

## QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

### SERMON NUMBER ONE

Glasgow, Kentucky

INTRODUCTION: These sermons are being preached at the request of the men in the business meeting of Monday night, February 5, 1968. The reason for the request was based on the expressed desire of the men in the meeting to look out from among us certain men to serve as additional elders and deacons in this congregation.

In view of this request and preparatory to the teaching of these lessons, I read Sunday night, February 11, 1968, what Paul had to say about the qualifications for those who would serve any congregation as elders. The scriptures were 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Let me point out some things in the very beginning of these studies. Two things I want us to keep in mind:

#### 1. THE ELDER-CONGREGATION RELATIONSHIP

- (1) If the elders involved persist in directing the affairs of the congregation without regard for the wishes of the congregation, ignoring their complaints (justified or otherwise) and vetoing their suggestions, without giving good and valid reasons for such action, trouble is not far removed.
- (2) On the other hand, if members of the congregation will not be in submission to the elders and will not be willingly under them, and will not respect and obey them, the Day of Trouble is at hand.
- (3) Where such conditions exist, as already stated, there can be no peace, no harmony, no worship, no fellowship, no love, and consequently  
NO CHRISTIANITY.

#### 2. THE GREATEST NEED TODAY. What is the Greatest Need?

- (1) Our greatest need is:
  - (a) Just plain, simple, primitive New Testament Christianity.
  - (b) Such Christianity would prove a panacea for all of our ills.
- (2) Some scriptures teaching the need of and showing the power of such Christianity:
  - (a) Philippians 2:3-8;

3-Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. 4-Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5-Let his mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6-Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7-But made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8-And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Ephesians 4:31,32;

31-Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32-And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

(c) Ephesians 4:1-4;

1-I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2-With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; 3-Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4-There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. And finally,

(d) Romans 8:9;

9-"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

LOOKING AT THE WORK OF ELDERS 1 Tim. 3:1, "If any man desire the office of a bishop."

I. Why would any man desire such an office? Consider:

1. The work is often very difficult for one reason or another. Some reasons why it is so:

(1) Men all too often have a poor remembrance of the kindnesses we extend to them and the good that we do for them.

(a) Often men write the record of grudges in marble and the record of favors in snow flakes upon the warm water.

(b) If one has done us an injury we do not easily forget, but if we have received a benefit or some good, we let the remembrance of that slip out of our minds.

II. Why would any man desire the office of a bishop? Consider the good side:

1. One should never undertake the work of an elder as a matter of compulsion. This work cannot be successfully done when one is armed with an unwilling spirit. Motives for accepting the work would be:

(1) It is a good work: "If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." 1 Tim 3:1.

(2) The motive for doing the work of an elder is: THE GOOD THAT ONE HOPES TO DO.

(3) This work must be done as a "labor of love."

2. Because of the great reward: 1 Peter 5:4;

4-And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

3. Because of the great honor: 1 Timothy 5:17;

17-Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."



## QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

SERMON NUMBER TWO  
Glasgow, Kentucky

INTRODUCTION: Last Sunday, I spoke to you about the statement "If any man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work." 1 Tim. 3:1 I mentioned some of the difficulties in connection with such a work as well as some of the better things in connection with the work of an elder, namely, IT IS A GOOD WORK. I set down three motives for desiring the work of an elder. I call them to your attention today:

1. IT IS A GOOD WORK: "If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." 1 Tim. 3:1
2. BECAUSE OF THE GREAT REWARD: 1 Peter 5:4; "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
3. BECAUSE OF THE GREAT HONOR: 1 Tim. 5:17; "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine."

Last Sunday I called to your attention some statements in chapter 13 of Hebrews having to do with those who rule as well as those who are ruled. I refresh your minds with these thoughts again today. It seems certain that there are two classes of rulers involved. How do they rule? Consider:

Hebrews 13:7: "Remember them which have the rule (guide) over you..."

Who are these rulers? Nearly all are agreed:

1. That these rulers, guides, were those preachers who had taught them the word of God. Some, no doubt, dead at this time. How did they rule and guide?:
  - (1) By teaching them the word of God
  - (2) By showing before them such faith and manner of life as each could safely follow.
    - (a) This is the rule that those preachers to be remembered had at that time. This is the only rule that preachers have today among the members.

Hebrews 13:17, 24: 17-"Obey them that have the rule over you, (that guide you) and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. 24-Salute them that have the rule (guide over you) over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you." How do these elders rule and guide you?

1. By watching for your souls. How do they watch for souls?
  - (1) By taking the oversight. 1 Peter 5:2; "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof..."
  - (2) Things the elders should know: In taking the oversight they should;
    - (a) Be able to see the first indication of indifference, worldliness, or backsliding.
    - (b) They should know whether the member is growing or whether he is deteriorating.
    - (c) They should know whether the babes in Christ are being properly nourished, and whether they are digesting and assimilating their food.
2. NOTE: There is no room anywhere for arbitrary rule (fixed or arrived at through will or caprice, decisive but unreasoned, despotic, absolute rule) in the congregation by preachers, elders, or any other member.

