

Qualifications for Elders 2

Detailed Outline

Part 6 of 9

II. Defining Pastoral Oversight by a Plurality of Qualified Elders (cont.)

B. New Testament Qualifications for Elders

3. Moral and Spiritual Qualities

d) Relational Skills with People

“Gentle” (1 Tim. 3:3)

- This should be true of every Christian leader.
- It allows them to get along with all kinds of people.

“Upright” (Titus 1:8)

“Not quick tempered” (Titus 1:7)

- Quick tempered people get themselves into a lot of trouble!
- As an elder, if you are quick tempered, you will hurt a lot of people as you deal with many different people in their problems.

“Not quarrelsome” (1 Tim. 3:3)

- I knew a man who pastored a church who had a phenomenal knowledge of the Bible. But his church always stayed small and struggled to survive because he was an argumentative, quarrelsome man.
- As an elder, you will have to interact with lots of people you will disagree with. You have to learn to disagree in a proper way.

“Not arrogant” (Titus 1:7)

- This is the type of person that has to have their way, someone like Diotrephes (3 John 9-10). Diotrephes loved to have the first place and control people. He excommunicated anyone who disagreed with him. He wouldn't even allow the apostle John into his church. I'm sure he had a lot of skills, but he was arrogant and deceived about himself.
- We are in the people business. We are not building cars or computers. We are leading, growing and edifying people. So we need great social skills. We need to be team players, and we need to be able to work with those who don't agree with us. There will always be people who are unpleasant to be around and those who

constantly find fault with us. So you have to have these social skills and Christian virtues to be a servant leader.

- Also note the negative traits. If we are quarrelsome and arrogant, we will be the problem, not a problem solver.

e) Hospitable and Loving Good

"Hospitable" (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:8)

- You would probably never think that hospitality is a biblical requirement for a pastor-elder, but it is. It is in both lists of Paul's qualifications. Why do we need to be hospitable to be a leader? We are leaders of the flock of God. One of the most powerful tools for ministering to and caring for people is to invite them into your home. Ask them about their testimony, when they were baptized, how they met, how they are raising their children, and all of a sudden you see them in a different light.
- Hospitality is directly related to the virtue of love. If you want to influence people, have them over to your home. Let them see you in your normal sphere. You do not want a cold, impersonal, unfriendly church.
- In the ancient days, there were many itinerant preachers. The elders of the church were to have these preachers into their home. You will learn so much when you have missionaries or traveling preachers or other Christians into your home!

"A lover of good" (Titus 1:8)

- An elder is to be compassionate, caring, and involved in kind deeds.
- This reminds me of Acts 20:28 where Paul says we must care for the weak ("Pay careful attention... to all the flock").
- We are to be financially generous to those who cannot provide for themselves.

f) Personal Integrity

"Above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6)

"Being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3)

"Not greedy for gain" (Titus 1:7)

- This means not stealing or misappropriating the church's funds.
- You would be shocked how much stealing goes on worldwide in churches. Ask any missionary and they will tell you a key moment in a church's history is when the missionary turns over the collection of church funds to the local people.
- Stealing from the church is a great temptation, more than we usually realize.

"Holy" (Titus 1:8)

"Hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught" (Titus 1:9)

“Upright” (Titus 1:8)

- When considering these qualifications of personal integrity, I am reminded of Psalm 78:72:

With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand. (Ps. 78:72)

- This verse is speaking of King David. An upright heart means he was a man of integrity.
- And then it says he guided them with a skillful hand. A good leader is skilled with people. They know how to handle problems. They are problem-solvers. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9a). If you can’t make peace in a church, you will have division.
- An elder is to be a man of integrity, a person you can trust, a person who lives consistently with what he says and what he does.
- Someone once said, in many of our churches we are suffering from AIDS – Acquired Integrity Deficiency Syndrome. If we have this in our leaders, we are in big trouble.

g) Spiritual Maturity

“Not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Tim. 3:6)

- You cannot be a new convert and be an elder. You must have maturity. How long it takes to get that maturity depends on the person. But you must have life experience and you must know the Word of God. You must show yourself to be capable of leading God’s people.
- If a person newly saved is in a position of leadership too early, they will become conceited. It takes time to know yourself and your weaknesses and have dealt with them. So an elder must be a mature Christian.