

GSM

Qualifications for a bishop/elder

1 Tim. 3:1-7

- I. **Church Leadership- The Four leadership terms of the NT**
 - A. **Pastor**- Gr. Poimen- One who feeds- This is the ministry gift in the church- **[Eph. 4:11]**- This is one called by the Lord Jesus Christ to watch over His sheep. Jesus is the head shepherd-
[1 Peter 5:4]- The bishops, elders, and deacons are selected and placed into leadership by men. The ministry gift of pastor- this one is selected by God and put over a local church by the Lord Jesus Christ. Man cannot vote or make someone a five fold ministry gift.
 - B. **Bishop**- Gr. *episkopos*- epi- above skopos- a watchman-One who oversees. This means to see from a higher position and provide direction. A bishop gets this view from his time in prayer with God. He sees the church from God's perspective. This is the function of ones who lead the church. A bishop could also do the work of a pastor which is to feed the flock. This is like our department heads at the church. Some teach the Word and others do not.
 - C. **Elder**- Gr. *Presbuteros*- mature one- This speaks of the character of the church leaders. Elders can also do the work of the pastor which is to feed the flock. Not all elders feed the flock. **[1 Tim 5:17]**- Not all elders labor in the Word and doctrine. Not all elders (mature ones) are bishops (overseers) but all bishops (overseers) are elders (mature ones). Bishop comes from the Greek but the term elder is borrowed from the Jews from the OT.
 - D. The terms bishop and elder are used interchangeably.

1. **[1 Peter 5:1-2]**- Peter called himself an elder. He wrote to elders- **presbuteroi**. He told them to feed- **poimaino**- shepherd the flock, taking the oversight- **episkopeo**.
 2. **[Acts 20:17, 28]**- Paul called the elders (**presbuteroi**) to Miletus. He referred to them as overseers (**episkopoi**), and he told them to shepherd (**poimaino**- feed) the flock
- E. The early church met in homes. This was sort of like cell groups. There would be leaders in each house church. Although they met in different homes they had solidarity in the city. The church of Ephesus, Philippi, etc. – **[Acts 20:20]**- Paul met with Christians in house to house home churches in Ephesus but also ministered publicly- He taught in the synagogue of Ephesus, the school of Tyrannus
- F. Very early on in church history there was one bishop that headed up each church. He was the **head pastor** (feeder), **bishop** (overseer), and **elder** (presbuteros- mature one). The head leader of the church must be able to feed the flock from the Word of God and be able to oversee the church- make sure it is fulfilling the vision Jesus has given to it. He is also to be a mature one. Timothy and the John the Apostle were the head bishops of Ephesus after Paul died. Just as the universal church has one head and the family has one head so the local church needs one head. This one head can't do the entire work of the ministry. He must have bishops (overseers)/elders (mature ones) to help him feed and take care of the flock.
- G. **Deacon**- Gr. **Diakonos**- dia- through; konis- to run-to run through- "to stir up dust in haste to serve". These were attendants that served tables and kept the wine flowing. Deacons did the menial tasks of the church so that the spiritual wine can keep flowing in the church. **[Acts 6:1]**
- H. Every elder, bishop, and pastor starts in the church as a deacon- a server. From the seven first deacons Philip

became an Evangelist and Steven became a Teacher. You never leave being a deacon when you are an elder, bishop, or pastor. The head pastor is the head bishop, elder and deacon!

- I. From the deacons- elders/bishops are to be chosen. No one starts out as a bishop/elder. From the elders/bishops, God places a chief bishop/elder/pastor over the local church. Often the elders officially appointed this person but it was only after prayer and seeking God on who He had selected to be the head pastor. Again the five fold ministry gifts are given by the Lord Jesus Christ and not by man.