## WORD PICTURES OF THE EARLY CHURCH AND HER WORK

1. THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM. Acts 15:22; "Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethern."
  1. The whole church was pleased. How these men were chosen I do not know.  
How this was done:
    - (a) The whole church was called together: "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things God had done with them."  
Acts 15:4
    - (b) No secret meetings in the matter. The meeting were open for the whole church. The church was informed, therefore; a willing and working church.
  2. No ecclesiastical order from the apostles, elders, and the church at Jerusalem. It was:
    - (a) We would lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.
    - (b) They came to Antioch and gathered the multitude (church) together and reported. Acts 15:30

## A LOOK AT THE WHOLE CHURCH. Ephesians 4:1-33 (See also 1 Corinthians 12:28-31)

1. The walk of the believer to be worthy of the position. Eph. 4:1-3
2. The seven unities to be kept. Ephesians 4:4-6
3. The ministry in the body of Christ: the church. Eph. 4:7-11
4. THOSE CHRIST SET IN THE CHURCH. Eph. 4:11
  1. APOSTLES
    - (a) The apostles all chosen by Christ. They were witnesses to his resurrection, Acts 1:22
    - (b) Since to be an apostle meant that one had to be a witness to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21,22) companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from among us: they could have no successors, but their own office continues. How?  
By their writings, teachings, and examples of life as set down for us in the Bible.
  2. PROPHEETS
    - (a) These were inspired men, essential in the church for its teaching until (UNTIL denotes termination) the New Testament was completed. Their work ceased at the time.
  3. EVANGELISTS
    - (i) Such as Timothy, Philip, and Titus. The duty to preach the gospel will continue so long as the church continues on earth.
      - (a) Preaching of the revealed gospel did not require extraordinary gifts, it is permanent.
  4. PASTORS
    - (1) Bishops, elders. A Pastor should always be an elder, but it is not necessary that all teachers should be elders



5. TEACHERS

- (1) Teachers who are able to communicate unto others the word of God.

6. THE DESIGN OF SUCH A MINISTRY

- (1) For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. Eph. 4:12  
(2) For the edifying of the body of Christ. Eph. 4:12  
(3) Eph. 4:13-16; 13-Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: 14-That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15-But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ: 16-From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

7. PERFECTION FOR THE MINISTRY.

- With each and every member working in keeping with his ability to work we are going to have:
- (1) Perfection in service. A man must be good to do good.  
(2) Perfection in unity. Till we all come in the unity of the faith.  
(3) Perfection in character. Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.  
(4) Perfection in Strength. That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, carried about by every wind of doctrine. (SOME PEOPLE WILL FOLLOW ANYTHING)

This will involve:

- (a) The strength of firmness: to stand against the doctrines and laws of man's opinions.  
(b) The strength of determination. Not influenced by the tricks and man's craftiness.  
(5) Perfection in growth. Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS  
SERMON NUMBER THREE

Glasgow, Kentucky

INTRODUCTION: Some scriptures to remember: Phil. 2:3; "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves."  
James 3:16; "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."  
1 Cor. 3:3; "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, (factions) are ye not carnal and walk as men?" See also Ephesians 4:31 and Hebrews 12:15

THE PREACHER'S POSITION IN THE CONGREGATION

1. The preacher is often more popular with the congregation and of greater influence among the members than the elders. WHY IS THIS SO?
  - (1) If the preacher is humble and considerate, it is not his wish or design that he have preeminence over any one, including the elders.
    - (a) This is not the wish or design of a single faithful, humble Christian.
2. Then why does the preacher sometimes occupy a greater position of influence and popularity? The following thoughts will illustrate this:
  - (1) He is before the congregation in a greater measure than are the elders. The very nature of the preacher's work brings him in close contact with the members. A look at his work:
    - (a) He visits the sick and prays with and for the sick
    - (b) He baptizes the children and reads the ceremony that unites a young couple as husband and wife.
    - (c) He conducts the funeral services for the dead and encourages the living as best he can on such occasions.
    - (d) He is often called upon to referee their disputes and misunderstandings and counsels with them in their troubles.

NEW TESTAMENT WORDS BY WHICH THE ELDER IS DESIGNATED

1. ELDER: Its usage and meaning.
  - (1) The word "elder" always carries with it the idea of age. Older people.
    - (a) Luke 15:25; "Now his elder son was in the field..."
    - (b) 1 Tim. 5:1; "Rebuke not an elder, but treat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren."
    - (c) 1 Tim. 5:2; "The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity."
  - (2) Elder: Those who take the lead, especially in the spiritual affairs of the New Testament Church. Acts 11:30; Acts 15:4.
2. BISHOP: 1 Tim. 3:1; "This is a true saying, If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."
  - (1) 1 Peter 2:25; "For we are as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."
    - (a) Here "Bishop" refers to Christ and not to man.
    - (b) In the New Testament the Bishop is guardian of souls and watchmen over the spiritual welfare of the members involved.
    - (c) Philippians 1:1; "Paul and Timotheous, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons."
    - (d) BISHOP: Overseer, Oversight, Superintendent.



