

The Shepherds of the Church

New Testament Church
Studies



The Qualifications and Work of Shepherds



Introduction

- Paul sets out requirements and standards by which leaders of the local church must live by (most of these apply to all Christians).
- A high moral standard is laid out. Paul insists that a man who aspires to be an overseer must be a man of character. He must be willing and able to lead, feed, protect, encourage, and edify God's people.



Introduction

- Three terms used:
- *Presbuteros* (**Elder or Presbyter**) – Older w/ Experience
- *Episkopos* (**Overseer or Bishop**) – Oversight
- *Poimen* (**Shepherd or Pastor**) – Protection and Feeder



Qualifications for Overseers

1 Timothy 3

- ¹ The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.
- ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
- ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.



Qualifications for Overseers

1 Timothy 3

- ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,
- ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?



Qualifications for Overseers

1 Timothy 3

- ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.
- ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.



Qualifications for Elders

Titus 1

- ⁵ This 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—
- ⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.



Qualifications for Elders

Titus 1

- ⁷ For 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,
- ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.
- ⁹ He 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

Titus

3:2 above reproach

1:6, 7 above reproach

3:2 husband of one wife

1:6 husband of one wife

3:2 sober-minded

1:8 disciplined

3:2 self-controlled

1:8 self-controlled

3:2 respectable



1 Timothy

Titus

3:2 hospitable

1:8 hospitable

3:2 able to teach

1:9 able to give
instruction

3:3 not a drunkard

1:7 not . . . a drunkard

3:3 not violent but
gentle

1:7 not . . . violent



1 Timothy

3:3 not quarrelsome

3:3 not a lover of money

Titus

1:7 not be arrogant or quick-tempered

1:7 not . . . greedy for gain



1 Timothy

3:4-5 manage his own household well, care for God's church

3:4 keeping his children submissive

Titus

1:7 God's steward

1:6 children are believers (or "faithful"), not insubordinate



1 Timothy

3:6 not a recent convert

3:7 well thought of by
outsiders

Titus

1:8 a lover of good;
upright, holy



The saying is trustworthy

- This seems to be a phrase that reinforces Paul forthcoming statements. Not that anything that he says without this preface is not true and trustworthy, but that what he is about to say should be given special attention.



If anyone

- The context will reveal that this “anyone” is a male.
- He is a husband.
- Only male leadership is expressed and articulated in the New Testament (all the apostles were male).



aspires to the office of overseer

- He sets his heart on being an overseer.
- He is striving after something that is good.
- If a person does not have the desire and appreciation for the task – they should not seek to become an overseer of God’s people. This work should not be entered lightly.
- The term “overseer” carries the idea of one who watches of someone (or a group) to make sure everything goes well or is performed well.



he desires a noble task

- The task of being an overseer is an important undertaking and is indeed understandable why men would aspire to be such.
- It is a good and excellent task to desire.
- He must approach the task with the right attitude.



Therefore an overseer must be above reproach

- His conduct must be of such that he is never observed doing wrong.
- Basically one who is not caught doing wrong.
- No sinful charge can be established or sustained against him.
- While perfection or sinless is not the requirement, godly conduct is.
- He should be well regarded within the church.



the husband of one wife

- He must be a one-woman man. Does this mean that a man that has been married before, in all circumstances, does not qualify to be an overseer? Even, those whose spouses have died, and they have now married again or those who have divorced their unfaithful spouses and married again. Such is not the case. There are two cases in which one would be the husband of more than one wife? **1)** If a man married two or more women thus becoming a bigamist or polygamist. **2)** If a man has divorced his wife for a reason other than for fornication and marries another. In both examples, those men must repent of their sins.



sober-minded Temperate (Vigilant)

- Often refers to temperate in regard to alcohol.
- However, here it relates to the ability to be balance and rational in judgment.
- But the former cannot be accomplished if he does not practice sobriety from alcohol. He must be watchful.



self-controlled

- This qualification is similar to sober-minded.
- He must be able to exercise good judgment and not be a hothead.
- He must be serious-minded when it comes to the work of God.
- He must be clear-headed.



respectable

- Orderly.
- Virtuous.
- Decent.
- Well mannered.
- Someone living a well-ordered life.
- He must live a life that is worth following.



hospitable

- Loving strangers.
- He must love people.
- Receiving strangers and guest with kindness and without being paid to do so.
- He must be willing to build relationships with those whom he shepherd.



able to teach

- Must have the ability and knowledge to teach others. Must have complete and accurate knowledge of the Word of God with the ability to teach others either publicly or privately. They are instructed to “feed” (teach) the flock (Acts 20:28).
- This qualification specifically indicates one of an overseer’s duty in church – the must teach.
- And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, **the shepherds and teachers** (Eph 4:11)
- Let the **elders** who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in **preaching** and **teaching** (1 Tim 5:17).



not a drunkard

- He must not be dependent on wine.
- How can a drunkard lead God's people?
- He must be one who completely abstains from alcohol.



not violent but gentle

- Not a contentious person.
- He must not be someone who is “ready to fight.”
- He must be kind and gracious, especially when he has been done wrong or mistreated.
- Peaceable.
- Balanced.
- Reasonable.
- Forbearing.



not quarrelsome

- Not argumentative.
- Peaceable.
- Not contentious.
- He should be courteous to everyone and seek to reconcile members – not add to disagreements.



not a lover of money

- He must not be one who is driven by money (cf. 1 Tim 6:9).
- He cannot love God and money at the same time (Matt 6:24).
- He cannot be covetous.
- He must be content with what he has.



