

ELDERS AND DEACONS

-A. Ralph Johnson

The New Testament reveals a very simple form of early church leadership. Eph. 4:11 says, “And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”

The first two of these, Apostles and Prophets, were part of the foundation of the church, with Jesus as the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20). Apostles had to have seen Jesus after his resurrection. The first apostles were the twelve who walked with Jesus (Ac. 1:22) and were to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:38). When Judas betrayed Jesus and hanged himself, Matthias was chosen to replace him (Acts 1:15-26). Later, apostles were sent, to the gentiles (Acts. 9:15; 22:21; 26:17; Gal. 2:8; Rom. 11:13). Just as the earlier apostles, they had to become a witness of the resurrection by Jesus appearing and appointing them (1Cor. 9:1; Ac. 26:16; 1Tim. 2:7; 2Tim. 1:11). Paul says he was “last of all, as one born out of due time” (1Cor. 15:8, 9).

The Apostles had special powers (2Cor. 12:12;). It appears that some of this was to bestow the “manifestations” (1Cor. 12:7) or “signs” (Mark 16:17, 18, 20; Heb. 2:3, 4) of the Holy Spirit through laying on of their hands (Ac. 8:14-19); 19:6; 2Tim. 1:6; Rom. 1:11). Prophecy was given to provide the word until the New Testament was complete (Jn. 14:25-26; 2Pet. 1:19, 20; 1Cor. 13:8-13). When it was completed, and the Apostles and prophets died, these special powers came to an end (Zech. 13:1-6; 1Cor. 13:8-13), just as occurred when the Old Testament was completed. As part of the foundation, the prophets and apostles, like Jesus, went to heaven (2Cor. 5:1-10; Ph'p. 1:23). They were never promised to continue on earth in the church.

Evangelists appear to have been much the same as our “missionaries.” The Greek word is, euaggelistes (Strong's #2099, from #2097; a preacher of the gospel: KJV—evangelist). It literally means a proclaimer of good news. Unlike elders who were appointed over each church (Ac. 14:23; Titus 1:5), they carried the good news to other places (Acts 21:8 cf. 8:4, 12, 35).

The meaning of “Teachers” is difficult to determine. Some believe this is another name for “pastors” (Eph. 4:11) who’s qualifications called for them to be “apt to teach” (1Tim. 3:2). Some think they may have been inspired teachers with the special gift of knowledge (1Cor. 12:8, 28; 13:2, 8). It is possible that some were, but it appears that some were not (Heb. 5:12; James 3:1; Rom. 12:7). In some passages they appear to be serving in a leadership capacity in the absence of elders. At Antioch the teachers shared with the prophets in sending out Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1). In the absence of enough elders I have in the past selected teachers to assist in the leadership. In 1Corinthians 16:15, 16 we may have just such a case. It says that the house of Stephanus had set themselves to minister (probably, in the word) unto the saints and that those at Corinth were to be in subjection to them. We know of no elders at Corinth. Due to their leadership roll, it is possible some were ordained to the office by the laying on of hands. However, we find no example.

Ephesians 4:11 deals only with the teaching offices. For our purposes here, we want to especially consider the elders and deacons.

I. CONGREGATIONAL OVERSIGHT

In the New Testament, three basic Greek words are applied to the congregational oversight office. Elders, bishops, and pastors.

A. THREE NAMES FOR THE SAME OFFICE

1. “Elders”

This term came from Israel's use of older men as leaders (Num. 11:16). Two Greek forms are used.

#4244 presbuterion (pres-boo-ter'-ee-on); neuter of a presumed derivative of #4245; the order of elders, i.e. (specifically) Israelite Sanhedrin or Christian “presbytery”:

KJV-- (estate of) elder (-s), presbytery.

1Tim. 4:14. “of the hands of the presbytery”

#4245 presbuteros (pres-boo'-ter-os); comparative of presbus (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specifically, an Israelite Sanhedrist (also figuratively, member of the celestial council) or Christian “presbyter”:

KJV-- elder (-est), old.

Ac. 14:23. Elders appointed in every church

Ac. 20:17. Elders from Ephesus called to speak with Paul.