3. PASTOR: Ephesians 4:11; "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, Pastors and teachers.
- (1) Pastor comes from a Greek word which means a "herdsman" and especially a shepherd.
- (a) Used only this one time in the New Testament.
- (b) Used at least ten times in the Old Testament and all in the book of Jeremiah. Here it denotes leading and feeding a flock by another. Lack of which means the destruction of the flock or people involved.
4. PRESBYTER: 1 Tim. 4:14; "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."
1. With reference to elders the word "presbytery" is used this one time in the New Testament.
- (a) Here it refers to an assembly of elders and for the purpose stated.
- (b) The spiritual gift qualified him for the work for which he had been called. It was according to some prophecy in the past concerning Timothy. It may have been at the time of his conversion.
- 1 Tim. 1:18; "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare."

NOTE: We now have the New Testament, so elders or any one else would not have this power today.

5. OVERSEER-OVERSIGHT
- Acts 20:28; "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
- 1 Pet. 5:2; "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."
1. Overseer; oversight means to overlook or look over, to be preeminent. A man charged with the duty of seeing that things are done right, especially in the church.
6. SHEPHERD
1. Elders nowhere in the New Testament are called "shepherds" but if Christ is the chief Shepherd then the elders certainly would be the "lesser shepherds" as in 1 Peter 5:1-4.
- (a) The very nature of their work as in Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:1-4 places the elders in the role of shepherds: feeding, tending the flock.
- (b) In another lesson we will discover what it means to tend and feed the flock.
- (c) Read John 10:11-14 for a contrast of the good shepherd and the hireling shepherd. So, Christ the chief Shepherd - Elders the lesser shepherds.
7. STEWARD Titus 1:7; "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre."
1. In a business sense: A steward may be a household manager for a lord as in Luke 16:1-13.
2. In a spiritual sense: A steward is one who has charge and care for and over the souls of men as in Titus 1:7.
8. OTHER WORDS BY WHICH ELDERS MAY BE KNOWN
1. Two of these words are used in the New Testament with reference to the elders, one is not.

(a) RULE-RULER

- a. Hebrews 13:17; "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls..."  
See also Romans 12:8

(b) ENSAMPLE-EXAMPLE

- a. 1 Peter 5:3; "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."  
Two kinds of examples: Good or bad.

(c) LEADER

- a. There is no passage in the New Testament which refers to the elders as leaders. The very nature of their work (duties) set all of them forth as such.



QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS  
SERMON NUMBER FOUR

Glasgow, Kentucky

ELDERS: THEIR DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

SCRIPTURES

Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

1 Pet. 5:1-4, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2-Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3-Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4-And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

INTRODUCTION

There are but two sources through which trouble may come to the flock of God: the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul names two classes of enemies and they will come:

1. FROM WITHOUT Acts 20:29, "For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."
  - (1) When would these trievous wolves enter in? AFTER PAUL'S DEPARTURE.
  - (2) They would not enter in while he was there.
    - (a) Those who would come from without would be Worldly men, malignant in nature and relentless persecutors of the church: the flock.
2. FROM WITHIN Acts 20:30, "Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."
  - (1) The greatest enemies of the church have sprung from its own bosom.
  - (2) It must have taken great courage for Paul to thus speak to a group of elders.
    - (a) Are you charging us with weakness and unfaithfulness.
    - (b) What Paul told them did happen as witness the Ephesian church about thirty years later: Revelation 2:1-7.

NOTE: What the enemies could not accomplish fighting the church from the outside, is accomplished easily when he is on the inside.

- (c) Nearly all church troubles arise from the inside and from three possible sources:
  - a. Among the elders themselves
  - b. Between the preacher and the elders, or
  - c. Between one or two families, or several families.

ELDERS: THEIR DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS

1. THREE PROHIBITIONS

- (1) Not of constraint.
  - (a) One should never undertake the work of an elder, or any other work as a matter of compulsion.
  - (b) One who reluctantly attempts the work of an elder, or any other work for the Lord has set himself to be a miserable failure.
    - a. All work, including the work of the elder, is to be done cheerfully, gladly, and of a ready mind. 1. Peter 5:1, 2



- (2) Not "for the sake of filthy lucre."  
(a) One who attempts to serve as an elder in the church of God for the sake of financial gain will be a failure. The only motive for doing the work: The good one hopes to do. 1 Peter 5:2
- (3) Not "lording it over God's heritage." 1 Peter 5:3  
(a) Elders must not, elders cannot exercise authority as "hard-headed" business men, or as labor bosses, but as loving and understanding fathers over their children.  
(b) God's plan always works beautifully and successfully and when people decide they want to do the right thing they always get along together. Otherwise there is no way.

