

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Beginning December 11, 2024

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

The Pastoral Epistles

The First Letter to Timothy

Text – 1 Timothy 3

1 Timothy 3 – “Qualifications for Leadership”

Introduction

In this portion of Scripture, Paul explained to Timothy the qualifications that are necessary for a person to be considered for a position of leadership, as a pastor / bishop / elder; or as a deacon. He first addressed the qualifications for pastors:

I. Pastors (vs. 1 – 7)

"1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1 Timothy 3:1)

The person holding the office of pastor is to be elected by the congregation based on his possessing the appropriate qualifications and gifts (1 Timothy 3:1-7). He must demonstrate the characteristics of servant leadership (Matthew 20:25-28). The gift of pastoring is the ability to shepherd, provide for, care for, and protect God’s people. In Ephesians 4:11, teaching is linked to pastoring and in Acts 20:28, ruling (leadership and administration) is linked to pastoring.

A. The pastor’s relationship to his church

1. His role (Acts 20:17-28)

- a. The elder (*presbuteros*) is one of spiritual age and dignity.
- b. The bishop (*episkopos*) is the overseer of the church and its ministries.
- c. The pastor (*poimenas*) is the shepherd of God’s flock.

These terms and roles are used interchangeably and applied to the same individuals in the same context (Acts 20:17, 28-29; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pt. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:7, 17)

2. His duties

- a. To shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28)
- b. To receive and give instruction from the Word (2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:2)
- c. To be diligent in prayer (Acts 6:4; James 5:14)

- d. To be diligent in doctrine, guarding against error (Titus 1:9; 2:1)
- e. To be an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5)
- f. To watch over the business of the church and to the distribution of money (Acts 11:30)
- g. To rule and provide general leadership (I Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17)
- h. To receive reports about missionary work (Acts 20:17; 21:18)
- i. To avoid being a dictator (I Pet. 5:1-3)
- j. To account to God for the ministry of the church (James 3:1; Heb. 13:17)

3. His qualifications (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)

"2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;" (1 Timothy 3:2)

- a. Must be "blameless" (v. 2)—above reproach: There is nothing in his life for which to accuse him.
- b. Must be "the husband of one wife" (v. 2)—It does not mean "one at a time." He has not been divorced and remarried.
- c. Must be "vigilant" (v. 2)—temperate: He is sober in judgment and action.
- d. Must be "sober" (v. 2)—prudent: He is discreet, sound-minded.
- e. Must be "of good behavior" (v. 2)—respectable: He is well balanced, not abrasive.
- f. Must be "given to hospitality" (v. 2)—hospitable: He loves and hosts guests.
- g. Must be "apt to teach" (v. 2)—able to teach: He discerns and communicates sound doctrine.

"3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;" (1 Timothy 3:3)

- h. Must be "not given to wine" (v. 3)—He does not use alcoholic beverages.
- i. Must be "no striker" (v. 3)—not pugnacious: He is not a fighter.
- j. Must be "not greedy of filthy lucre" (v. 3) - no lover of money. He is not greedy or irresponsible concerning money.

- k. Must be “patient” (v. 3)—gentle: He is reasonable.
- l. Must be “not a brawler” (v. 3)—uncontentious: He avoids fighting.
- m. Must be “not covetous” (v. 3)—content with material possessions and circumstances.

"4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Timothy 3:4-5)

- n. Must be “one that ruleth his own house” (v. 4)—managing his own household: He attends to his own family so that they act as believers and are orderly.

"6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Timothy 3:6)

- o. Must be “not a novice” (v. 6)—not a new convert: He is not a beginner. He has ministered to people in less official capacities prior to being selected for the role of a pastor.

"7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (1 Timothy 3:7)

- p. Must “have a good report” (v. 7)—good reputation with unbelievers: He is respected in the community at large.

B. The church’s responsibility to the pastor

1. To follow his leadership (Heb. 13:7, 17)
2. To respect him and care for his needs (1 Tim. 5:17-18)
3. To protect him from slander and accusation (1 Tim. 5:19)
4. To pray for him continually (Col. 4:2)

II. Deacons

Turn to Acts 6 - The first mention of deacons in the early church is found in Acts 6. There, we see that deacons were needed to take care of some ministry duties that were taking up a lot of the apostles’ time and energy, which could have been devoted instead to the ministry of the Word of God.

Here in 1 Timothy, Paul explains to Timothy some more of the qualifications for these servants of God:

"8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;" (1 Timothy 3:8)

Vs. 8 – “grave” (σεμνούς from σεμνός – *semnos* - adjective) – translated “honest” in Philippians 4:8. Means reverent, honourable.

“not doubletongued” (διλόγους from δίλογος – *dilogos*) – literally “two word.” Sying one thing to one person and something else to another.

