

A. Elders

1. Biblical qualifications of the elder: (see handout) (Eph. 4:11-15; I Tim. 3; Titus 1; I Peter 5)

- a. He **must long for/aspire for (sets his heart on) this position** (I Tim. 3:1), in other words this cannot be a position that is thrust upon a man out of necessity...or out of some desire for power...but a genuine desire to serve the Lord, and the knowledge that this is where God would have him to serve.
- b. He **must be above reproach** (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 2:7), in other words there are no grounds to accuse this man of improper behavior. The elder's life is an open book before the world.
- c. He **must be the husband of one wife** (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6), in other words, a "one-woman man" as the original says. An elder must be fully faithful and devoted to his wife. Restrictions because of divorce are dealt with on an individual basis.
- d. He **must be temperate** (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). He is to be clear-headed. and not self-indulgent. This man is also characterized by a clear sense of balance spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
- e. He **must be self-controlled** (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7-8). This quality goes along with being temperate. He clearly exhibits God honoring actions in all that he does. This is not a man who is easily angered, frustrated or worried. He is not given to quick and superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
- f. He **must be respectable** (I Tim. 3:2). The original means "orderly" in his inner life, which is his thinking. He is consistent. He is able to work through the toughest problems with clear, wise and decisive thinking.
- g. He **must be hospitable** (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). This is a man that shows everyone around him an open heart and open home. He is unselfish and willing to share his blessings with others.
- h. He **must be able to teach** (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). The original does not necessarily mean one who has the gift of teaching. The Elder must be able to evaluate a need in a person and knowing enough of his faith be able to show them the light of Scripture in each situation of life. In other words, what is meant here is that the Elder is to be able, when called upon, to explain God's truth as it applies to each individual life under his care (see II Tim. 2:24-26).
- i. He **must be able to equip the church and manage the affairs of the church well.** (Eph. 4:11-15)
- j. He **must not be given to drunkenness** (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7). In other words, an Elder must not be one who is "addicted" to alcohol. The idea here is that nothing is to control the Elder except the Spirit of God.
- k. He **must not be violent or quarrelsome, but gentle** (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7). The terms violent and quarrelsome describe someone who is always defensive, always fighting back. This is someone who is unwilling to compromise even on

the smallest of issues. An Elder is to be gentle, exhibiting patience and tenderness in his caring for God's flock.

- l. He ***must be free of the love of money*** (I Tim.3:3; Titus 1:7; I Peter 5:2). Man cannot serve two masters.
 - m. He ***must be one who manages his household well*** (I Tim. 3:4-5, Titus 1:6). He is to have the respect of his household and be recognized as the head of the home. Failures at home will be echoed in the church!
 - n. He ***must not be a recent convert*** (I Tim. 3:6). He must be a mature believer and obviously one who has been a Christian for a period of time-- at least long enough to demonstrate the reality of his conversion and the depth of his spirituality.
 - o. He ***must have a good reputation with those outside the church*** (I Tim. 3:7). He must be a man that even unbelievers have respect for his character and integrity.
 - p. He ***must be just*** (Titus 1:8). He must be fair and impartial. He must be one who can make objective judgments based upon God's principles. Hungers and thirsts for justice.
 - q. He ***must be a shepherd of God's flock*** (I Peter 5:2). He must be a shepherd who carries out the responsibly of practicing oversight, not an overseer who, among other tasks, does some shepherding. As shepherd the Elder's task is to alleviate fears, discomforts, aggravations, and hungers from the sheep so that they can settle down to seek God.
 - r. **Not an exhaustive list in any way.** It may also include these:
 - (1) Full of the Spirit
 - (2) Faithful in prayer
 - (3) Merciful
 - (4) Dependable, faithful and disciplined, devoted to God and His flock
 - (5) Pure in Heart
 - (6) A peacemaker not a peacekeeper
 - (7) and the list just seems to go on and on...
 - s. **Why is God so detailed when it comes to the leaders He calls for us to nominate and elect?**
 - t. **Why does the church NEED such leaders? Why do we NEED such leaders?**
2. **Book of Church order on the elder:**
- a. **8-1.This office is one of dignity and usefulness. The man who fills it has in Scripture different titles expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop or pastor. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and Kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the**

gainsayer, he is termed teacher. These titles do not indicate different grades of office, but all describe one and the same office.

