

Choosing Church Leaders

Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7

As we discovered last week, the New Testament teaches that the local church is to be led by a plurality of qualified men (Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Peter 5:1) who are chosen on the basis of character qualities and spiritual maturity (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), who function in unity seeking to determine the will of God (Acts 15:22; Philippians 2:2).

The task of the elders is to protect (Acts 20:28-31), feed (Acts 6:5), lead (1 Peter 5:2), care for the needs (Acts 6:1-7; James 5:14), and provide a godly example for the congregation (1 Timothy 4:12-13, 15; 1 Peter 5:3).

Some elders are supported financially and have unique gifts and functions (1 Timothy 5:17-18), but all are to shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2-3).

Titus 1:5–9 (ESV)

⁵This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— ⁶if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

1 Timothy 3:1–7 (ESV)

¹The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 describe the qualifications for one who holds the office of an elder:

He must be above reproach or blameless (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6, 7)					
The overarching qualification speaks of having an unquestionable and irreproachable character. There must be no sin that taints his reputation or puts his character in question. He's not perfect, but there is no obvious defect in his character. This quality is demonstrated in four vital areas of his life:					
Personal Life		Family Life		Spiritual Life	
Social Life					
He should desire to lead (1 Timothy 3:1). Rather than being forced into leadership, it is something that he strives after and reaches for.	He must be free from the love of money (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). He is not to have his attention fixed on monetary rewards; or to be preoccupied with amassing material possessions or involved in "shady" business practices.	He must be one-woman man (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). He is solely devoted to his wife. A single man is not excluded, but the qualifications speak of his moral purity.	He must not be a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6). Rather, he must be a mature believer.	He must be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). He is to show kindness to strangers; to be generous and caring toward others, using what he has to serve them.	He must not be quarrelsome (1 Timothy 3:3). He is to be a peacemaker, not contentious or argumentative. He is not to be insistent on his rights. He is to keep his temper under control.
He must demonstrate self-control (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). He is to be temperate, well-balanced, calm, careful, and steady; not self-indulgent. He is to avoid excess so that he can see things clearly, and that clarity of thought leads to an orderly, disciplined life.	He must not be self-pleasing (Titus 1:7). He is not to be self-willed, arrogant, or overbearing. He is not to be a headstrong, stubborn man who demands his way without regard to others.	He must maintain a godly family (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6). He must be able to demonstrate spiritual leadership in the context of his family before he can lead in the church. He is to have an exemplary home life, with his children being respectful and under control.	He must be deeply devoted to a growing walk with God (Titus 1:8). His words, actions, and spirit exhibit a character that is holy and devout.	He must not be given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). He is not to have the lifestyle of a drinker or be characterized by a belligerent, negative attitude that is associated with drunkenness.	He must be well-respected by non-Christians (1 Timothy 3:7). His character is to be certified by the testimony of those who are not in the church. He should have a reputation for integrity, love, kindness, generosity, and goodness among those in the community who know him.
He must be sober minded (1 Timothy 3:2). He is to be prudent, serious about spiritual things, not frivolous.	He must love what is good (Titus 1:8). He is to be devoted to all that is good and beneficial. He avoids what is questionable and evil.		He is committed to the Scriptures (Titus 1:9). He bases his life on the truth of the Bible	He must not be a fighter (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7). He is not to be quick-tempered or resort to verbal and physical abuse. He must be able to handle things with a cool mind and gentle spirit.	He must be just (Titus 1:8). He is to be upright in his dealings with men. His conduct in relation to others must conform to the standard of right.
He must be well-organized (1 Timothy 3:2). He is to be respectable and live a well-ordered life, free from behavior or habits that would embarrass and discredit Christ's reputation.			He must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9). He must be skilled in communicating God's Word and have the integrity to make his teaching believable.	He must be gentle (1 Timothy 3:3). He is to be patient, considerate, genial, forbearing, and gracious. He must not seek to domineer others.	