Qualifications for Elders and Deacons

Elders

The qualifications for Elders (also called Overseers and Pastors) are noted in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

I. Six Desirable Personal Qualifications

1. **Above reproach** means that the Elder has a “sustained reputation for blamelessness,” one against who no legitimate criticism can be made.
2. **Aspires to the office** indicates the Elder desires to carry out the responsibilities of an Elder, rather than simply desiring a “position.”
3. **Temperate** implies the Elder guards against intoxication while also maintaining mental alertness and spiritual vigilance in daily life.
4. **Prudent** implies that the Elder is a man of self-control, one who has his passions bridled.
5. **Respectable** refers to “inner moral excellency and...outward orderly behavior.”
6. **Gentle** does not imply weakness, rather a kind, yielding, forbearing spirit.

II. Seven Characteristics to Avoid

1. **Not addicted to wine** is a phrase that literally means “one who does not sit long at his wine.”
2. **Not pugnacious** means that he is not a bully, he is “not given to blows or violence.”
3. **Uncontentious** is a similar word implying “disinclined to fight.”
4. **Free from the love of money** literally means “not a silver lover.”
5. **Not fond of sordid gain** refers to one who refuses to make a profit by shameful or disgraceful ways.
6. **Not self-willed** means that the Elder does not seek to “please himself.”
7. **Not quick-tempered** means one who does not suddenly blaze in anger.

III. Five Social Qualifications

1. **Husband of one wife** literally means “a one woman man.”
2. **Manages his own household well** means that the Elder “stands before his household as a leader and as an example.”
3. **Having children who believe** refers to the Elder, who has children, being one who instructs his own children in the faith so that his teaching has full credibility with his own children.
4. **Hospitable** literally means “lover of strangers.”
5. **A good reputation with those outside** implies that the Elder’s life is exemplary to the non-Christian as well as the Christian.
IV. Six Spiritual Qualifications

1. **Loving what is good** means that he devotes his life to what is best and wholesome.
2. **Not a new convert** literally means “not one who is newly planted.”
3. **Just** is a word which refers to personal righteousness.
4. **Devout** refers to the Elder’s personal holiness, so that he lives a life “separated unto God.”
5. **Holding fast the faithful Word** implies that an Elder must be “stable in his faith and obedient to the Word in all respects.”
6. **Able to teach** does not necessarily mean the Elder has the spiritual gift of teaching, but it does mean he is well-versed in God’s Word and is able to instruct others in the church from the Word.

Deacons

The qualifications for Deacons are stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

1. **Likewise must be men of dignity** is a statement similar to the “above reproach” characteristic of an Elder.
2. **Not double tongued** expresses that the Deacon does not “talk out of both sides of his mouth.”
3. **Not addicted to much wine** refers to a Deacon’s self-control in the area of intoxicating drink.
4. **Not fond of sordid gain** implies the Deacon abstains from greediness or being controlled by wealth.
5. **Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience** points to the fact that the Deacon is confident and clear in his salvation, as well as certain of his walk with Christ.
6. **Let these also first be tested** means that Deacons are to be “proven” men.
7. **Women [Deacon’s wives] must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.**
8. **Husbands of only one wife** means “a one woman man.”
9. **Good managers of their children and their own households** means that his family and his personal business dealings demonstrate the evidence of his spiritual leadership.