## 2. SIX OBLIGATIONS

- (1) "TAKE HEED UNTO YOURSELVES." Acts 20:28  
(a) No man can successfully serve as an elder who does not carefully guard his steps  
a. He who would save another must first have a firm, solid footing.  
b. It is required of an elder that he be "blameless," and of a "good report of them which are without." 1 Tim. 3:2, 7  
(b) The elder must never wander into the shadows and soil his garments in the muck of sin. This is true of all members.
- (2) "Take heed...to all the flock." Acts 20:28  
(a) Elders cannot know the spiritual needs of the congregation unless they keep closely in touch with the members.  
(b) Elders need to be keenly aware of the fact that they are watchmen for the souls of men. Helps suggested:  
a. Elders could divide the congregation alphabetically and have deacons assisting them in knowing and watching for the members.
- (3) "Feed the church of God." Acts 20:28  
(a) Peter makes use of the same expression when he says, "Feed the flock of God which is among you." 1 Peter 5:2  
(b) What do you think would happen if a shepherd called his flock about him, only to take a club and start flailing them?  
a. The flock soon would not come but instead would flee at the sound of his voice.  
b. When one has gone astray he should be brought back with all haste, not with a club, but with tender love and great care. Gal. 6:1
- (4) "Taking the oversight thereof." 1 Peter 5:2  
(a) They should lead in all the work of the church and always have plans by which more souls might be saved.  
(b) The present day practice of having the preacher do all this is leading rapidly toward priestcraft and a professional clergy.  
(c) Let the preacher, if he does not he is very apt to get fired, do all the work that should be done by the elders but it just would not do to call the preacher an "elder."
- (5) "Rule...the church of God." 1 Tim. 3:4, 5; Hebrews 13:17  
(a) Taking the oversight of a congregation implies that the elders are to rule it. Example:  
a. In a school room the teacher is the source of authority  
b. In the home, it is the father, or should be.  
c. In the church, it is the elders, or should be.



- (b) How is this rule to take place and be exercised? Suggestions:
- a. Elders should be together, in agreement on all questions before they are presented to the congregation. Unless this is done, the elders may become divided and in turn divide the whole congregation.
  - b. Under Christ the chief Shepherd, the elders are to rule the church. Elders rule in the same way that a shepherd rules his flock of sheep.  
How is this?
    - a. They must go before and lead, not behind and drive.
    - b. The sheep must have confidence in the shepherd and know where the shepherd is leading them.
    - c. The sheep, the members of the congregation have a right to know of the plans the shepherds have for them.
    - d. Any plan of work, expansion or other work, that cannot be freely talked about and discussed with the congregation very likely will lead to trouble if carried out.
- (6) "Being ensamples (examples) to the flock." 1 Peter 5:3
- (a) "Being ensamples" to the flock is the most effective way of teaching.
  - (b) Elders are to set the right kind of example, lead in the right manner, and in the right direction. People will follow for they are searching for good leaders.

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS AND DEACONS  
SERMON NUMBER FIVE

Glasgow, Kentucky

INTRODUCTION: 1 Thessalonians 5:11-13, 11-Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. 12-And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13-And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. How does this peace come?

1. Peace begins with a righteous regard for others. What it means to be at peace:
  - (a) For people to be at peace involves morality, honor and mutual self-respect.
  - (b) If these be lacking it is impossible for people to be at peace.
2. Peace grows through self-respect and right regard for others.
  - (a) "Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." 1 Thess. 5:11
3. Peace becomes strong through mutual encouragement and upbuilding.
  - (a) "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. 4:18
  - (b) "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God..." 1 Thess. 4:8
4. This peace is gained by working for it.
  - (a) We must cultivate such good feeling as will dispose us to be at peace, refraining from all strife, to be on good, peaceful terms with others of our Christian family.

RELATION AND DUTY OF THE OVERSEEN TO THE OVERSEER

1. TWO THINGS IMPLIED:
  - (a) Duties and obligations of the elders to the church.
  - (b) Duties and obligations of the members toward the elders.
2. TWO FACTS INVOLVED:
  - (a) The duties and obligations which the elders owe to the members are important.
  - (b) The duties and obligations which the members owe to the elders are no less important.
3. DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS TOWARD THE ELDERS They are:
  - (a) DULY REGARD THE ELDERS This is done:
    - a. By knowing the elders: In many congregations some of the members do not know the elders.
    - b. We cannot ignore the elders without going contrary to the Scriptures.
    - c. Any member who will not give heed to the admonition of the elders, who ignores the elders, disobeys God.
    - d. The word "know" means more than merely to be acquainted with the elders. It means to acknowledge, to respect, or duly regard.
  - (b) ESTEEM THEM VERY HIGHLY IN LOVE (1 Thess. 5:13)
    - a. This simply emphasizes the first admonition "to know" the elders.
    - b. What is the ground for this claim by the elders? It is:
      1. "For their work's sake."
      2. Not merely for the office, but for the sake of the "labours of love" involved in its faithful discharge.
      3. Ministers and elders who "make full proof of the ministry" will challenge the abiding respect and high esteem of their flocks. 2 Timothy 4:5
      4. This bond, "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake," is not to be one of mere official relationship, but of affection.



