



Well Led & Well Fed

Effective church leadership isn't about titles or structures but about the tested character of those who lead. A true pastor must embody godly integrity, protect the flock with sound doctrine, and lead by example, ensuring the church is both well-led and well-fed.

Titus 1:5-9

BIBLE PASSAGE

Titus 1:5-9 (NKJV - New King James Version)

⁵ For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

⁶ if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

⁷ For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

⁸ but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

⁹ holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

INTRO

Last week, we touched on one of the most controversial and dividing issues in the church, the election, so Paul decided he might as well stay on a roll and talk about the next most divisive issue: **church leadership**.

Titus was entrusted with the task of finding the things that were lacking in the church and putting them in order. Directly connected to that was establishing the right kind of leaders.

- ***There seems to be a direct connection between church deficiencies and a lack of solid leadership. Godly spiritual leadership leaves less room for gaps within a church.***
- **Commanded - dee-at-as'-so - a direct instruction. For Paul, a church without qualified leadership was not an option. Titus could not leave a church with a clear conscience until it could be left in the right hands.**

Much of the debate around church leadership stems less from scripture and more from people's experiences. Scripture is unapologetically clear about the qualifications and roles of church leaders and even gives us some freedom and liberty in our interpretation regarding the form and structure of church leadership.

- Yet, for many people today, hearing the words "Authority" and "Church" in the same sentence triggers them, inciting frustration, hurt, and anger.
- This is because people with the titles "Bishop, Apostle, Priest, Pastor, or Elder " have done much harm in the church. In fact, hardly a month goes by without the headlines rattling off another church leadership scandal: a financial mishandling, a moral failure, or an ethical impropriety.

People's response to these real failures is often to overcompensate by trying to change the **structure of ministry leadership in the church rather than dealing with the character and calling** of those who are leading.

- They make larger boards, have more oversight committees, hold more congregational votes, and do everything they can to minimize the authority a pastor or elder can have.
- What people often fail to realize is that when we have embraced and even idolized a leadership model that values charisma over character, talent over integrity, and success over sanctity, we have set ourselves up to place leaders in the church who are on the road to failure regardless of the structure they are put into.

You can be an elder-run church with co-equal voices, but if your elders are carnally-minded men or carry selfish ambition, they can just as easily strangle the church from fruitfulness.

You can be a megachurch with a larger-than-life senior pastor who begins to view the pulpit as his self-kingdom-building platform and begins to play fast and loose with His morality and integrity, believing that the rules don't apply to him and whose pride ends up marring the church's reputation. You can be a congregational church full of members lacking faith and spiritual depth and run the church into the ground through immaturity.

JOKE

A pastoral search committee evaluated several men for the role of pastor. They found flaws in each—Moses stuttered too much, David's past was littered with an affair, Paul was not particularly attractive, and didn't seem to have much charisma in person. Peter told the truth but frequently offended people. They liked Jesus' teaching style, but were turned off when they discovered that he frequently drew lines in the sands that caused crowds of people to leave. Finally, they found their perfect candidate! He had a pragmatic approach to handling money and a keen ability to close deals. He was practical, charismatic, and really seemed to care for the poor: Judas was their man!

APPLICATION

I believe this is why the New Testament scriptures deal mainly with the ***leader's qualifications and character rather than the leadership's structure***. That's not to say that there isn't some structure implied or instructed.

QUOTE

“The Bible is flexible regarding the specific structure of the church's leadership and rigid regarding the character qualifications of its leaders.

Pastor Josh

CONTEXT

Five main passages in the New Testament deal with the structure and qualifications of church leaders. Three others deal with how people within the church should interact with those who lead.

- **The specific qualifications of Elders and Deacons are found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.**
- **The various job descriptions of church leadership are found in Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 5, and Acts 20.**

1 Defining Leadership Titles

APPLICATION

The Bible translates several words into the titles or offices of church leadership. The terms Elder, Bishop, Pastor, or even Apostle were not used as titles to impress but terms to define the role of an appointed leader in the church. Sadly, semantics has caused a ton of confusion among churches. I hope not to add to that but rather provide clarity. You may recognize some of these Greek words because certain denominations have adopted them within their title.

