

(1 Timothy 3:1-13)

What is a church officer?

"someone who has been publicly recognized as having the right and responsibility to perform certain functions for the benefit of the whole church." (Wayne Grudem)

Jesus has established two officers to properly care for his bride, the church, here on earth:
Elders (AKA Pastors, Overseers, Bishops) and Deacons

When it comes to the biblical qualifications of an Elder or Deacon, Jesus supremely cares about proven character. Is this elder first and foremost marked by godliness? Is this deacon first and foremost marked by godliness?

Character Qualifiers of an Elder (1 Tim. 3:1-7):

1. He is _____: a man whose life does not make the gospel seem fake (v.2).
2. He is the husband of _____ wife: a man of singular devotion to his 'woman' (v.2).
3. He is _____-minded: a man who is a clear thinker (v.2).
4. He is self-_____: a man who displays thoughtful restraint in his daily living (v.2).
5. He is _____: there is order and discipline in his day-to-day life (v.2).
6. He is _____: a man with an open home (v.2).
7. He is _____: a man who believes the Bible and can explain and defend it well (v.2).
8. He is not a _____: a man who is not given to substance abuse (v.3).
9. He is not _____ but gentle: a man who does not lash out (v.3).
10. He is not _____: a man who does not always look for an argument (v.3).
11. He is not a _____ of _____: a man who is not more concerned about _____ than God (v.3).
12. He must _____ his own home well: a man who consistently _____ his family & his marriage (vv.4-5).
13. He is not a recent _____: a man who is not a 'rookie' but has faced adversity in ministry (v.6).
14. He must have a good _____: people who are not Christians generally like this man (v.7).

Character Qualifiers of a Deacon (1 Tim.3:8-10; 12-13)

1. He is _____: a man who other people feel drawn to respect (v.8).
2. He is not _____ - _____: he speaks true words without deception or manipulation (v.8).
3. He is not _____ to much wine: a man who is not given to substance abuse (v.8).
4. He is not _____ for dishonest _____: a man who is able to handle his money and your money (v.8).
5. He holds to the mystery of the _____ with a clear _____: a man who is actively living a growing gospel-centered life (v.9).

6. Tested... Prove... Serve: a man who has been a _____ for quite some time for the rest of us to see them in action and confirm his _____ for office (v.10).
7. He is the husband of _____ wife: a man of singular devotion to his wife (v.12).
8. He _____ his home well: a man who has his home life in order (v.12).

Character Qualifiers of Women (1 Timothy 3:11)

1. She is _____: a woman who other people feel drawn to respect (v.11).
2. She is not a _____: a woman who controls her tongue (v.11).
3. She is _____-minded: a woman who is a clear thinker (v.11).
4. She is _____ in all things: a woman who is dependable and trustworthy (v.11).

Learning to Live (Applications):

A. The two offices of Elder and Deacon are not complicated if our concern is godly character.

Biblical church leadership is simply one more area where we must gladly place ourselves under the word of God. Is this member being considered in the office of Elder or Deacon living a gospel-centered, Jesus-exalting life as a whole? If we can rightly answer 'YES' to this question, we will have faithful leaders in the church!

B. It is the job of the local church to test, train, evaluate and affirm who will be a church leader

Elders and deacons must be observed and properly tested first with an open Bible.

This requires the entire church taking much time to prayerfully evaluate a candidate and make sure they meet the biblical qualifiers. Only then should the church feel confident about setting apart someone for the office of Elder or Deacon!

C. A right distinction between Elders and Deacons benefits the whole church.

- a. A qualified elder is not the president of a non-profit organization. He is a shepherd.
A qualified deacon is not a high school custodian. He is a first responder. Deacons are essential to assist pastors (elders) in their calling.

Recommended Resources to Go Deeper:

Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons (Thabiti Anyabwile)

The Pastor's Ministry (Brian Croft)

Church Elders: How to Shepherd God's People Like Jesus (Jeramie Rinne)

Deacons: How they Serve and Strengthen the Church (Matt Smethurst)

Paul's Vision for the Deacons (Alexander Strauch)