- (c) COUNT THE ELDERS WORTHY OF DOUBLE HONOR 1 Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and in honor.
- a. This passage seems to teach that while all the elders governed, all did not labor in Word and doctrine.
  - b. It seems that in that day that some of the elders may have devoted full time to "labor in word and doctrine," and they were supported by the church. See 1 Tim. 5:18
  - c. Their labors are not light or desultory: it is hard toil of mind and body and soul.
    1. In the church of the Lord there is no place for drones doing nothing and yet eating the fruit of other men's toil.
    2. "We commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 2 Thess 3:10
- (d) IMITATE THEIR FAITH (Heb. 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3)
- a. Whose faith follow is urged upon all Christians in Heb. 13:7. It is thought by most commentators that this refers to former preachers especially, but would also be applicable to the elders as well.
  - b. Jesus gave us the first and only perfect model and so long as a man follows Christ we may safely follow that man. 1 Cor. 11:1
  - c. Being ensamples (examples) to the flock.
    1. We are urged to follow the examples of the elders, preachers, and every teach of the word of God.
    2. If there are to be followers then it means there must be some leaders. Can all the members safely follow the elders and preacher?
    3. We learn to do things best by seeing others do them.
- (e) OBEY THE ELDERS (Heb. 13:17)
- a. Within the limits of their rightful authority, the elders are to be honored and obeyed.
  - b. The trouble with many is that they have never learned to obey much less submit themselves to the warning and admonitions of another, in this case the elders.
  - c. The private as well as public teachings and admonitions of elders should be received:
    1. "Let the righteous smite me; (correct me) it shall be a kindness."
    2. "Let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil." Psalms 141:5
      1. Let him smite me kindly and my head shall not refuse.
      2. It is not, "Let just anybody reprove me," but "the righteous." Reproof from other sources would be of no avail.
  - d. This present age is characterized not only by a healthy independence of thought, but also by an unhealthy impatience of legitimate authority.  
How this begins:
    1. In the family. No family restraints with a lack of correct guidance.
    2. Next with rebellion, riot and insurrection against the state: all governmental restraint. (resent anything that would seem to stand in their way)
    3. Next it shows up in the church: refusal of any and all warnings, suggestions, and admonitions by the elders.

- (f) SUBMIT TO THE ELDERS (Hebrews 13:17)
- a. Submission to another a hard thing for the proud. 1 Peter 2:18, "Servants be subject to your own masters with all fear...
    1. Not only to the good and gentle...
    2. But also to the froward."
  - b. In the area of patience there are three stages of exercise in THE UNFOLDING OF CHARACTER before God. (Submission, Perseverance, Faith) the very first of these is
    1. Submission to the will of God under disappointment and suffering.
      1. The Stoic is not patient or submissive, for he is past feeling
      2. The Christian is a man of great feeling, and he usually feels more acutely than other people.
  - c. Some one has said, "That patience is the school where we learn submission."
    1. Did you make passing grades in the "school of patience", or are you a DROP-OUT?
  - d. Lessons on submission.
    1. If the young people have not learned to submit themselves to the older people, they have not learned submission to God. 1 Peter 5:5
      1. God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5
    2. All members are under the oversight of the elders. So:
      1. It is his duty to submit to the elders and hear them when they admonish him.
      2. If it becomes necessary to reprove or even rebuke him, he must heed the elders.
      3. From the elders he should be willing to receive three things: Counsel, Help and Encouragement.
      4. If the elders give him work to do, he must do it, if he can.
    3. Finally:
      1. Not infrequently those who failed to learn Submission in the school of "Patience" will ignore the elders and dispose of them with a contemptuous "they-are-not-fit-for-elders" remark. To disobey and disregard the elders is to disobey and disregard God.



QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS  
SERMON NUMBER SIX

Glasgow, Kentucky

1 Timothy 3:1-7  
Titus 1:6-9

INTRODUCTION

We have already studied the Scriptural designations of this office, Elders, Bishops, and Shepherds. We we begin our study this day of the qualifications as set down in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:6-9 for the men who would fill this office. As we study these qualifications together we should remember:

1. That there is not one single quality of character required of those who would be elders that is not also required at some other place in the New Testament of every other member.
2. That certainly those who would be elders should have these qualities developed to a greater degree than other members.
3. Before we shall have finished our studies in the field of elder-congregational relationship, I plan to give you a two column list of the qualifications for the elders and the duties of each and every member.