1Tim. 5:17. Elders to be paid and treated with respect.

Titus 1:5-9. Elders' qualifications. Also called “bishops.”

James 5:14. Elders to pray for the sick.

1Pet. 5:1-4. Behavior of elders

Ac. 11:30. An offering taken to the elders at Jerusalem

Ac. 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4. Jerusalem elders participated in decision about circumcision.

Ac. 21:18. Jerusalem elders present to hear Paul's report.

2. “Bishops”

This was the common Greek name for one given oversight.

#1983 episkopeoo; (verb) from #1909 and #4648; to oversee; by implication, to beware:

KJV-- look diligently, take the oversight.

1Pet. 5:2. *taking the oversight, not by constraint*

#1984 episkopee; (noun) from #1980; inspection (for relief); by implication, superintendence; specially, the Christian “episcopate”:

KJV-- the office of a “bishop,” bishoprick, *visitation*.

1Tim. 3:1. *If a man desire the office of a bishop*

#1985 episkopos; (noun) from #1909 and #4649 (in the sense of #1983); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):

KJV-- bishop, overseer.

Acts 20:28. *The Holy Ghost made you overseers*" (at Ephesus)

Phil. 1:1. *with the bishops and deacons:*

1Tim. 3:2. *A bishop then must be blameless*

Tit. 1:7. *For a bishop must be blameless*

1Pet. 2:25. *Shepherd and bishop of your souls.*

3. "Pastors," or "shepherds"

This seems to have come from Jesus' likening his followers to a flock of sheep. Four forms of this are so associated.

#4166 Poimeen; of uncertain affinity; a shepherd (literally or figuratively):

KJV-- shepherd, pastor.

Eph. 4:11. *and some, pastors and teachers*

#4165 poimainoo (verb); from #4166; to tend as a shepherd of (figuratively, supervisor):

KJV-- feed (cattle), rule.

Acts 20:28. Elders at Ephesus told to feed the flock.

1Peter 5:2. Elders told to feed the church.

#4168 poimnion; neuter of a presumed derivative of #4167; a flock, i.e. (figuratively) group (of believers):

KJV-- flock.

Acts 20:28. Elders at Ephesus told to feed the flock.

1Peter 5:2. Elders told to feed the flock.

1Peter 5:3. Elders told to be examples to the flock.

B. COMPARISON OF DESCRIPTIONS

Compare the following:

1. Titus 1:5. calls them "elders" (#4245 presbuteros).

Titus 1:7. calls them "bishops" (#1985 episkopos).

Here the two words are used interchangeably.

2. 1Tim. 3:1. calls it the office of a "bishop" (#1984 episkopee).

1Tim. 3:2. calls him a "bishop" (#1985 episkopos).

1Tim. 5:17, 19; 4:14. calls him an "elder" (#4245 presbuteros) or "presbyter" (#4244 presbuterion)

Note that in giving the qualifications in 1 Timothy, only “bishop” is used although it is obviously the same office as in Titus, chapter 1, where the elders (1:5) are called bishops (1:7). Elsewhere in Timothy, “elder” is used. It seems that he expected them to know it was the same office.

3. Ac. 20:17. calls them “elders” (#4245 presbuteros).
Ac. 20:28. calls them “overseers” or “bishops” (#1985 episkopos).
Ac. 20:28. says to “feed” (#4165 poimainoo) the church.

Note: poimainoo is what a shepherd does for a flock.