“not given to much wine” – given (προσέχοντας from προσέχω - *prosechō*) - literally means someone who pays a lot of attention to something, or to be addicted to something, or controlled by something. Translated “beware;” take heed;” take earnest heed;” “attended;” “pay attention to;” give attendance to.”

“not given to filthy lucre” – (αίσχροκερδεῖς from αίσχροκερδής – *aischrokerdēs*) – eager for base gain; greedy for money. Illustration – my dad used to say, “That kind of money will do you no good.”

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." (1 Timothy 3:9)

meaning that he carries the right doctrine and lives his life according to the doctrine he holds.

The word, “mystery” refers to something that was previously concealed that God was going to reveal. In Ephesians 3:1 – 7, Paul speaks of the “mystery” of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the plan and promises of God:

*"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."
(Ephesians 3:1-7)*

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (Romans 11:25)

The word mystery is used 5 times in Ephesians and 5 times in Colossians, roughly half of the times it is used in the entire Bible. Most times the word mystery is used to refer to the gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 15:51 the word “mystery” is used to refer to the rapture:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

In Ephesians 5:32, the word “mystery” refers to the Bride of Christ:

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:31-32)

Here in 1 Timothy 3, the word “mystery” probably refers to New Testament doctrine corporately.

"10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." (1 Timothy 3:10)

This verse teaches that someone who is to be considered for the office of deacon has proven and been tested through years of faithful service that they are faithful to the Lord.

According to MacArthur: “The present tense of this verb indicates an ongoing evaluation of deacons’ character and service by the church”¹

“blameless” - “not able to be held” in a criminal sense; there is no valid accusation of wrongdoing that can be made against him. No overt, flagrant sin can mar the life of one who must be an example for his people to follow.²

Joshua was tested as a servant of Moses for many years before he was put into the position of a leader in Israel.

Joseph was tested in Egypt before he was made the second in command.

"11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." (1 Timothy 3:11)

“grave” – same as above.

“slanderers” (διαβόλους from διάβολος – *diabolos* – adjective, plural) – same word for devil, meaning a false accuser. Satan is the accuser of the brethren. This is associated with gossip.

¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1865.

² John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1864.

“sober” (νηφαλέους from νηφάλιος – *nēphalios*) – moderate, temperate, circumspect, vigilant, abstaining from wine; at least from its immoderate use.

"12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." (1 Timothy 3:12)

This is the verse that has caused the most problems regarding deacons. Is it referring to one wife at a time; or is it referring to polygamy.

It literally means “one woman man.’

This verse may shed a little light on the subject.

"9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man," (1 Timothy 5:9)

According to McArthur: “The issue is not the elder’s marital status, but his moral and sexual purity. A “one-woman man” is one totally devoted to his wife, maintaining singular devotion, affection and sexual purity in both thought and deed. To violate this is to forfeit blamelessness and no longer be “above reproach”³

"13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 3:13)

“good degree” – (βαθμὸν from βαθμός – *bathmos*) – a step, a grade of dignity, meaning a good reputation and a good standing.

Conclusion

We will now look at our Constitution and see what it says about both pastors and deacons.

ARTICLE 3 - Officers of the Church

SECTION 1 - Pastor

1) Qualifications- I Timothy 3 and Titus 1

The life of the Pastor and his family should be an example of godliness and spirituality. They should not indulge in worldly or sinful practices which would tend to weaken the testimony of the Church. No one who uses intoxicating liquors as a beverage, drugs other than medicinal, or tobacco in any form, or who belongs to a society, or who brings repute (or disrepute) upon his ministry through sinful language, practice, or associations shall be considered for Pastor or retained as Pastor if such is persisted in. No person shall be considered for, nor hold the office of Pastor who maintains any connection with unscriptural alliances, i.e. The National Council of Churches, or any of its agencies, conventions, or other ecclesiastical bodies. No women will be considered for the office of

³ Ibid, 1864.

Pastor. Any man that is married to a divorced woman in conflict with I Cor.7 or is himself in conflict with I Cor.7 will not be considered for the office.

2) Term of Office

The term of office shall be for an undesignated period. The pastorate shall terminate immediately upon refusal of the Pastor to affirm the Articles of Faith.

3) Duties

It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach regularly at the Church, administer the ordinances, and perform the various duties incumbent of his office. He shall be moderator at the Church and preside at all its business meetings. He shall be ex officio member of all committees and organizations, which includes the privilege of voting. The Pastor oversees the pulpit and has overall responsibility for all church administration. He must appoint someone to fill the position in his absence as interim pastor.

