

Elders/Deacons

The apostle Paul, in giving these inspired instructions to both Timothy and Titus, was speaking to the subject of divine management of the Lord's body, the church. These were instructions given specifically to members of the body and were not concerning those outside who only the Lord will judge (*1 Cor 5:12*). The church needs to heed these instructions if she is to remain pure since her leaders are tasked with a weighty charge (*Mat 15:14; Heb 13:7*). 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 list the qualifications.

Elders

1. **Desire**- Gk.3713- *reach* out after (*long* for).
2. **Must**- Gk.1163- *it is* (*was*, etc.) *necessary* (as **binding**): - behoved, be meet, must (needs), (be) need (-ful), ought, should. **Be**- Gk.1511- **Present infinitive** from G1510; *to exist*. Thus, he is to be **at present** and, as the infinitive suggests, as **long as** he meets **all** the following qualifications, in such a state as is scripturally commanded. (*emp. added*)
3. **Above reproach**- Gk.423. Thayer “*not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of; hence cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable*”.
4. **Not arrogant** (*Gk.829- self pleasing*) or **quick tempered** (*Gk.3711- irascible [irritable, grumpy]: -soon angry*)
5. **Husband of one** (*Gk.3391- one or first*) **wife**. At the time of the writing, polygamy was common but was categorically forbidden of Christians according to Jesus' statement in Mat 19 concerning marriage, divorce and re-marriage. The koine Greek word for ‘one’ implies that the elder, who had multiple wives prior to conversion, give up all those wives and that he remain married to his ‘first’ wife (*not to be misunderstood as Gk.4413- foremost; which would denote that he could only be married once*). Any faithful brother who meets all the eldership qualifications, even one who was divorced because of a wife having committed “sexual immorality” (*adultery- Mat 5:32*), who himself is scripturally qualified to marry, and who marries another woman who is also ‘scripturally’ eligible, thus fits the “husband of one wife” restriction. But, if the wife of an elder dies, he is no longer qualified to serve in that capacity as the husband of one wife. Widowers therefore, cannot serve as elders since there is no scripture that states such, and to do so would only be adding to the inspired Word. (*Deu 4:2; Isa 55:8; Rev 22:18-19*)
6. **Sober minded**- Gk.4998- *safe* (*sound*) in *mind*, that is, *self-controlled* (*moderate* as to opinion or passion. Thayer- “*curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate*”.
7. **Respectable**- Gk.2887- *orderly*: -of good behavior, modest.
8. **Hospitable**- Gk.5382- *fond of guests*: -given to (lover of, use) hospitality.
9. **Able to teach**- Gk.1317- *instructive*. Thayer- “*apt and skillful in teaching*”.
10. **Not**- (*Gk.3361- negation*) a **drunkard**- Gk.3943- *staying near wine*. Interlinear- “not given to wine”. An elder is to be “given to hospitality” but “not given to wine”. We must never forget that our bodies belong to the Lord as temples of the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor 6:19-20*) and are to be respected as such. If that is to be understood and practiced by the common Christian, why should the elder be relieved of this?
11. **Not**- (*Gk.3361*) **violent**- Gk.4131- *a smiter*, that is, *pugnacious* (*quarrelsome*).
12. **Not**- (*Gk.3361*) a **lover of money or greedy of gain**- Gk.146- (*gain*); *sordid*.
13. **Must manage** (*Gk.4291- to stand before, that is, [in rank] to preside*) **his own household** (*Gk.3624- Thayer- “the inmates of a house, all the persons forming one family, a household”*) **well/ with all dignity** (*Gk.4587- venerableness, that is, probity [honesty, integrity]*) **keeping his children** (*Gk.5043- a child. Thayer- “offspring; plural children*) (*Question: How long are offspring still offspring? Don't they continue*

as such when they leave the nest?') **submissive** (Gk.5292- subordination)/ **his children** (Gk.5043) **are believers** (Gk.4103- Thayer- "one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and author of salvation, [a believer]: with addition... of persons in whom faith or trust is reposed"), **not open to charge** (Gk.2724- a complaint, that is, criminal charge: -accusation) **of debauchery** (Gk.810- un-savedness) (This must include those who have had their fellowship withdrawn from.) **or insubordination** (Gk.506- un-subdued, that is, insubordinate [in fact or temper]: -disobedient, that is not put under, unruly) 1Ti 3:5 "for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" (Eph 6:1)