4. 1Pet. 5:1. calls them “elders” (#4245 presbuteros).
1Pet. 5:2. says to take the “oversight” (#1983 episkopeoo).
Note that “episkopeoo” is what a bishop does. He oversees.
1Pet. 5:2. says to “feed” (#4165 poimainoo) the flock (#4168 poimnion).
1Pet. 5:4. reward promised when the “chief shepherd” (#750 archipoimen) returns.
Note: 1Peter 2:25 the terms are used interchangeably, saying Jesus is called both “shepherd” (#4166 poimeen) and “bishop” (#1985 episkopos) of our souls.
5. Eph. 4:11. In listing the teaching offices, “pastors” (shepherds) is specified. Neither elders nor bishops are mentioned. Since he surely did not forget them, it seems to be the same office?
6. The Jerusalem church is several times said to have elders. Neither pastors nor bishops are mentioned (Ac. 11:30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 21:18). This would be consistent with Hebrew description of oversight.
7. Acts 14:23 speaks of ordaining elders in every church. Tit. 1:5 says to ordain elders in every city. It never speaks of bishops ordained in every church. This suggests both terms are for the same office. Otherwise, both offices would be mentioned.
8. Bishops and deacons (Ph'p 1:1; 1Tim. 3:1, 8) are mentioned together in some churches. It never mentions bishops and elders as distinct offices.
9. Other than Jesus, no one is ever said to be a “bishop,” (singular) over either a church or several churches. Bishops, elders and pastors are generally given in the plural as ruling the church, rather than a single one over a church. When the singular is used it never indicates one man over a church. He is just one of several.

C. AUTHORITY AND WORK OF ELDERS

#4165 poimainoo (verb); from #4166; to tend as a shepherd of (figuratively, supervisor):
KJV-- feed (cattle), rule.
Acts 20:28. Elders at Ephesus told to feed the flock.

1Peter 5:2. Elders told to feed the church.

#4291 proistemi; from #4253 and #2476; to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by implication) to practice:

KJV-- maintain, be over, rule.

1Tim 5:17. *Let the elders that rule well*

Compare:

Rom 12:8. *ruleth, with diligence;*

1Thes 5:12-13. *and are over you in the Lord*

Note that they were to hold the same position with regard to the church as does a man with his family (1Tim. 3:4, 5, 12). Wives and children were to be in subjection (1Tim. 3:4; Eph. 5:22-24; 1Pet. 3:1-6; Col. 3:18). The members were to obey those over the church (Heb. 13:17; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20).

#1983 episkopeoo (verb); from #1909 and #4648; to oversee; by implication, to beware:

KJV-- look diligently, take the oversight.

1Pet. 5:2. *taking the oversight, not by constraint*

Acts 20:28. *“Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops [#1985 episkopos --overseers], to feed [#4165 poimainoo] the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Wherefore watch ye [#1127 greegoreuoo], remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.”*

It is clear from this that the elders were not only to feed the flock but also to protect the flock both from wolves without and from those arising among themselves.

Titus 1:9-11. says the elder is to *be able to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict the gainsayers.* They were to stop the mouths of vain talkers and deceivers.

1Tim. 5:17. *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor especially those who labor in the word and teaching.”*

1Pet. 5:2. *“Tend [4165 poimainoo] the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight [1983 episkopeoo], not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”*

Heb. 13:7. *“Remember them that had the rule [2233 hegeomai] over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith.”*

Heb. 13:17. *Obey them that have the rule [2233 hegeomai] over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

OBJECTION: This is speaking of Evangelists.

ANSWER: The fact that these are in the plural may indicate these are either Elders or intended to refer to a variety of rulers (Elders, Evangelists, teachers, etc.).

#2233 hegeomai; middle voice of a (presumed) strengthened form of 71; to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); figuratively, to deem, i.e. consider:
KJV-- account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose, think.

D. RELATIVE FUNCTIONS OF ELDERS AND EVANGELISTS

1Tim. 4:14. It appears that the elders at Lystra had participated in the ordaining of Timothy to be an evangelist. Similarly, we find teachers participating in appointing Paul and Barnabas to their work (Acts 13:1-3).

Elders had the oversight of the church, often with no evangelist present. Evangelists (#2099 “euangelistees” Acts 21:8; 2Tim. 4:5; Eph. 4:11) carried the good news (#2097 “euongelizo” Acts 8:12, 35, 40), starting congregations and setting them in order (Tit. 1:5). However, at Ephesus, for a period of time we find both an evangelist (Timothy) and elders. How should they function together?