- 1. Elder - Presbyteros (1 Tim 5:19, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5, 2&3 John)**
- 2. Bishop - Episcopo - (1 Tim 3, Titus 1)**
- 3. Pastor - Poimane - shepherd (Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 5)**

In my studies, I believe it's safe to say that these three words are synonymous with one office. Paul uses two of these terms together in this letter to Titus, describing an Elder and a Bishop in the same paragraph. Peter and Paul use all three of their words of exhortation to elders:

BIBLE PASSAGE

[1Pe 5:1-2 NKJV] [1] The elders (Presbyteros) who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: [2] Shepherd (Poiman) the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers (Episcope), not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Act 20:17, 28 NKJV] [17] From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. ...

[28] "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.

APPLICATION

Instead of looking at all these as different titles, we would probably be better to see them as descriptors of the leadership office:

Elder - Their Maturity

Overseer (Bishop) - Their Ministry - the responsibility of seeing the bigger picture - Epi: over / Scopus - to see

Pastor (shepherd) - Their Method - lead by serving as a shepherd leads sheep.

It's a fascinating study in history. However, during and shortly after the Reformation, the title "Pastor" gained popularity over bishop because of the move away from the carnal hierarchy within the Catholic Church. Pastor had a more relational and humble meaning in that era and has since become the preferred title for church leadership in the evangelical tradition.

But that is an issue of semantics. Should we call our spiritual leaders bishops, pastors, or elders? I think there's flexibility within those titles. The more important question is, **"How are they functioning, and are they qualified?"**

2 Defining Leadership Qualifications

QUOTE

“Qualifications of a pastor: the mind of a scholar, the heart of a child, and the hide of a rhinoceros.

Stuart Briscoe, British Preacher

APPLICATION

Church leaders should be people who have Christ-like qualities you want to emulate, not people you have to put up with.

I want the gentleness and kindness of **Frank Stanley**.

I want the zeal and commitment of **Tony Bryan**.

I want the wisdom of **Tom Richmond** and the kindness of **Joe Huber**. I want the joy of **Ted Myers**.

I want the steadiness and consistency of **Chris Olson**, the excellence and compassion of **Dan Blakely**, the optimism of **Rick Lipera**, the servant's Heart of **Ken Maxey** and faithfulness **Jonathan Medina**, and the loyalty and resolve of **Adam Przybylski**.

These are the pastors/elders of our church. They are not perfect men, but they are men who inspire us to pursue Christ.

APPLICATION

Titus 1, 1 Timothy 3, and 1 Peter 5 carry the brunt of the qualifications for an overseer in the church. We could define these qualifications into four main categories:

- **Gender**
- **Desire**
- **Character**
- **Giftedness**

Gender: Both the Bible and church history teach that the unique office of elder/overseer in the church is designated for men. If this concerns you, I would recommend that you go back and watch or listen to my 5 part series on gender roles in the church and home.

- The qualifications in both Titus and Timothy are written in the nominative singular masculine, and one of the first qualifications is **"the husband of one wife."** Despite what the culture is desperately trying to convince us of today, the only ender that is qualified to be a husband of a wife is the male gender.
- This qualification has nothing to do with the worth of value of one gender over another. It is not related to skill or capability.
- It is ultimately the way the church honors God's created order in that he created the male as the head and the female as the helper, which ultimately paints the picture of Jesus being the head of the church and the church in the feminine role, being submitted to the leadership of Christ.

Desire: In 1 Timothy, Paul adds the phrase, "If any man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work."

- Desire is a reflection of calling, and someone who is not called into the pastorate should not enter the pastorate.
- That desire should obviously be tested to ensure that it is purely motivated and not a selfish desire, but it's always good to have a pastor/elder who actually wants to be one.

