

Scriptural Qualifications for Officers of the Church

1 Timothy 3:1-13 (NIV)

- 1 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.
- 2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
- 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.
- 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.
- 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)
- 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.
- 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.
- 8 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.
- 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.
- 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.
- 11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.
- 12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.
- 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:5-9 (NIV)

- 5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.
- 6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.
- 7 Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless-- not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.
- 8 Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.
- 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NIV)

- 1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:
- 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;
- 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.
- 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Acts 6:1-6 (NIV)

- 1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.
- 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.
- 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them
- 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."
- 5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.
- 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

But when the church elevates a man to the highest office (under Christ) in Christ's church, it says in effect, 'Behold one who is like unto Christ, whom we have chosen to teach us about Christ and to bear rule over us in Christ's name.'

Lawrence Eyers, *The Elders of the Church*, p. 40

Relation to God			
Loving what is good Tit 1:8	Able to teach 1Tim 3:2, 5:17; Tit 1:9	Above reproach 1Tim 3:2, 9; Tit 1:6	<i>Tested</i> 1Tim 3:10
Upright and holy life Tit 1:8	Not a new convert 1Tim 3:6	Hold firmly to Scripture 1Tim 3:9; Tit 1:9	<i>Full of the Spirit and wisdom</i> —Acts 6:3
Relation to Others			
Not quarrelsome 1Tim 3:3	Not overbearing Tit 1:7	Hospitable 1Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8	Doesn't pursue dishonest gain—1Tim 3:8; Tit 1:7
Not violent but gentle 1Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7	Good reputation w/ outsiders —1Tim 3:7	Respectable 1Tim 3:2, 8	<i>Sincere</i> 1Tim 3:8
Relation to Self			
Disciplined Tit 1:8	Doesn't love money 1Tim 3:3	Temperate 1Tim 3:2, 8; Tit 1:7	
Self-controlled 1Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8	Not quick-tempered Tit 1:7	Not given to drunkenness 1Tim 3:3, 8; Tit 1:7	
Relation to Family			
Having one wife 1Tim 3:2, 12	Having obedient children 1Tim 3:4-5, 12; Tit 1:6	Manages his family well 1Tim 3:4, 12; Tit 1:6	
Bold: elder only; Plain: elder and deacon; <i>Italic: deacon only</i>			
Texts: Acts 6:3; 1Timothy 3:2-12; Titus 1:6-9			

The Gender Qualification

Women are esteemed in Scripture through their high calling in Christ and valuable ministry roles (Acts 18:24-26).

One third—10 out of 29—of the saints greeted by Paul at the end of Romans are women. For example:

- 16:1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea.
 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.
 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus...
 12 ...Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

Yet the exercise of spiritual authority (ordained leadership) in the Church is reserved for men only (1Tim 2:11-3:2, 8, 12).

- The Bible tells us that there is an authoritative order in relationships—even in the Trinity! (1Cor 11:3)
- One application of that authoritative order is in marriage (Eph 5:22-23).
- Another application is in church leadership (Heb 13:17; 1Tim 2:12).