In such a case there are overlapping responsibilities. Elders must protect the flock (Acts 20:28-31; Tit. 1:9), and evangelists may receive accusations against an elder “*at the mouth of two or three witnesses*” (1Tim. 5:19-20). Timothy was to be “apt to teach” (2Tim. 2:24) and to teach “with all authority” (Tit. 2:15) while Elders are also to be “apt to teach” (1Tim. 3:2) and “feed the flock” (1Pet. 5:2). Indeed, Elders labored in the word and teaching (1Tim. 5:17)

It appears that the original design was for evangelists to start churches and teach until a plurality oversight could be established, and then move on to carry the good news to others (see the examples of Timothy and Titus). Today we have switched it to have an evangelist over every church, sometimes with no real effort to establish a scriptural eldership.

We call him an “evangelist” but he functions as a bishop. He oversees the church. If there are elders they are expected to go along with his programs, not share in preaching the word to the congregation, and to receive no pay. To do the job of evangelist, we have

invented the term, “missionary” (which even includes women) to go to other countries as the bearer of the good news.

In many churches, the headman is called a, “pastor.” Since that is what he does, it is just as well, except that the church was intended to have a plurality of pastors, not just one. If a second man is hired, to indicate rank, the first becomes the “Senior Pastor.”

To try to restore the eldership to the honor God intended some of us now ordain evangelists into the eldership. Since our “evangelist” functions as an elder, I see this as a good move in the right direction. However, we still have a difficult time getting the eldership elevated to the honor it was designed to receive, and avoid elevating one above another. We tend to follow the denominational pattern of placing a “pastor” over the elders.

Elevating one man above the rest is much the same as took place in the post-apostolic period, when they established a bishop over each church. In turn, they placed “arch-bishops” over a region, and eventually one of them over all to sit in the “chair of St. Peter” as “Vicar of Christ.” He was called “pope,” (Latin for “father”) and ruled in the place of Christ over all of the churches. So far most of the churches of the Restoration Movement have shunned further moves in the direction of a hierarchical system, except in the Boston Movement and the Disciples. However, we had better beware of this trend.

In many Churches there has been a tendency to set up church “boards” to govern, composed of both men and women representatives from various church programs. This has been substituted for the Scriptural pattern where the elders were to rule the church.

But what if there are too few to provide a legally required number of trustees? Based on the example of the house of Stephanus (1Cor. 16:15- 17) and the participation of “teachers” in sending out Paul and Barnabas (Ac. 13:1-3), it seems appropriate to select some teachers to temporarily assist in the absence of qualified leaders. However, even after there are both Evangelists and Elders the “board” often continues to run things.

It has been unfortunate that there have been power struggles in churches over who should be in charge. I was once told that the idea of a collective ministry cannot work because it is impossible to have more than one leader. Well, I am here to say they are wrong. We started this church over 45 years ago and from it has come two others. Evangelists and elders can work together as equals, especially if the evangelist promotes the office of elder to its full honor and shepherding the flock.

We presently have three elders, one paid. In time we want to pay others (1Tim. 5:17, 18). I see no reason why they can not be every bit as professional as an evangelist or why the church can not continue and grow without a located evangelist. The Elders can be just as good at speaking. They can even function as Bible College teachers to train people for leadership roles.

Eventually I hope this church can send fully paid evangelists out to start churches or to give assistance to churches needing help. Unfortunately, the temptation is to remain located, in an established congregation, holding a position of power and preeminence.

Instead of larger churches paying men to carry the good news and set churches in order, we send Missionaries and forget smaller struggling congregations around us. Indeed, we even compete with them instead of helping each other.

This has too many aspects of a “hireling” system. To get training, young men must leave the local congregations at a time when they could be the most useful, and go off to struggle to survive college (which may have serious false teaching). If they finish they hire themselves out to the highest bidder and begin the “climb” (or “slide”) in the system as churches switch leadership in the game of “musical preachers.” Small churches cannot financially compete, and must struggle as they lose some of their best members to larger churches or college, and pay for less competent leaders. I find no such system in the New Testament.