Giftedness: While this is a small category, it is worth mentioning because it is mainly what sets apart an overseer from a deacon.

- In Timothy and Titus, we find that an overseer must be **"Apt to teach"** and able to **"exhort with sound doctrine."**
- This does not mean they have to be the most charismatic personality or have the strongest communication skills, but there will be a spiritual power, giftedness and

effectiveness to their teaching in the local church for the growth of the body. Some are more apt to teach in a "one-on-one" discipleship environment, others in small groups, and others from a platform, but it is a gift needed to lead and oversee the flock's spiritual health.

- **“Paul does not just mean a facility in speaking, as we know how many people have much to say but edify no one. Rather, Paul is commending knowing how to apply God’s Word so that the people listening benefit from this.” -Martin Luther**

Character: The majority of the qualifications rest in this category, which is where we will spend the rest of our time as we examine the following verses.

- In Titus specifically, the qualifications consist of **11 "musts" and 5 "must nots."**

1. BLAMELESS

To effectively blame someone means to throw out an accusation against him or her that sticks. If I put the blame on someone for something, I now have the obligation to bring forth the evidence against him or her.

- Paul is not saying that this man has to be perfect, seeing that it is impossible to find a perfect man (and all the ladies said!).
- True is the saying, **"The best of men are still men at best."**
- Pastors are also subject to human struggles. They are not perfect, but their character should be able to stand up against attack and accusations of consistent carnal or evil behavior. While they are still sheep being sanctified, they have also demonstrated maturity and consistency in their pursuit of Christ and holiness in their lives.

Blameless - “Not to stick; cannot be called into account.”

When accusations come flying from someone who wants to harm the church or cause division, they start accusing the pastor of stealing money, treating people unethically, or walking in immorality. When closely examined, those accusations should not be able to stick to the man in the role of an elder/pastor.

This is why Paul told Timothy in Chapter 5, **“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from 2 or 3 witnesses.”**

- If you hear one guy or girl spouting out how the pastor did this or an elder did that, don't be quick to believe it until two or three wise witnesses have examined the accusation.
- **One person's assumption of opinion should not be allowed the weight to wreck a pastor's reputation. Conversely, a pastor's clear and evidenced sin should not be overlooked to protect the pastor's reputation.**

“Satan likes nothing better than to disgrace God’s work and God’s people by trapping church leaders in sin before a watching world.” -Zuck

- **You have to understand that when you sign up to be a Christian, you get a target on your back. When you accept the role of a pastor, that target becomes one large bull’s--eye.**

2. HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

Three options:

- He is disqualifying all those who have had a spouse die or are divorced.
- He is coming against possible polygamy from the Greek culture.
- (I tend to agree with this interpretation) The Greek actually means **“A one-woman man.”**

With his heart, mind, and his hands, there is only one woman for him... his wife. There are no women on the side. He’s learned how to control his lusts or desires for any other. I also don’t believe Paul is disqualifying single people, because he would have to disqualify himself since he was not married.

3. A FAITHFUL FATHER

...having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

In verse 1, **Timothy 3:15**, Paul tells Timothy that the church is **“The Household of God.”**

- As within any house, the kids can get unruly and out of hand. A good father knows when and how to administer discipline as well as gentleness to keep his children in a

place of obedience. If a man can't take a stand to control the rebellion under his own roof, how can he handle it when it comes into God's house?

- I believe this rule applies to children who are living in the house as opposed to those who have moved on or are married.
- Ask a child if they respect their father; that will tell you a lot about what happens at home.

4. A STEWARD OF GOD

[1Co 4:2 NKJV] 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

The pastor is keenly aware that the church doesn't belong to Him but is entrusted to His care by the chief shepherd, the great shepherd, the head of the church, Jesus Christ.

- The church is not a platform for the pastor's benefit but something he will give an account for to God.
- Like Joseph in the household of Potifer, so the elder is in the household of God.

