to be a lover of money. **(1 Tim 6:6-10)**
2. Not only is this a sin, but it will cause one to have a warped view of others. In time they will judge success by their riches! (Ex. Attitude in business meetings)

G. He must not be quarrelsome. **(1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)**

1. There are some who enjoy fights and fusses.
2. This kind of leadership will bleed a church to death. **(1 Tim 1:4; Eph 4:29)**

Conclusion: What kind of life are you building?