A WARNING

We should not be faulty ever of trying to make qualifications to fit the individual but to produce individuals that fit the qualifications. God has set the standard and man dare not alter it. Now then: (We should remember that a man's habits grow out of his character and that they also react upon his character)

A LOOK AT THE QUALIFICATIONS

1. HE MUST BE BLAMELESS (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6, 7)
  1. Does not mean perfect, "Sinless" or "faultless"
  2. He must be free from any charge of immorality or false teaching.
  3. He must be especially "blameless" at these points involved.
2. THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6)
  1. All through the years this statement, "the husband of one wife" has been interpreted in at least three different ways. They are:
    1. The elder must be a married man.
    2. One not married to a second wife, though the former were dead.
    3. A man not having two living wives at the same time: not a polygamist. This seems to be the meaning.
3. VIGILANT (1 Tim. 3:2)
  1. This means to be temperate, discreet, watchful.
  2. It means to be alertly watchful as one keeping vigil by day and by night.
  3. Not drowsy, sleepy, indifferent, don't care attitude.
4. SOBER (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8)
  1. A prudent man of a sound mind.
  2. A man of learning with a well cultivated mind.
  3. A man having complete government of himself.
    1. A man lacking government of himself; a man out of control of himself is always a sad sight.
5. OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR (1 Tim. 3:2)
  1. This would involve:
    1. Orderly, decent, grave and correct in the whole of his appearance.
    2. The sour, the sullen, the boisterous man should never be invested with a dignity which he would most certainly disgrace.



2. The two terms "sober" and "of good behaviour" in contrast:
  1. The former refers to the mind.
  2. The latter to a man's external manners.
  
6. GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
  1. A necessary injunction, especially in that day when so many Christians were banished and persecuted. It seems to indicate two things:
    1. That hospitality is to be furnished when sought.
    2. That Christians are to seek opportunities for the exercise of hospitality.
    3. It means too that elders should be courteous, friendly, and kindly disposed. They should seek to develop a warm and friendly personality.
  
7. APT TO TEACH (1 Tim. 3:2)
  1. In his WORD STUDIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, Vincent divides the elders (Bishops) into two groups as follows:
    1. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor..."
    2. "Especially they who labor (teach) in the word and doctrine." 1 Tim. 5:17
  2. The fact is:
    1. Elders should be able to teach others the Word of God. Otherwise, how can he "feed the flock of God?"
    2. The elders should have such knowledge of the Scriptures as would qualify them to give right instructions to others.
  3. BUT OUR BIG PROBLEM: How is this teaching to be done? Some thoughts:
    1. How was teaching done in the early church?
    2. All in the church should be teachers as we read in Titus 2:1-7; Hebrews 5:12.
    3. The "teaching" elder versus the "non-teaching" elder.
      1. The "teaching" elder taught the Sunday morning auditorium class. Did very little visiting among the weak members or members otherwise.
      2. What they called the "non-teaching" elder did not teach a class but he did oversee the Bible school, check the literature used in all the classes, visit with and admonish those who were out of the way, or who seemed to be going out of the way.
  4. How elders may teach today.
    1. They may teach a class on Sunday morning, or at other times.
    2. They may teach one person or several individually.
    3. They may either teach the class in the absence of the teacher, or see that it is done.
    4. If the preacher should be sick or out for a meeting, the elders may lead the congregation in worship by reading of Scriptures, leading in prayers. They may do this themselves or call upon some one else to do it.
    5. Elders not required to do everything. As "overseers", "rulers", "feeders" of the flock they are to see that it is done.
  5. Chaucer's description of the Clerke of Oxenford is a good paraphrase of Paul's "apt to teach" requirement for the elders. Here it is:

"Sowing in moral virture was his speech,  
And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach."
  
8. NOT GIVEN TO WINE (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
  1. Beginning with the Revision and American Standard we have the word "brawler" used rather than the "not given to wine" expression.
    1. The secondary sense seems to be not contentious, abusive or brawling. So it might read, "not a brawler, contentious, abusive, or brawling" as those given to and under the influence of wine.
    2. Romans 14:21; "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, no anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."



2. So, "not given to wine" simply means:
  1. Don't drink it in the first place.
  2. Secondly it means that an elder, or any others should not be:  
Demanding and overbearing. Abusive: tending to hardness toward others.  
Insolent: haughty disregard for the feelings of others.
  
9. NO STRIKER (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
  1. Some make this to mean a pugnacious or combative person. It certainly would include such persons.
    1. He must not resent every suggestion or any imposition that might come in connection with his work.
    2. He must not be quick on the trigger, always ready to take offense at others.
    3. He must never engage in violence. Not ready to strike a person who may displease him.
    4. Not ready to persecute a person who may disagree with him by speaking harshly and in bitterness to that person.
  
10. NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE-NO LOVER OF MONEY (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
  1. One way or another, money generally the root cause of most trouble that arises among brethren. 1 Tim. 6:10
  2. "Money lovers" of two types:
    1. The man who has already made his money but who is covetous, stingy and miserly with that money.
    2. The man who is avaricious in seeking worldly gain as his aim in life. He has not gained his wealth yet but his every effort is in that direction taking every chance that might make him a dollar.
  3. The results of such attitudes toward money:
    1. Both are covetous and Paul calls coveteousness "idolatry." Col. 3:5
    2. The man whose whole heart is set on making money has neither the time nor the desire to be an overseer in the house of God.
    3. The stingy, miserly, covetous man cannot be a successful elder in the church for he is a man "greedy of filthy lucre."
  4. Some lessons to learn:
    1. A covetous Eldership will make a covetous church, and a covetous church is a dead church. - McGarvey
    2. The heart of a covetous man, elder or any other, is not right. The love of money leads to all kinds and degrees of sin.
      1. Mark 10:24; "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God.
      2. 1 Tim. 6:9; "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.
      3. James 5:3; "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." Read James 5:1-5 together.
    3. Consider the trouble in the world today, March 20, 1968, over gold and the dollar.
  
11. PATIENT-GENTLE (1 Tim. 3:3)
  1. Consider the power of patience. Luke 21:19; "In your patience possess ye your souls."
    1. An elder must be genteel, polite, courteous, peaceful, not harsh or turbulent.
    2. Where meekness and patience do not reign, the love of God cannot dwell.
    3. Patient and gentle means that a man is "easy to be entreated" as in James 3:17.



12. NOT A BRAWLER-NOT CONTENTIOUS (1 Tim. 3:3)
1. An elder, or elders must not try to force their will upon others. He must be easily entreated and kindly disposed.
  2. This qualification is very much like the one "no striker" already discussed.
    1. A man may have firm convictions and yet not always be in a row with someone.
    2. The quickest way to destroy a congregation is for the elders to get into a fuss with the congregation, or among themselves.
    3. The church always suffers and souls are lost when this happens.
13. NOT COVETOUS (1 Tim. 3:3)
1. He must not be a lover of money.
  2. To the covetous person fair and foul methods are alike, provided they may be equally productive.
  3. See notes in this lesson on NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE.
14. ONE THAT RULETH WELL HIS OWN HOUSE (1 Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6)
1. The elder must have properly governed children. "Having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly" Titus 1:6 says.
  2. The big question is: HOW MANY CHILDREN MUST HE HAVE TO BE AN ELDER? Some thoughts:
    1. Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy. 1 Cor. 7:14
    2. Children obey your parents in the Lord. Eph. 6:1-4
    3. But if any widow have children. 1 Tim. 5:4
    4. I will therefore that the young women marry, bear children, guide the house. 1 Tim. 5:14
  3. We admit and say "that it is much harder to rear one child alone, than it is to rear several together." Why not give the elder with just one child due credit then?
15. NOT A NOVICE (1 Tim. 3:6)
1. A brand new convert should never be ordained an elder.
  2. The word "novice" indicates a plant newly planted, not yet securely rooted.
  3. Why this prohibition?
    1. "Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 1 Timothy 3:6
  4. How long must one have been a Christian before being appointed an elder.
    1. It could not have been more than two years before Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps over their first missionary journey to "...ordain them elders in every church," as we read in Acts 14:23
    2. From the viewpoint of growth in knowledge of the Word of God, in proper spiritual attainment, in right attitude, in ability to reach and lead in the work of the Lord, failing in these important matters, it follows that one would remain a novice. Please see and read: 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Peter 2:1,2; 2 Peter 1:5-11
16. A GOOD REPORT OF THEM WHICH ARE WITHOUT (1 Tim. 3:7)
1. What other people think of us is very important.
  2. As a bearer of the gospel of Christ he must show its effects in his own life, else they that are without will have no confidence in the religion he represents.
  3. Why he should have this good report.
    1. "...lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." 1 Tim. 3:7
    2. The real meaning of the term, "a good report of them which are without" we see in Col. 4:5 where we read, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."



SOME QUALIFICATIONS IN TITUS NOT MENTIONED IN TIMOTHY

17. NOT SELF-WILLED (Titus 1:7)
  1. Not a man who must have his own way regardless.
    1. Who is the man that must have his own way? See if you can figure it out!
    2. Is it the man who says "no" or the man who says "yes"?
  
18. NOT SOON ANGRY (Titus 1:7)
  1. Not a choleric man: one who is always irritable and seems by the expression on his face, by what he says and the way he says what he says never to be happy, but always "sorta" out of "sorts" with any and everybody. Not flying "off the handle" as we say.
  2. When one is quick to "fly off the handle" and make rash statements, always ready to speak his mind, he will make many enemies for himself and the church. Too, this will cause many weak members to be lost.
  
19. A LOVER OF GOOD MEN (Titus 1:8)
  1. Literally: a love of goodness or of good things in general.
  2. One ancient manuscript reads, "A lover of the poor."
    1. Elders, ministers, and all Christians who love not and therefore neglect the poor have not the mind of Christ and knows little of the work that should be done. Please read Psalms 15.
  