ILLUSTRATION

Once, a salesman came to town looking for the local Church of God. He asked a resident if he knew where the church was located. The man answered, "Well, there's a church on Main Street, but it belongs to a couple of rich cats that keep it afloat... There's a church on Maple, but it belongs to a stubborn old grunt who runs the show... And the church down on Elm Street belongs to the family. I'm really not sure if there's a church in town that really belongs to God.

5. NOT SELF-WILLED (OVERBEARING)

The pastor must not be driven by their selfish ambitions, nor should he drive those around him out of his own agenda. The overseer's job is to know the heart and will of Jesus for His church and to be filled and led by the Spirit.

- The pastor who views the church as a company and himself as the CEO will ultimately be the type of person who drives the church as a tyrant from behind rather than a self-sacrificing shepherd who leads from the front.
- Whenever I get the chance to speak to pastors or future pastors, I like to tell them that ***being a pastor is like occupying three positions simultaneously: staying behind the people to humbly serve them, walking alongside them to relate with their experiences, and far enough ahead to lead them.***

QUOTE

“True leadership is found in giving yourself in service to others, not in coaxing or inducing others to serve you. Leaders are to serve and not be served.”

J. Oswald Sanders, Spiritual Leadership

6. NOT QUICK TEMPERED

I like how Woolvard and Zuck put it, ***“His self control is to extend both to his appetites and his anger.”***

- He’s not talking about being a pushover. But someone who can have self--control over their passions and emotions.
- Trust me! Enough happens in ministry with people, that without patience and an even temper, one could fly off the handle and lose it frequently!

ILLUSTRATION

Agatho, a desert monk from the 4th century, put it this way, “Even if an angry man raises the dead God is still displeased with his anger..” God can use any man for a moment - but Titus is clear, He measures us by our character!

7. NOT GIVEN TO WINE

There's debate as to whether or not this phrase means not given to using alcohol in excess or an all-out prohibition.

- Scripturally, we understand that minimal alcohol usage is a liberty that the believer can exercise, as long as they don't enter into drunkenness or cause their brother or sister to stumble in their faith.
- However, there is a sense that elders are called to an even higher standard of being willing to give up some of their Christian liberties for the edification of the entire body of Christ.
- It's true that Paul told Timothy to "use a little wine for his stomach's sake," but that isn't a pastoral prescription to drink! If anything, Paul had to tell Timothy to do it because Timothy refused to drink, and even then, only for limited medicinal purposes because of some gut issues.

In my experience in a culture where strong alcohol has become the norm and recreational drunkenness seems to be a sport, my conviction is that pastors should abstain from drinking altogether. The last thing you want is to show up in the emergency room with a mourning family with the smell of whisky or beer on your breath.

EXAMPLE: At my first wedding, someone thought I was drinking a beer.

[Pro 31:4-5 NKJV] 4 [It is] not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; 5 lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.

8. NOT VIOLENT

Violence and alcohol are frequently attached, so there may be a connection there, but in short, the pastor is not to be a brawler.

- A pastor should only demonstrate violence against the kingdom of darkness through spiritual warfare.
- Violence can take many forms:

- One can be violent with their fists
- One can be violent in their actions
- One can be violent with their words.
- The Greek word means **"Violent: One who is ready for a blow."** Someone who's looking to pick a fight.
- I heard it once appropriately said that the Christian leader should never be one to pick a fight but will not run from a fight when the battle comes to them.
- Someone who is not a divisive and belligerent trouble maker: a trouble maker is someone who rocks the boat and tells everyone else there's a storm.

Regardless, the bottom line is the pulpit is no place for an abuser who uses violence and quarreling to advance their agenda.

9. NOT GREEDY FOR MONEY

After the church service, a little boy told the pastor, "When I grow up, I'm going to give you some money." "Well, thank you," the pastor replied, "but why?" "Because my daddy says you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had."

Money should never be a driving force to join the ministry. The Bible is clear in the OT and the NT that pastors are worthy of compensation for their work, but the work itself is motivated not by riches on earth but by riches in heaven.

