

STUDY 4

1 Timothy 3:1-13– Overseers and Deacons

Q. What do you think are the character traits of good leadership?

Read verses 1-13 and as you read, circle the words you think are important. (Discuss your reasons afterwards).

1 Timothy 3:1-13 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

⁸Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹²Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Q. What two groups of people are these verses directed to?

Q. This passage is a continuation of 2:1-15? What is the main instruction given in these verses?

Q. Write down the qualities of an overseer (1-7)

Q. How do you think verses 4 and 5 affect single men who wish to be overseers?

Q. Why do you think overseers must not be recent converts? (v6)

Paul teaches that to be an overseer is a very difficult task and the man who chooses to follow this path has very high expectations placed on them. They are to be men who live their lives within the church with the utmost self control in the way they minister to the congregation of God. They must manage the church and their family in a way which does not leave them open to the charge of hypocrisy. They must also be older men who have been tried and seasoned in Christian ministry and who possess the Christian maturity worthy of the role.

Q. Read verse 7. What other area is important for the overseer? Why do you think so?

Read verses 8-13 and as you read, circle the words you think are important. (Discuss your reasons afterwards).

1 Timothy 3:8-13 ⁸Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.

¹¹Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.

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gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Q. List the qualities of a deacon.

Q. What do you think is/are the difference/s between the overseer and the deacon.

Q. How can you encourage your overseer or deacon to remain faithful to their office?

Q. Discuss whether you think leaders of the church should be rebuked by the congregation if they continue to err habitually? (Then read 5:17-20)

The expectations of elders in the church are very high and the Christian leaders will always strive to uphold these ideals of Christian character and teaching. As models to the church though, they are not above rebuke and the congregation plays a vital role in supporting and encouraging their Christian walk. Above everything our leaders ought to be men who are modelled and shaped by the very character of Jesus who fulfils all these roles perfectly. In desiring to be like Jesus the care takers of God's church will strive for godliness and equip the church to live likewise.

Prayer points:

Spend some time praying for church leaders, world wide, nationally, regionally and in your local congregation.