

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

I. 1 Timothy: Basic Local Church Ministry

G. God's Qualifications For The Office Of Deacon

(1 Timothy 3:8-13)

I. Introduction

- A. In view of reports of great needs and problems in various churches, much of which has been produced by Church leaders themselves, we view the Pastoral Epistles, handbooks on local pastoral ministry.
- B. 1 Timothy 3:8-13 provides God's qualifications for the office of deacon, qualifications that are greatly needed amid the dysfunctional lives and relationships of many professing Christians today.
- C. We thus view this passage to establish a template of what godly church deacons should be (as follows):

II. God's Qualifications For The Office Of Deacon, 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

- A. The office of deacon in the Early Church began as a ministry of helps to the apostles in Acts 6:1-7:
 - 1. Initially, the apostles were involved with not only prayer and the study and preaching of Scripture, but also with distributing the material goods of believers' donations to needy widows in the growing Early Church.
 - 2. However, the Aramaic-speaking Jewish apostles did not know the Greek-speaking Jewish widows, so a complaint rose about the apostle's not giving them goods, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Acts 6:1.
 - 3. The apostles thus had the congregation recommend reputable men to "serve" these goods to the widows while the apostles kept ministering in the Word and in prayer, causing the Church to flourish, Acts 6:2-7.
 - 4. The word "deacon" is thus derived from the verb "serve" in the Greek, Ibid., fn. to Acts 6:2.
- B. Thus, the **office** of a deacon was a role that involved **both a spiritual and a practical** side to its ministry.
- C. The deacons must then meet both spiritual and practical qualifications for an effective ministry, 1 Tim. 3:8-13:
 - 1. Deacons must be godly in their lives, 1 Timothy 3:8, 11-12:
 - a. They must be *semnos*, men who are "worthy of respect, noble, dignified, serious," Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 754; 1 Timothy 3:8a.
 - b. They must **not** be *dilogos*, "double-tongued; insincere," Ibid., p. 197; 1 Timothy 3:8b.
 - c. They must **not** be alcoholics, 1 Timothy 3:8c.
 - d. They must **not** be *aischrokerdes*, "fond of dishonest gain," Ibid., p. 24; 1 Timothy 3:8d.
 - e. They must be *mias-gunaikos-andres*, a "one-woman-man" in qualification so that as we learned with the elders (1 Timothy 3:2b), means they must not have a history of divorce and remarriage; 1 Tim. 3:12a.
 - f. They must like elders (1 Timothy 3:4-5) manage their own children and households well, 1 Tim. 3:12b.
 - g. Their **wives** must also be *semnos*, "worthy of respect, noble, dignified, serious," Ibid., p. 754; 1 Tim. 3:11a. [Some claim 1 Timothy 3:11 discusses qualifications for *deaconesses* as if **women** were to be **leaders** in the **church**, but since Paul **continued** discussing the qualifications of *deacons* in verse 12 as he had in verses 9-10, the women in verse 11 must be the **wives** of *deacons*, Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 1 Tim. 3:11a.]
 - h. Their **wives** must **not** be *diabolos*, "slandorous," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 181; 1 Timothy 3:11b.
 - i. Their **wives** must be *nephalios*, "temperate in the use of wine," Ibid., p. 540; 1 Timothy 3:11c.
 - j. Their **wives** must be *pistos* in all things, "trustworthy in every respect," Ibid., p. 670-671; 1 Tim. 3:11d.
 - 2. Deacons must be sound in their beliefs, 1 Timothy 3:9:
 - a. They must hold to the body of revealed Bible doctrine, 1 Timothy 3:9a; Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 1 Tim. 3:9.
 - b. They must hold to that body of truth with a pure conscience, without any reservations, 1 Timothy 3:9b.
 - 3. Deacons must be honorable in their service, 1 Timothy 3:10, 13:
 - a. They must first be *dokimazo*, "approved by testing" in life so as to be found blameless and thus fit to serve in the office of deacon, Ibid., p. 201; 1 Timothy 3:10.
 - b. If they serve well once they are assigned the office of deacon, such men "gain a good standing for themselves" before God and man "and also great confidence in the faith" in Christ, 1 Timothy 3:13 ESV.

Lesson: Deacons must live godly lives, be sound in their beliefs and honorable in their service along with their wives who are similarly to be upright, honorable and faithful in all things. If a deacon serves well in his office, he wins a good reputation before God and man and great personal confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Application: (1) May those who serve as deacons live, believe and serve righteously while their wives similarly retain godliness in life and service. (2) May we in the congregation elect men to the office of deacon who are qualified for that office, men who through proven track records are upstanding in spiritual and practical realms.