II. Church leadership is chosen not volunteered

- A. The biblical pattern is that leaders are to be **chosen**, not **volunteers**.
- B. A big mistake many churches make is by asking for volunteers to be in places of leadership. You will end up with ones you do not want in places of leadership who will do damage. Asking for volunteers to help serve under established leaders is fine but volunteers are not to be placed into leadership. Leaders should be selected.
- C. The head pastor cannot do everything. This is the reason why so many churches do not grow. They do not delegate work and authority.
- D. **[Ex. 18:14-27]**- Moses tried to do everything himself and it was wearing him out and the people!
- E. Jethro gave him God's wisdom- He was to **select** out leaders and **delegate**. Then Moses would endure and the people would go home in peace.
- F. Notice Moses did not ask for volunteers. God's wisdom was to **choose** out those who met the qualifications of maturity and showed signs of leadership.

- G. God selected His leaders- kings and priests. He did not ask for volunteers.
- H. In the NT – **[Acts 6:3]**- deacons were to be selected from those who met the qualifications and after prayer. Then they prayed about them. This was for men who would serve tables and distribute to the poor.
- I. The first qualification for a leader is faithfulness. **[1 Cor. 4:2, 2 Tim. 2:2]**
- J. A leader must show maturity- humility and submission
- K. Often those who should be in leadership will not put themselves forward. If you approach them often they will admit God has been dealing with them about serving in a greater capacity. If you ask for volunteers you will no doubt get those who volunteer that you DO NOT want leading and SHOULD NOT be leading! Find those who are faithful to attend. This shows maturity and stability. If they have not caused problems then test them with a few small tasks and test their faithfulness. If they pass let them serve as a deacon- helper. Once they prove themselves as a deacon, they can be raised to be an overseer because they are an elder- mature one.

III. Qualifications for a bishop/elder- [1 Tim. 3:1-7] [Titus 1:5-7]

- A. There are qualifications for leadership and for oversight over people. The world places those who have intellect, gifting, and personality in leadership. God places emphasis on character first and foremost in leadership
- B. No one perfectly meets these qualifications. One must be striving towards these attributes and are at a place that moral defects are not a significant hindrance to leading others.
- C. **[1 Tim 3:1]**

1. It is **noble** to **desire** to be in oversight in the church!
Desire and passion is one of the important things that must be seen in one that is looked at for leadership over an area. Do they **desire** to do it? When God places a calling to do something He also places with the call a **desire** for it! Many people are put into places because someone wants them there even if they do not want it. Ei. parents, church leaders...
 2. If any aspire- **oregetai**- stretch out for. This is in the middle voice- this desire comes from within them, not outside them!
 3. He desires for himself- **epithumia**- strong desire. This is placed there by God. This is just one sign of the calling of God on a person.
 4. It is a good work- good-**kalos**- noble; ergos- **work**-the ministry is work! If one is not willing to work hard he will not be a good leader in the ministry. We are co-laborers with the Lord. Paul labored more abundantly than all the other apostles by the grace that worked in him! We have responsibility as ministers to labor and work in the ministry. Responsibility is a response to God's ability!
- D. [1 Tim 3:2]
1. **Bishop must be above reproach**- Gr. **anepilemptos**- not being able to be caught hold of.
 2. Many of us have a colored past. We even lived in sins. However, once we are saved and have matured in the Lord we are called to put those things off of us as old used garments that don't fit us anymore. We are to drop those old garments, walk on leaving them behind us. Someone might find those old garments but we are not in them now! We are not attached to the things of our past. We are not presently living in sins. No one can catch doing things that would bring shame to us or to the

ministry and will not bring a stumbling stone to other Christians and/unbelievers.

