

Slides 1

What Does God Require of His Shepherds

1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3

Introduction

1. The church, the body of Christ, of which many of us here this morning are a part, if it is to function at its greatest potential, needs godly leaders.

Slide 2

2. We know these men to be our elders (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5).

“When they [Paul and Barnabas] had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” (Acts 14:23, NASB95)

“From Miletus he [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.” (Acts 20:17, NASB95)

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,” (Titus 1:5, NASB95)

Slide 3

3. They are known by a few other titles as well:

- a. Overseer or Bishop (*episkopos*) — (1 Timothy 3:1)

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.” (1 Timothy 3:1, NASB95)

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.” (1 Timothy 3:1, NKJV)

Slide 4

b. Presbyter (*presbyteros*) — (Acts 20:17; 1 Peter 5:1)

“From Miletus he [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders [presbyters] of the church.” (Acts 20:17, NASB95)

“Therefore, I exhort the elders [presbyters] among you, as your fellow elder [presbyter] and witness of the sufferings of Christ . . .” (1 Peter 5:1, NASB95)

Slide 5

c. Shepherd or Pastor (*poimen*) — (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11)

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28, NASB95)

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,” (Ephesians 4:11, ESV)

4. At present we have four who shepherd us here, but these men have asked you to submit the names of more men who are qualified to come along side of them and help with the task of leading this congregation.
5. Last week we looked at the heart of a shepherd and what motivates him to care for God’s people.
6. This morning I would like for us to consider the qualifications which God places upon such men and reasons for such qualifications.
7. Only qualified men and truly lead us in the way of righteousness.

Slide 6

I. The Foremost Requirement of An Elder Is . . .

A. HE IS A MAN ABOVE REPROACH

1. Three times Paul sets forth this qualification at the beginning of both of his lists (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6,7).

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach . . .” (1 Timothy 3:2)

“namely, if any man is above reproach . . .” (Titus 1:6).

“For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward . . .” (Titus 1:7).

2. This is the general, overarching, “all-embracing” qualification.
3. Another word used for this is “blameless”.
4. It means that he has a clean moral and spiritual reputation.

Slide 7

B. WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

1. All of us as God’s people are called to live holy and blameless lives (Philippians 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

“so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,” (Philippians 2:15, NASB95)

2. We live in a world which casts a critical eye at the Christian community, perhaps more so today than in any time known in recent history.
3. It was no different in Peter’s day. We know this because of the exhortation he gave to those Christians living in Asia Minor (1 Peter 2:12).

“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:12, NASB95)

4. Since Christian leaders lead primarily by their example — “proving to be examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:3) — a blameless life is an indispensable quality to a Christian leader.
3. Job, of whom we read in the book which bears his name was such a man:

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil” (Job 1:1).

Slide 8

II. In His Home Life, He Is A Man Who . . .

A. IS THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife . . .” (1 Timothy 3:2).

“namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife . . .” (Titus 1:6).

1. Literally, he is “a one woman man.”
2. He has been “faithful and true to one woman.”
3. Such a man . . .
 - a. Is not guilty of polygamy
 - b. Has no mistress on the side, or a homosexual partner
 - c. Or any other questionable sexual relationship
4. He is above reproach in his sexual and marital life.

Slide 9

B. MANAGES HIS HOUSEHOLD WELL (1 TIMOTHY 3:4-5; TITUS 1:6)

“He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),” (1 Timothy 3:4–5, NASB95)

“. . . having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion” (Titus 1:6).

1. He is a responsible Christian father, husband and household manager.

2. He must have a reputation of providing for his family, financially, emotionally, and spiritually.
3. One aspect of a well-managed family is that of children who obey and submit to their father's leadership.
4. Paul said that such leadership is carried out "with all dignity."
5. This means that such a man is not a tyrant who crushes the spirits of his children and gains submission by harsh punishment.
6. Such a relationship violates Paul's teaching in Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
7. A Christian father is one who controls his children in an honorable, respectful and dignified way.
8. In Titus 1:6, Paul adds that he has faithful or believing children who are not accused of dissipation or rebellion.
 - a. "Dissipation" — "wild, disorderly living" (1 Peter 4:4; Luke 15:13).
 - b. "Rebellion" — "disobedient," "unruly," or "insubordinate"
9. In 1 Timothy 3:5, Paul tells us why such a qualification is so important, it is because a man who is unable to manage his own household will not be able to effectively take care of the church.