4) Provisions of the Pastor

The church will provide as voted on during regular business meetings or by the amount voted on in the yearly budget. Vacation time will also be determined in this manner.

5) Authority to hire full time staff

The Pastor will be given the authority to hire a church staff as he deems necessary. He will be responsible for the hiring and firing of the church staff, and the staff will be responsible to him. Each new staff member must have his/her salary approved by the church before taking a paid position. Provisions for the staff will be voted on by either a regular scheduled business meeting or by the yearly budget.

6) Calling of the Pastor

A pulpit committee shall be called and shall be composed of the Board of Deacons. The Deacon chairman will ensure that the pulpit is filled in the absence of a pastor and will expedite the selection process. They will examine all candidates to be presented to the church. The pulpit committee will present only one man at a time for the consideration and vote of the church.

The call of a pastor shall come before the church at a business meeting called for this purpose. An affirmative 80% of the voting members present shall be required at the time of call.

Whenever a change in pastor is desirable, it shall be the duty of the church, or pastor desiring such change, to give the other a six-week notice or shorter if there is a mutual agreement.

7) Pastor Succession Plan **(Revised by Unanimous Vote of Congregation on July 30, 2023)**

In the event the senior pastor of the church resigns, is dismissed, or dies unexpectedly, Jersey Shore Baptist Church will implement the following succession plan:

1. The Assistant Pastor of the church will take over as interim pastor for a period of six months and will assume all ministry responsibilities of the pastor and will make all ministry related decisions. He will have the same authority the previous pastor held in decisions regarding preaching and teaching, curriculum decisions, choosing ministry staff, etc.
2. The deacon board will assume all administrative responsibilities including all financial obligations and decisions, upkeep of the building, etc. The chairman of the deacon board will be granted the same authority that the pastor previously held in administrative areas.
3. The pastor's wife will continue to receive the pastor's salary package for a period of six months, but only in the case of the pastor's death.
4. At the end of the six-month period, the assistant pastor will make his wishes known regarding being considered permanently for the senior pastor position. If he feels called of God to continue as pastor, the church will vote to approve or disapprove. Approval will require a vote of 80% of the congregation.

If the assistant pastor does not wish to be considered for the permanent position of pastor, or if he is not approved by the congregation, the following procedure will be implemented as per the church constitution.

SECTION 2 - Deacons

1) Qualifications- I Timothy 3

Both the man and his wife (if applicable) must meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3. The life of a Deacon and his wife should be a good example. They should not indulge in worldly or sinful practices which would tend to weaken the testimony of the church. No one who uses intoxicating liquors as a beverage, drugs other than medicinal, tobacco, or who belongs to any subversive organization; or who brings disrepute upon the church by sinful practices, language, or associations shall be considered for nor retain the office of Deacon, nor will he retain the position if his wife fails in these areas. In keeping with scriptures, gossiping, tattling, backbiting, undermining, holding grudges, uncontrolled temper, etc. are unbecoming to a Deacon or a Deacon's wife and shall be considered grounds for dismissal. Faithfulness to all services is expected and except where it is unavoidable, each Deacon and family will be at all services. No woman will be considered for the office of deacon. No man in conflict with I Cor. 7, if remarried, will be considered.

2) Term of Office

The term of a Deacon shall be for two years. Upon approval of the church by a majority vote, he may serve additional terms. No man will be considered as a Deacon who does not have the support of the Pastor.

3) It shall be the duty of a Deacon, aside from appointed tasks, to assist the Pastor in the building of the church numerically, financially, and spiritually; to visit the sick, sorrowing, and needy; to personally strive to win others to Christ, to guard the reputation of the Church and the Pastor; to help with the physical repair, cleaning, and upkeep of the building, buses, etc. The Deacons will also act as the Trustees of the Church. They will also act as the benevolence fund board, assist in the yearly budget preparation, and other like tasks.

4) Procedure of selecting Deacons

Members will nominate persons for the office of deacon. The Pastor will screen the list and eliminate those men not qualified under I Tim. 3 or is not actively involved in the ministries of the church. Members will vote on the list and the top three (more if so needed) will be put into office. If a deacon leaves during his tenure, then this same procedure will be used to replace him.

III. Concluding Remarks (vs. 14 – 16)

A. The Importance of Proper Procedure (vs. 14 – 15)

"14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

Paul was concerned that everything that was done within the church was done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40) because the church belongs to the Lord and was the “pillar” (στῦλος – *stylos* – the column or support) and “ground” (ἐδραίωμα – *hedraiōma* – a foundation) for the truth. The church is to “prop up” and firmly hold up the truth – the Word of God.

B. A Parenthetical Pronouncement of What the Truth Includes (v. 16)

"16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Timothy 3:16)

The church is to support this Truth and proclaim it to the world.