3. **[2 Cor. 7:2-3]**- Paul wronged no one, corrupted no one, defrauded no one
 - a. Wronged- **adikeo**- act unrighteously- hurt, injure, offend
 - b. Corrupted- **phtheiro**- to bring into a worse state
 - c. Defrauded- **pleontekteo**- to commit covetousness
 - d. Paul had wronged, corrupted, and defrauded people in his past religious life but it was not in his life now!
4. **Six positive characteristics for a bishop-**
 - a. **Husband of one wife-** Lit. **A one woman man**-This is not referring to past marriages but present marriage being to one woman. Polygamy among the Jews was not practiced but was common among the Greeks and in Ephesus. This is why there were so many widows in Ephesus which Paul discusses in chapter 5. A bishop should be a one woman man. **A bishop must have a commitment to his wife and marriage first.**
 - b. **Temperate- nephalion-** sober minded- This literally means to be wine free. When someone is drunk their thinking is impaired. Wine is specifically mentioned later so this is taken in the **figurative** sense. This word means to not be given to excesses but is **vigilant and watchful**. We are to be free from all things that cloud our mind and distract us. We are to be vigilant and watchful in prayer. A bishop needs to be a person of prayer. **Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6-** A **bishop must have a commitment to prayer.**
 - c. **Self controlled- sophron-** from sozo and phren- thinking- saved thinking. This is a sound mind. This is stable thinking that lives to stable living. This is a by-product of a renewed mind by the Word of God-

Romans 12:2- A bishop must have a commitment to the Word of God. This leads to saved living!

d. Good behavior- *kosmion*- orderly in life, work, and appearance. God is a God of order. God wants things done decently and in order in the church. A disorderly leader will make for a disorderly church. This speaks of a disciplined lifestyle. **A bishop must be committed to self discipline.**

e. Hospitality- *philoxenos* – fondness of strangers or foreigners. In ancient days it was common to open your home to strangers. Not a great idea today! This word means you are fond of people. A leader should have friendships in their life. Being cut off from others in ministry is a trap and dangerous. **A bishop should have a commitment to people.**

f. Apt to teach- *didaktikos*- caught up in teaching. Addicted to teaching. Someone who is instructive and skilled in it. This means teaching the Word of God if you are a teaching elder (**1 Tim. 5:17**) or a specific area of expertise if not a teaching (*the Word*) elder. Those called to teaching will find themselves teaching others even if they don't realize it! Ex. I have a friend I talk to who is a pastor and we find ourselves teaching each other! This is a true sign of a teacher! A great teacher is a great learner. Do you have a drive to read and study? A bishop must teach what he knows to those under him. **A bishop must be committed to mentoring and instruction.**

E. [1 Tim. 3:3]- Three vices that should not be present in a bishop

1. Not given to wine- *paroinon*- para- beside; oinos- wine-to sit beside the wine bottle. This is not an admonition

against wine drinking but addiction to alcohol. One is not to be given to wine.

2. **Not violent- *me plektes***- not a striker- this is settling things with the fist or to lash with the tongue. A bishop must have a control of his temper.
 - a. **But gentle- *epieikes***- forbearing in giving judgment even if it is deserved. Patient and gentle.
 - b. **Not quarrelsome- *amachos***- not warring. The word macho comes from this. A bishop is not to ACT MACHO! This means you are not looking for a fight and not easily drawn into one. A sign of immaturity is to fight over the Word of God with people, especially over side issues. Someone who likes to go to war will often get people on his side to go to war. In Spanish this word macho means to pick on someone who is weaker. This is someone acting macho. A bishop is in a place of authority not to act macho but to bless and lead for good.
3. **Not a lover of money- *aphilarguron***- without fondness of silver. Money should never be the motive for ministry.

F. **[1 Tim. 3:4]- Threefold relationship with those around them- His family, church, and public in large**

1. **Toward his own family- Ruling well his own house-** ruling- *proistemi*- to stand out front as a leader. Middle voice- He is doing this of his own will and as his own personal responsibility. Standing in front is by example and is for guidance and protection. Well- *kalos*- noble; house- *oikos*- this means the family unit as a whole. A bishop must lead his OWN (*idios*) well before he can lead

the house of God (which is not his own, but God's). *The word, **proistemi**, is used in other passages to refer to the Elders (Pastor's) position before the local Church (5:17; 1Thess 5:12).* The local church is set up to model the family. It is the family of God. All of the above traits should be seen in his own home with his wife and children.