Slide 10

III. In His Personal Life An Elder Is . . .

A. TEMPERATE (1 TIMOTHY 3:2), SELF-CONTROLLED (TITUS 1:8)

1. Self-restrained, clear-headed, known for his balanced judgment.
2. From time to time, elders our elders will be confronted with serious problems, pressures and decisions.
3. In order to respond to these things in a godly way, these men must be mentally and emotionally stable.

10a**B. PRUDENT (1 TIMOTHY 3:2), SENSIBLE (TITUS 1:8)**

1. Men who are prudent and sensible are men who exercise good judgment, discretion and common sense.
2. They are able to keep an objective perspective in the face of problems and disagreements.
3. Prudence is needed in an elder's life because it tempers pride, the temptation to act in an authoritarian way, and even to justify himself in such actions.

10b**C. RESPECTABLE (1 TIMOTHY 3:2), LOVING OF WHAT IS GOOD (TITUS 1:8)**

1. He exhibits an honorable life.
2. His life is characterized by a love for all things good (Philippians 4:8).

“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” (Philippians 4:8, NASB95)

Slide 11**D. HOSPITABLE (1 TIMOTHY 3:2; TITUS 1:8)**

1. Open and loving toward others.
2. Hospitality is a concrete expression of Christian love and family life.
 - a. Paul exhorted the Christian in Rome to practice hospitality (Romans 12:13).
 - b. In 1 Peter 4:9, Peter wrote, “Be hospitable to one another without complaint.”
 - c. Hebrews 13:2 states, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

3. We are looking for men who give themselves lovingly and sacrificially for the care of the flock.
4. This cannot be done from a distance — with a smile and a handshake on a Sunday morning, or through a superficial visit.
5. An elder who is hospitable shares his life and his home with others.

11a**E. NOT ADDICTED TO WINE (1 TIMOTHY 3:3; TITUS 1:7)**

1. “Not given to wine” (KJV, NKJV).
2. God’s Word contains many warnings against the potential dangers of wine and strong drink (Isaiah 5:11, 22; Proverbs 20:1; 23:30-35; Hosea 4:11).

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.” (Proverbs 20:1, NASB95)

3. Those who would lead others are specifically warned about it (Proverbs 31:4,5; cf. Leviticus 10:8,9; Isaiah 28:1, 7, 8; 56:9-12).

“It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink, for they will drink and forget what is decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted.” (Proverbs 31:4–5, NASB95)

4. Elders work with people, often those who are troubled.
5. If an elder has a drinking problem, he will lead people astray and bring reproach upon the church.

11b**F. NOT PUGNACIOUS (1 TIMOTHY 3:3; TITUS 1:7)**

1. A pugnacious man is a fighter; one who is irritable and out-of-control.
2. He is a violent person who is prone to physical assault upon others.
3. There are times when elders must handle highly emotional, interpersonal conflicts, or even some deeply felt doctrinal disagreements between believers.
4. Because they are at the center of very tense situations, a pugnacious man

will make a bad situation even worse.

Slide 12

G. GENTLE (1 TIMOTHY 3:3), NOT SELF-WILLED (TITUS 1:7)

1. The opposite of a pugnacious man is one who is “gentle” and “not self-willed.”
2. Other words describe such a man: “kind,” “forbearing,” “gracious.”
3. In Philippians 4:5, Paul states, “Let your gentle spirit be known to all men.”
4. A gentle man demonstrates a willingness to yield and patiently make allowances for others.
5. He refuses to retaliate in kind for wrongs done by others.

Conclusion

1. As you can see, the men God looks for to lead His church are men of great character.
2. All of these qualities are important because of the tremendous responsibility they are to carry out.
3. Please continue to study these passages and prayerfully consider the men you place before this congregation to lead us on our heavenward journey.
4. Ask God to give you wisdom in this process.

Slide 13

5. Today, if you are not a Christian, please know that we, like God, consider the eternal security of your soul very important.
6. As we seek godly men to lead us, we ask you to listen to God’s invitation to you.
7. If you have not repented of your sins and been immersed in the waters of baptism to have those sins washed away, why not do so today.
8. If you have not confessed Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, why not now.

9. Our God promises to save you and His will rejoice over your obedience. Won't you come.