14. **Not-** (Gk.3361) **a recent convert-** Gk.3504- newly planted, that is, (figuratively) a young convert.
15. **Well** (Gk.2570- good [literally or morally], that is, valuable or virtuous [for appearance or use]) **thought of** (Gk.3141- evidence given) **by outsiders-** Gk.1855- Thayer- "those who do not belong to the Christian church".
16. **Lover of good-** Gk.5358- fond of good, that is, a promoter of virtue.
17. **Upright-** Gk.1342- Thayer- "rendering to each his due; and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or by shown by the manner of dealing with them". **Holy-** Gk.3741- Thayer- "undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious". **Disciplined-** Gk.1468- strong in a thing (masterful), that is, self-controlled (in appetite, etc.): -temperate.
18. **Must hold firm to** (Gk.472- to hold oneself opposite to, that is, [by implication] adhere to; by extension to care for) **the trustworthy** (Gk.4103) **word** (Gk.3056) **as taught** (Gk.1322- instruction [the act or the matter]: -doctrine) in order to be able **to give instruction in sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict it.** This concerns being "devoted... to the apostles' teaching" (Act 2:42) "and to the word of [God's] grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among those who are sanctified" (Act 20:32) and "[receiving] with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas 1:21).

The above is a breakdown of each of the qualifications of an elder/bishop/presbyter (*all three designating the same office*). But what are the obligations that elders have toward members and what are the obligations members are to have toward the elders of their own congregations, since all congregations are to be autonomous? Notice Paul's admonition toward the Ephesian elders before he left them for the last time.

Act 20:28 "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God (*Christ, since Jesus is God and the church is His bride*), which He obtained with His own blood. (29) I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; (30) and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. (31) Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears."

1Pe 5:1 "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: (2) shepherd (Gk.4165- to tend as a shepherd [supervise]) the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; (3) not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."

Heb 13:17 “Obey (*Gk.3982- assent [to authority]*) your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

Sadly, there will always be those who arise among the flock as elders whose egos tend to rule their own lives and thus within the church. But if all the qualifications given for such an important office are heeded, who wouldn't want to be submissive to such a man?

Deacons

1. **Likewise**- *Gk.5615- as thus, that is, in the same way.* Referring back to the qualifications of the elders but here with some amendments. Yes he is to desire the position and must not be forced into it but nothing is said about his being able to teach either. And just because nothing is stated respecting the wife of the elder, it can be assumed that their wives meet the same qualifications (*likewise*) as those of the deacons'.
2. **Must** (*Gk.1163- it is [was, etc.] necessary [as binding]*) **be dignified**- *Gk.4586- venerable, that is, honorable: -grave, honest.*
3. **Not**- (*Gk.3361*) **double-tongued**- *Gk.1351- equivocal, that is, telling a different story.*
4. **Not**- (*Gk.3361*) **addicted**- *Gk.4337- (figuratively) to hold the mind (intellect) towards, that is, pay attention to, be cautious about, apply oneself to, adhere to.* **Much**- *Gk.4183- much (in any respect) (emp. added).* **Wine**- *Gk.3631- A primary word (or perhaps of Hebrew origin [Heb.3196- to effervesce; wine (as fermented)]) (See notes above on bullet point 10.)*
5. **Not greedy of dishonest gain**- (*See notes on bullet point 12 above.*)
6. **Must**- (*Gk.1163*) **hold** (*Gk.2192*) **the mystery** (*Gk.3466- a secret or “mystery” [through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites]*) **of the faith** (*Gk.4102- persuasion, that is, credence; moral conviction, especially reliance upon Christ for salvation*) **with a clear** (*Gk.2513- clean. Thayer- “free from every admixture of what is false, sincere”*) **conscience** (*Gk.4893- co-perception, that is, moral consciousness. From Gk.4894- to see completely; respectively meaning to understand or become aware, and to be conscious or [clandestinely] informed of*)
7. **Be tested** (*Gk.1381- to test; by implication to approve*) **first** (*Gk.4412- firstly [in time, place, order, or importance]*)
8. **Prove themselves blameless** (*Gk.410- un-accused, that is, [by implication] irreproachable*) – Interlinear- “unimpeachable being”.
9. **Wives likewise** (*Gk.5615*) **must** (*Gk.1163*) **be dignified**- *Gk.4586- venerable, that is, honorable: -grave, honest.*
10. **Not**- (*Gk.3361*) **slanderers**- *Gk.1228- a traducer: -false accuser.*
11. **Sober minded**- *Gk.3524- sober, that is, (figuratively) circumspect [cautious]: -vigilant.*
12. **Faithful** (*Gk.4103- objectively trustworthy; subjectively trustful*) **in all things** (*Gk.3956- all, any, every, the whole: -whatsoever*).
13. **Husbands of one wife**- (*referring back to an elder's qualifications; see bullet point 5 under elder qualifications*)
14. **Managing their children and their own households well**- (*See bullet point 13 under elder qualifications*)

1Ti 3:13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

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