- a. **Having his children in subjection with all dignity-**
having- ***echonta***- to hold or maintain influence over. Present tense participle- ongoing activity that is concurrent with him ruling- standing out front. Subjection- ***hupotage***- arrange in rank under. gravity- ***semnotes***- dignity. This means you treat you wife and children with dignity not as property or slaves. You are to command a natural respect as you set the example. This is verse is a picture of a military march- the husband in the lead and his family marching in rank behind him. A family cannot follow where there is not example to follow! Doing as I say and not as I do just does not work! If your home life – marriage and children are all out of order- then you should not take spiritual leadership in the church. Get it in order at home and then take leadership in the church. A home life that is messed up will be a hindrance and hurt to the church. Many work at the church to escape dealing with matters at home.

b. **[1 Tim. 3:5]-If he does not know (eido- to see) how to rule (proistemi-to stand in front of) his own house, how can he care-epimeleomai- to show intense concern for the house of God. This word was used in the Good Samaritan parable where the Good Samaritan took care of the wounded man. The church is full of wounded. If you cannot care for the wounds at home you cannot take care of the wounds in the church! Having a house out of order is a good sign of wounds in the marriage and in the children.**

2. **[1 Tim. 3:6]-Toward the church- A bishop should not be a novice- neophutos- neophyte- a new plant- thus new to the light. It is important you don't take gifted enthusiastic new converts and place them in oversight positions. They need time to grow in the light (the Word of God). This also has application of a new plant into a congregation from the outside. Placing a new plant from the outside without knowing their background and knowing their past testimony. Someone from the outside that is gifted and enthusiastic needs to have a traceable track record before placing them in an oversight position. We are to know those who labor among us- (1 Thess. 5:12, 1 Tim 5:22) Laying hands in ordination hastily will possibly bring their (unknown) sins into the church for all to deal with. This does not preclude someone of a young age serving in oversight. Timothy grew up under the Word of God and was mature at an early age.**

- a. Lest he be lifted up with pride- taphoo- To be wrapped in smoke. Pride is like smoke that blinds you to your own faults, mistakes, and positive criticism.
- b. Fall into the condemnation of the devil- fall- **emipto**- to fall into. Condemnation- **krima**- judgment. This does not mean to lose one's salvation. This means a simple judgment given. Condemnation is a stronger term- katakrima. Katakrima means eternal judgment/condemnation. A fallen leader is not katakrima. The simple judgment given to the devil was for him to lose his position of authority and position as the covering cherub. This is the same judgment that must be imposed by the pastor of the church. He must remove a bishop who has fallen into sin by way of his pride. They must be removed from the place of influence lest he hurt others.
- c. Those that are wrapped in pride will ultimately do things that will cause their own downfall. Unless you are the one in authority over someone do not assist in the downfall of some else. They will cause it themselves- E.i. David and Saul

3. **[1 Tim. 3:7]-Towards the public**- Must have a good testimony with those without.

- a. Must- **dei**- it is a necessity- this is imperative
- b. Have- **echein**- present tense- holding
- c. Good- **Kalen**-kalos- noble, outwardly attractive

- d. Testimony- ***marturian***- witness
- e. This does not mean he is approved of by all, but there is no moral flaw seen in him by the unsaved and general public
- f. Outside- ***exother***- outside one's circle- the unbelieving community in particular
- g. A Bishop should keep up his bills and commitments. They should be law abiding. They should keep up their yard!
- h. Lest he fall into reproach- fall- ***empipto***- fall into; reproach- ***oneidismos***- defamation and disgrace- This brings a stumbling block for the gospel
- i. And the snare of the devil- snare- ***pagida***- a trap to catch prey. Satan lays traps for the leaders of the church so he can hurt those under them and offend unbelievers so they will not hear the gospel.