I have determined to train men locally as much as possible, and to teach the people to accept a truly multiple leadership. Unfortunately, carnal nature seems to need “excellency of speech” (1Cor. 2:1-5) and to glory in men (1Cor. 3:3, 4). Like Israel of old, we want a “king” like the surrounding nations (1Sam. 8:4-20). Thus, we insist on adopting the patterns of the denominational world around us. The result is that each preacher must gain “a following.” People who do not like his style do not come. When he leaves, there is a struggle to replace him, perhaps generated by conflicts in his removal. In the face of this, the new preacher then must come and build up a new following. The result is often serious compromise of the scriptures, downgrading of the eldership, conflict between the preacher and the elders, and division in the church.

E. SELECTION PROCESS

Very little is said of the process used for selection of leadership (see notes on Titus 1:5 under “Appoint”). It is mostly left to judgment and expediency. I have found something like the following works well.

1. Inform the church of the need and requirements for office. Have them submit suggestions for the church leadership to consider.
2. From the list, choose a few promising candidates and contact each to see that they and their wives would be willing to prepare and accept such a responsibility. Include wives because his success is very much dependent on their support and behavior (cf. 1Tim 3:11).
3. Submit a list to the congregation for a vote of their judgment whether they are qualified.
4. Those chosen should be given training. This may be a period of time in which they work in the role preparing for ordination.
5. A final decision should be made by those in leadership as to when they are ready.
6. Ordination.

People should be asked to fast. The person should speak to the congregation, concerning his vision in service. The people should manifest approval in some way such as raised hands or standing. Some form of oath should be administered. Hands are laid while prayers are given.

F. ELDERS WHO RULE WELL SHOULD BE PAID

1Tim. 5:17-18. *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and teaching. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire.”*

“Honor” is here used as a euphemism for being paid. In verse 3, it is used for supporting the widows. Some think “double honor” means to be paid twice as much. That seems doubtful. The citation of the ox treading out the corn having the right to eat suggests that this is the second honor. Only in these two verses is it used in the sense of payment and it seems unlikely that those churches had the means to pay all of the elders, much less pay some double. It appears that he is saying that along with the honor of the office, those that rule well should be given the honor of being paid.

G. LENGTH OF OFFICE

Ordination sometimes may have been for the period necessary to accomplish specific responsibilities. Paul twice reported back to the church at Antioch (Acts 14:26, 27; 18:22) after being sent on missionary trips. With regard to the office of elders, evangelists or deacons, no time period is specified, except that the requirement to meet qualifications would indicate they should not serve when they were no longer qualified. Because of this some have maintained that it was for life. I see no scripturally indicated basis requiring this.

The matter seems to be left to judgment of those authorizing their terms. There are some advantages of qualified men being left undisturbed unless they are removed by a vote of the congregation, or by the other Elders. However, it is more difficult to remove one if he is negligent of his duties or becomes disqualified.

To avoid conflict some choose a set number of years with mandatory time out of office. In large churches this works well. However, the problem with this is that no matter how good a man is or how needed, he is removed for at least a year while men of lesser experience and competency take his place. Also, because there is a set number of offices to fill, the pressure is to shortcut on whether he is qualified. On the other hand, automatic removal from office after a given period avoids the embarrassment and conflict in voting to remove.

Something between these two extremes seems best. The office could be automatically vacated after a designated period, at which time a vote could be taken on whether to reinstate him.

Another alternative would be to have person remain in office and periodically submit to a vote of confidence as to whether they are adequately meeting their responsibilities. If they failed to get a majority they should resign.

Of course, any time an elder fails to be qualified he should resign (cf. Ac. 20:30-31). If he falls into some serious sin he should also be publicly reprovved (1Tim. 5:19-20). If an additional elder is needed, the process could begin to select someone for the job. In all cases voting should be by secret ballot to minimize conflict.

H. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Little is said about removal from office. Timothy was given power to “receive an accusation” against an Elder and to “reprove those that sin before all” (1Tim. 5:19, 20) and from this we conclude that in some manner he could bring about removal. This could have been through either congregational vote (as in disfellowship and in choosing them in the first place) or through the elders.

Elders were given responsibility to protect the sheep--both from wolves without and from shepherds among themselves (Acts 20:28-31). This indicates the right to expel a bad elder or evangelist. Likewise, the congregation was to come together to disfellowship members who persisted in certain sins. This would include leaders. In any case, the power to remove from office is inherent in the power to ordain.