He must manage his own household well

- The requirement that he must be a one-woman man speaks to his marital status, and even his faithfulness to wife.
- This requirements speaks to role as a father. He must not be a dictator, but be a loving leader in his home.
 - God must come first.
 - His family second.
 - The church third.
- Family life **MUST** come before ministry.



with all dignity keeping his children submissive

- He must have obedient and respectable children.
- Their submissiveness would be an indication of them having been trained and raised well.
- Children would encompass only one child as well (cf. Genesis 21:7).



for if someone does not know how to manage his own household

- If a man is unable to lead his family, how is he fit to lead the family of God?
- How he has led his family will be an indication of his church leadership.
- He will be measured by his family, especially the faithfulness of his children in the home.



how will he care for God's church?

- This indicates another duty of the overseer.
- He must manage and care for the people of God.
- Anyone who is not capable of managing his own household is not capable of managing the church of God.



He must not be a recent convert

- Newly planted, i.e. a young (new) convert.
- A new convert needs time for maturity.



or he may become puffed up with conceit

- The reason why a new convert should not be considered is because he may become conceited and arrogant because of his new responsibility of leading God's people.
- The connotation is – to envelop with smoke, i.e. to inflate with self-conceit.



and fall into the condemnation of the devil

- To be entrapped by, or be overwhelmed with the condemnation of the devil.
- Seems to be referring to a time when the devil's (Satan) pride caused him to be condemned by God.
- Likewise a newly converted elder's pride would cause him to fall into the same judgment as the devil.



Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders

- He must be well thought of by non-Christians.
- Co-workers, neighbors, and relatives may spend more time around him and may be even better judges of his character than Christians.
- Non-Christians may be more aware of hypocritical behavior.



so that he may not fall into disgrace

- A man hypocritical behavior as viewed by non-Christians would cause him bring shame on himself, his family, and the church.
- Basically, it would cause the church to be slandered or evil spoken of.



into a snare of the devil

- He may fall into a trap set by the devil.
- Satan would could easily use a conceited, newly converted elder.
- He devil would have his way with such a one.



This is why I left you in crete

- Crete was a large, long, and narrow mountainous island in the Mediterranean.
- It is approximately 160 miles in length and 35 miles wide.



So that you might put what remained into order

- The churches had been established, but they needed leaders so that the church could be complete.
- This was an important undertaking for Titus.
- The elders whom Titus was to appoint were to be men who were above reproach, one-woman men, having faithful children, and not arrogant.
- A man of godly character.
- Men who knew God's word – and were able to teach it and defend it.



And appoint elders in every town as I directed you

- He was to appoint elders – city by city.
- Thus, there were several churches on the island.
- This may take some time – depending on how much teaching was needed.
- Note: a plurality of elders was to appointed in each church.



if anyone

- The context indicates that this is man (male).
- He is a husband.



is above reproach

- Unaccused.
- Irreproachable.
- No sinful charge can be proved against him.
- He must live a clean life.
- Non-Christians should not be able to point their finger at any wrong that he does or the life that he lives.



the husband of one wife

- He must be a one-woman man. Does this mean that a man that has been married before, in all circumstances, does not qualify to be an elder? Even, those whose spouses have died, and they have now married again or those who have divorced their unfaithful spouses and married again. Such is not the case. There are two cases in which one would be the husband of more than one wife? **1)** If a man married two or more women thus becoming a bigamist or polygamist. **2)** If a man has divorced his wife for a reason other than for fornication and marries another. In both examples, those men must repent of their sins.



and his children are believers

- Some debate if an elder must have more than one child. Some have taught the deacon could have only one, but elders had to have more than one. Both qualifications state “children,” which would include one or more than one.
- Some have questioned if this means that the children must be “faithful” to their parents (or to God) or must they be “Christians.” Many believe that they must have a Christian child.
- His children must reflection of their father’s faith.



and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination

- His children cannot be seen as unruly.
- They must be examples of good behavior and obedience, not wild living.
- No should be able to say that his children are stubborn or rebellious.



For an overseer as God's steward

- A steward is one who has charge of or governs the affairs of another.
- In this case, he overseer of God's people.
- The overseeing of God's people should be taken seriously.
- A steward allocated tasks and coordinated their work so that the entire household functioned properly.
- Likewise, the overseer ensures that the church functions effectively and efficiently.



must be above reproach

- Sinless perfection is not the requirement here.
- But he must be a man of character.
- No charge of wrong can be brought against him in such a way that would affect his influence as a shepherd of God's people.



