

1 Timothy
The Challenge of Being the Church
1 Timothy 3:1-16 (page 830)

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After addressing the importance of sound doctrine (ch 1) and the conduct of public worship (ch 2), Paul addresses the need to appoint quality leadership in the church (3:1-16)

The Bible identifies two primary leadership roles in the church:

- Elders, who are servant leaders (3:1-7; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2)
- Deacons, who are leading servants (3:8-13; Acts 6:1-7)

Spiritual leadership requires spiritual maturity, which is crucial to healthy oversight of the church.

Elders must be men of integrity:

- In their character (vs 2; 1 Cor 7:7-8, 32-34; 6:9-11; 5:17)
- in their behavior (v 3; Matt 6:24; 1 Tim 6:10)
- in their family life (v 4-5; Eph 5:24-6:4)
- in their reputation (v 6-7; Prov 8:13; 11:2; 1 Thess 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:11-17)

Spiritual maturity on a nutshell: No glaring weaknesses

Notice what is not on the list of qualities of an elder:

- Giftedness (1 Cor 1:7, 3:1-3)
- Spiritual power (Matt 7:21-23)
- Theological training (Jn 13:15-17; 14:26; 1 Jn 2:27)
- Religious zeal and practices (Rom 10:1-3; Col 2:20-23)

Elders are to be:

- Followers (a disciple) of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:12; 11:1; 1 Tim 4:11-16)
- Servant leaders to the body of Christ (1 Pet 5:1-4)
- Stewards of Christ's church (1 Pet 5:5; 1 Cor 4:2; Heb 13:17)

Food for Thought:

From these descriptions of the qualities of an elder, do you think he is to be perfect? What is God saying about the moral character, attitude and skill of one qualified to lead His church? Are you aware of people at WCC who may fit these categories - in other words, do you take the time to observe and interact enough to have any opinion? _____

Paul gave similar instructions regarding selecting elders to Titus. Read Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and list the qualifications found in both lists, then compare them and identify what you find is similar and what is unique to each one. _____

Why do you think the issue of leadership in the church is so important to Paul? Why does he place so much emphasis on the qualities of those who would lead God's people? Explain. _____

Do your own research on the various views concerning "the husband of one wife" (literally a "one-woman man") by investigating several commentaries or "Googling" the topic on the internet. What conclusion do you come to on the issue? Why? _____