Paul warns Timothy of one of the characteristics of false teachers:

[1Ti 6:5 NKJV] 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

- Run from pastors who teach the gospel is the means for wealth, and who just so happen to acquire their wealth by fleecing the flock of God to support their lavish lifestyles.

10. HOSPITABLE

Welcoming. The pastor should live in an open home to be an example to the believers of love, generosity, and compassion.

The church willing to welcome the pastor should have a pastor willing to welcome the church. A pastor should not be aloof and distant from the people he is ministering to but someone who opens his heart and home in ministry.

- In our individualistic society, we often have trouble looking outside of our own immediate needs.
- Hospitality looks beyond your own borders to the needs of others and willingly opens what you have to help them.

11. LOVER OF GOOD

We discussed last week that truth accords with godliness, and everything godly is good.

- There is no such thing as a faithful pastor who affirms, embraces, and loves that which God hates.
- But this is not just about hating evil, but loving good. It's natural for humans to run to extremes. Often, you find pastors who hate evil but do not encourage much good or who pride themselves on doing good but never seem to take a stand on what is evil.

The called shepherd must always strive for the balance of loving and pursuing good, as well as abhorring and fleeing from that which is evil.

12. SOBER MINDED

Not only is their mind free from the control of alcohol, but it's also free from the influences of the world or being driven by their emotions.

- **Sober-minded—to be level-headed.** The pastor must think things through biblically and spiritually before reacting to his own feelings or perceptions of a person or situation.
- A sober-minded person does not react impulsively to a circumstance or emotion but is, at the same time, ready to quickly obey God's leading through spiritual discernment.

13. JUST

This word means fair without showing partiality. Paul told timothy:

[1Ti 5:21 NKJV] 21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

The pastor cannot afford to play favorites with family, friends, politicians, or potential donors. For the pastor over God's flock, the truth applies to everyone equally.

14. HOLY

Holiness is to "be set apart for God."

- The pastor should not be sharing his affections with the world or straddling the fence with his lifestyle.

15. SELF CONTROLLED

While this is a fruit of the Spirit for all believers, the pastor must model this characteristic as an example to the flock.

- It is heartbreaking to have spiritual leaders who want to control the church's direction, control the church's money, and control the people but refuse to control themselves.
- The pastor is to have disciplined restraint against the lusts of his flesh, selfish ambitions, words, and emotional responses.
- ***Gossip, division, and conflict are unavoidable potholes in church life, but pastors should not be the driving forces behind them!***

QUOTE

“The true minister of Christ knows that the greatest battle he fights is the one within. His greatest concern is his own soul, for he knows that if he loses that, he loses everything.”

AW Tozer, The Pursuit of God

16. DOCTRINALLY COURAGEOUS

[Tit 1:9 NKJV] 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

Some pastors naturally lean toward peacemaking, while others embody the righteous zeal of table-flipping. Both are reflective of our Savior, Jesus. Yet, regardless of their natural temperament, every pastor is called to demonstrate the courage and willingness to take a firm stand against false teaching and protect the integrity of sound doctrine.

I like how one pastor put it: **"The Pastor is not afraid to go toe to toe with a problem child."**

-Sandy Adams

- They must have a God-given ability to learn the faithful word, apply it to their own lives, and wield it to exhort and convict those who oppose the truth.
- The pulpit is not a place for self-preserving cowards whose highest ambition is to be liked by everyone.

If I could sum up these qualifications in one statement, I'd put it like this:

QUOTE

The pastor must not be a hireling who drives his sheep with violence, sacrifices them out of self-preservation, uses them for selfish gain, or directs them with manipulation and coercion. A true

shepherd lays down his rights, gives up his life, protects, feeds, and leads the sheep by example.

Pastor Josh

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Well, that was hard to preach.

- Many of you today might be thinking, "I never want to be a pastor."
 - I hope it motivates all of you to pray for your pastors' protection.
 - And for others, it may confirm your calling. And if so, I pray that it serves as an encouragement for what you are striving, by God's grace, to become for the glory of Jesus.
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