He must not be arrogant

- He must not be one who insist on things being done is his way.
- An arrogant man is not gentle, but conceited (looking down on others).
- He must not be self-willed.
- An arrogant overseer will not be willing to work together with his fellow elders.



or quick-tempered

- An overseer must be slow to anger.
- A quick-tempered man lacks self-control and discipline.
- Such a disposition would wreak havoc in the church.



or a drunkard

- A man who uses alcohol is not qualified to be a shepherd of God's people.
- One who imbibes alcohol cannot exercise self-control, be sober-minded, or disciplined.
- The drunkard destroys everything he touches i.e., marriages, careers, and churches.



or violent

- A person with a bad temper has no business or right being a shepherd over God's family.
- He is not self-controlled.
- Both physical and verbal abuse are the result of someone who is easily angered.
- He must be able to calmly communicate any disagreements he may have.



or greedy for gain

- A greedy man is always seeking and looking for more (he is never satisfied with what he has).
- In some cases, he will do whatever it takes to get money – even by ungodly and sinful means.
- Thus, there should be checks and balances when it come to the church's finances.



but hospitable

- His home must be open to the family of God so that he is able to get to know them, not just on Sunday.



a lover of good

- He must be a lover of all that is good.
- He must seek what is good for others.



self-controlled

- He must exercise self-control in every aspect of his life, especially as it relates to making decisions related to the family of God.



upright

- He must live a righteous and godly life based on the word of God.



holy

- He must be totally devoted to God and His word.
- He is set apart to do God's will.



and disciplined

- He must exercise self-control in every aspect of his life.
- He does not easily give in to sinful desires.



He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught

- He must holdfast (firmly) to the truth of God's word as taught by Jesus and His apostles.
- Also, those thing written in the Bible by Jesus' apostles and prophets.



so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine

- He must provide sound (heathy) teaching.
- He must be able to discern between truth and error.
- He must be able to encourage, educate, and exhort those whom he oversees.



and also to rebuke those who contradict it

- He must be able to detect or identify false teaching at once.
- He must be able and willing to correct any false teacher and not allow them to affect (infect) the flock.
- He must be able to convict or convince those who oppose or speak against the truth.



The Source of the Overseers authority

- From Themselves? **NO**
- From the Congregation? **NO**
- From the Preacher? **NO**
- From Jesus Christ? **YES**



The Role of the overseer

- **He must be a leader.** (He is to lead the church) (1 Tim 3:4-5; Heb 13:17; see also 1 Thess 3:12-3).
- **He must be a shepherd.** (He must feed and protect the flock) (Acts 20:28).
- **He must be a teacher.** (He must teach the flock God's Word) (1 Tim 3:2; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:9; and Eph 4:11).
- **He must be an equipper.** (He must equip others to grow in the church by providing opportunities for such – equipping the next generation) (2 Tim 2:2 and Eph 4:11-16).



Conclusion

- The Lord's church must be preparing young men to one day aspire to be leaders of God's people. Overseers must be married with believing children. They must be men of character. They must be men who love people. They must be men who know God's word and are able to teach God's word in order to encourage, educate, exhort the flock and convict or convince those who oppose the truth.
- *Young girls should also be informed of what to look for in a godly, Christian man (they may one day be an elder's wife).



Elders – overseers – shepherds

- And they did so, sending it to the **elders** by the hand of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:30).
- And when they had appointed **elders** for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed (Acts 14:23).
- And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the **elders** about this question (Acts 15:2).



Elders – overseers – shepherds

- When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the **elders**, and they declared all that God had done with them (Acts 15:4).
- The apostles and the **elders** were gathered together to consider this matter (Acts 15:6).
- Then it seemed good to the apostles and the **elders**, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers (Acts 16:22).



Elders – overseers – shepherds

- with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the **elders**, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings (Acts 15:23).
- As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and **elders** who were in Jerusalem (Acts 16:4).
- Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the **elders** of the church to come to him (Acts 20:17).



Elders – overseers – shepherds

- On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the **elders** were present (Acts 21:18).
- Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the **elders** of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14).
- So I exhort the **elders** among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed (1 Peter 5:1)



Elders – overseers – shepherds

- **shepherd** the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly (1 Peter 5:2).
- The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of **overseer**, he desires a noble task (1 Timothy 3:1).
- Therefore an **overseer** must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2).



Elders – overseers – shepherds

- For 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 (Titus 1:7).
- Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
- Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the **overseers** and deacons (Philippians 1:1).



Elders – overseers – shepherds

- Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of **elders** laid their hands on you (1 Timothy 4:14).
- Let the **elders** who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17).
- This 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 (Titus 1:5)



Elders – overseers – shepherds

- And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the **pastors** and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