- b. 8-2. He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the Church.**
- c. 8-3. It belongs to those in the office of elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to his charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the Church generally when called thereunto. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. They should set a worthy example to the flock entrusted to their care by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted and make disciples. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.**
- d. 8-5. When a man is called to labor as a teaching elder, it belongs to his order, in addition to those functions he shares with all other elders, to feed the flock by reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. As he bears glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing, he is termed evangelist. As he stands to proclaim the Gospel, he is termed preacher. As he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.**
- e. 8-8. As there were in the Church under the law, elders of the people for the government thereof, so in the Gospel Church, Christ has furnished others besides ministers of the Word with gifts and commission to govern when called thereunto, who are called ruling elders.**
- f. 8-9. Elders being of one class of office, ruling elders possess the same authority and eligibility to office in the courts of the Church as teaching elders. They should, moreover, cultivate zealously their own aptness to teach the Bible and should improve every opportunity of doing so.**

B. Deacon

1. Biblical qualification of:

- a. The word "likewise" ties everything that has been said about the elder to this office as well...but the list is given for emphasis. So too the deacon is to aspire to/long for this position.
- b. **They must be people who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3).** Spiritual yet, gifted in management and organization (Rom. 12:8; I Cor. 12:28). Deacons were given the ministry of distribution to the needy, and the ministry of mercy, while the elders kept the ministry of the Word. (see Rom. 16:1)
- c. **They are to be worthy of respect (I Tim. 3:8).** Trustworthy in all respects of life and faith.
- d. **They are to be sincere (I Tim. 3:8).** They are to be honest, above reproach just as an Elder.
- e. **They are not to indulge in much wine (I Tim. 3:8).** They are not to be addicted to alcohol. Everything in moderation. Because they are an example to the flock.
- f. **They are not to pursue dishonest gain (I Tim. 3:8).** They are to be simple in their lifestyle not sending off any appearance of greediness.
- g. **They must keep hold of the faith with a clear conscience (I Tim. 3:9).** They must practice what they teach in their lives before all men.
- h. **They must be tested (I Tim. 3:9).** This has two meanings; first they must not be a new convert in the faith. Secondly, they must be able to "prove" they have the ability to carry out the work physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.
- i. **They must be the husband of one wife.** A deacon must be fully faithful and devoted to his wife. Restrictions because of divorce are dealt with on an individual basis.
- j. **They must manage their children and household well.**

2. Book of Church order qualifications:

- a. **9-1.** The office of deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the Church. The office is one of sympathy and service, after the example of the Lord Jesus; it expresses also the communion of saints, especially in their helping one another in time of need.
- b. **9-2.** It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In

matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session and consent of the congregation. In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders.

- c. **9-3.** To the office of deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.
- d. **9-7.** It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint godly men and women of the congregation to assist the deacons in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need.

C. Biblical Qualifications for officers wives:

- 1. **“Women worthy of respect.”** –They are to be women of consistency in their life and faith. Believers and non-believers willingly receive them and their words of counsel. They are women that others want around to help set courses of godly actions.
- 2. **“Not malicious talkers.”** – These are women who are God honoring in their speech. No gossip or slander comes from their mouths. **Why did Paul see the need to include this quality?** It appears that this was a reminder to the godly women. For they were and they will be working with so many different people and you naturally come to know so many things about people that you are around a lot; so he is simply reminding them of their duty to be discreet.
- 3. **“Temperate.”** – They are to be clear-headed, and not self-indulgent. This is a woman with a clear sense of balance, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
- 4. **“Trustworthy in everything.”** – She is to be blameless. She is totally trustworthy in all areas. There can be found no grounds to accuse her of improper behavior. Her life is an open book before the church and the world.
- 5. **Since the construction of the sentence is the same as that for both offices for men it follows then that the patterns of behavior that characterize the elder and deacon are to be seen in their wives. (see Proverbs 31 woman, and Priscilla) WHY? For they are one...she is his helpmate in all things...so she but all of these things as well.**