20. HOLY (Titus 1:8)
  1. Holy in heart. Devout and faithful in his duties to God and man.
  2. Pure and clean in life. Not defiled and taken up with the ways of the world.
  
21. JUST (Titus 1:8)
  1. Upright in all his dealings. Always providing things honest before God and man. Not meteing out "evil for evil." Romans 12:17.
  
22. TEMPERATE (Titus 1:8)
  1. Self-denying, self-controlled. This would apply to the whole life of man.
  
23. HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD (Titus 1:9) Why?
  1. That he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.
  2. This would indicate the necessity of study and knowledge of God's Word. Able to guard and defend the flock of God under all circumstances from false teachers.

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS

### SERMON NUMBER SEVEN

Glasgow, Kentucky

Acts 6:1-6

1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12, 13

LIKEWISE OR IN LIKE MANNER (1 Tim. 3:8)

LIKEWISE: In like manner, also moreover. As the elders must possess certain qualifications, so the deacons too must be men possessing certain qualifications. In his book, THE MODEL CHURCH, brother G. C. Brewer suggests that the young men of Acts 5:1-11, who attended to the burying of Ananias and Sapphira, may have been deacons assisting the apostles in their work. Anyway, we consider the qualifications of men who would serve as deacons in the congregation of the Lord. According to 1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12, 13 they are:

I. GRAVE (1 Tim. 3:8)

1. They must be serious-minded; not giddy, childish or unbalanced in reasoning.
2. The deacon must be able to give serious thought and consideration to any and all questions.

II. NOT DOUBLE-TONGUED (1 Tim. 3:8)

1. James 1:8; "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." The lessons:
  - (a) A man should not speak one thing to one man and something else to another on the same subject.
  - (b) We would speak of the "double-tongued" and the "double minded" man as being "two-faced." This means that:
    1. To your face he will speak one way, perhaps glowingly.
    2. Behind your back he will speak entirely different, perhaps scatheingly and with the thought to do harm and injury to the individual spoken about.
    3. He must not swing like a pendulum from one extreme to the other.
      - (1) From cheerful confidence to dark despair.

III. NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE (1 Tim. 3:8)

1. See note 8 where this prohibition concerning wine is considered under the qualifications for elders.
2. We need to know that:
  - (a) Wine is a hardtask master.
    - (1) Proverbs 20:1; "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
    - (2) Proverbs 23:29, 30; "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions, who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30-They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine."
    - (3) Ephesians 5:18; "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

IV. NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE (1 Tim. 3:8) (See 1 Tim. 6:17-19)

1. See note 10 under Qualifications for Elders for other thoughts at this point
2. Thoughts at this point:
  - (a) Not covetous, dishonest, having the getting of wealth as your goal in life.
  - (b) LUCRE: Simply means gain in money or goods of all kinds. Profit; riches.
  - (c) He must not be a lover of money to the extent that he will get into nearly anything to make a dollar. Using all of his time in seeking after "filthy lucre" he will not have any time left for the great business of the Lord.



V. HOLDING THE MYSTERY OF FAITH IN A PURE CONSCIENCE (1 Tim. 3:9)

1. 1 Tim. 3:16; "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:..."
2. 2 Cor. 5:7; "For we walk by faith, not by sight." This faith is to be held in a pure conscience.
3. He must be firmly and thoroughly sold on the Religion of Christ. No room for doubters.

VI. THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE (1 Tim. 3:12)

1. See note 2 in discussion of this point in qualifications for elders.

VII. RULING THEIR CHILDREN AND OWN HOUSES WELL (1 Tim. 3:12)

1. See note 14 under discussion of qualifications for elders.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS SUMMED UP

1. They must be:

- (a) Men whose general reputation will bring credit to the church and the cause of Christ.
- (b) Men who are spiritually minded rather than carnally minded.
  - (1) The man who lives for physical, worldly pleasures chiefly cannot be a fit public minister for Christ.
- (c) Men of sound judgment:
  - (1) With reference to the work of the church and the need of material improvements about the property etc.
  - (2) This can be determined by how he conducts his business affairs: has he been a success or failure in the business world.
  - (3) This can be determined too by how he leads and controls his family.

THE RESULT OF A GOOD WORK DONE BY A DEACON (1 Tim. 3:13)

1. "For they that have used the office of a deacon well:" 1 Tim. 3:13

- (a) "Purchase to themselves a good degree."
  - (1) He may be raised from a minister to the bodies and bodily wants of the poor to a minister in holy things.
  - (2) Instead of ministering the BREAD THAT PERISHETH he may minister the BREAD OF LIFE
- (b) "And great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."
  - (1) He may be raised to a teacher of the doctrine of Christ: expounding and teaching the word to others.
  - (b) He should develop to the point of becoming an elder in the church.

2. If this work is done then it will be true:

1. That he has proven himself and that he has used "the office of a deacon, being found blameless." 1 Tim 3:10