I question the scripturality and wisdom of ordaining men to the ministry and leaving them on their own with no on-going accountability. If the church appoints to the job it retains the right to rescind the commission. How else can those who violate scriptural qualifications be removed?

I. QUALIFICATIONS

There are two lists of qualifications, the first in 1Timothy, chapter 3 and the second in Titus, chapter 1. They vary in the choice of words but little in substance.

Qualifications in Timothy and Titus compared

1 Timothy 3	Greek	Titus 1:6-	Greek
<i>2. blameless</i>	anepilepton (423)	<i>6 blameless</i>	anengkleetos (410)
<i>the husband of one wife</i>	mias gunaikos andra	<i>husband of one wife</i>	mias gunaikos aneer
<i>vigilant, or temperate</i>	neephalion (3524)		
		<i>7 Not selfwilled</i>	authadee (829)
<i>sober-minded, or sensible</i>	soophrona (4998)	<i>8 sober</i>	soofrona (4998)
<i>of good behaviour, or orderly</i>	kosmion (2887)		
		<i>8 lover of good</i>	filagathon (5358)
<i>given to hospitality</i>	filoxenon (5382)	<i>8 a lover of hospitality</i>	filoxenon (5382)
<i>apt to teach</i>	didaktikon (1317)	<i>9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers</i>	didoskolia (1319)

<i>3. not given to wine</i>	mee paroinon (3943)	<i>7 not given to wine</i>	mee paroinon (3943)
<i>no striker but patient (or, gentle)</i>	mee pleekteen (4131) alla epieikee	<i>7 no striker</i>	mee pleekteen (4131)
<i>not contentious, or no brawler</i>	amachon (269)	<i>7 not soon angry</i>	mee orgilon (3711)
<i>no lover of money</i>	afilaguron (866)	<i>7 not given to filthy lucre</i>	mee aischrokerdee (146)
<i>4. ruleth well his own house, having (his) children in subjection with all gravity</i>	polpi la;pps proistamenon tekna echonta en hupotagee meta pasees semnoteetos	<i>6 having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly</i>	tekna echoon pista, mee en kateegoria asootias ee anupotaka
<i>6 not a novice</i>	mee neofuton (3504)	(covered in verse 9 above)	
<i>7 having good testimony from them that are without</i>	marturian kaleen echein apo toon exoothen		

This raises the question as to why the two lists differ. Surely God had no intention of two different sets of qualifications, one for Ephesus and another for Crete. The simplest explanation seems to be that the two lists cover the same general areas that the readers from those places would understand, with some special emphasis relating to their needs.

1. QUALIFICATIONS IN 1TIMOTHY 3

1 Timothy 3: *1 Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; 4 one that ruleth well his own house, having (his) children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

1Tim. 3:1. (ASV)

Faithful is the saying,
Faithful is the word,
Pistos ho logos
4103 3588 3056

1Tim. 3:1.

If a man seeketh the office of a bishop,
If anyone **overseership** seeks,
Ei tis episkopees oregetai
1536 1984 3713

“BISHOP” (OVERSEER) --Vine's Expository Dictionary

- a. **Episkopos #1985**, lit., an overseer” (epi, “over,” skopeo, “to look or watch”), whence Eng. “bishop,” which has precisely the same meaning, is found in <Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25>. See OVERSEER.

Note: Presbuteros, “an elder,” is another term for the same person as bishop or overseer. See <Acts 20:17> with <verse 28>. The term “elder” indicates the mature spiritual experience and understanding of those so described; the term “bishop,” or “overseer,” indicates the character of the work undertaken. According to the divine will and appointment, as in the NT, there were to be “bishops” in every local church, <Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5; Jas. 5:14>. Where the singular is used, the passage is describing what a “bishop” should be, <1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7>. Christ Himself is spoken of as “the... bishop of our souls,” <1 Pet. 2:25>. See ELDER.

- b. **Episkope #1984**, besides its meaning, “visitation,” e. g., <1 Pet. 2:12> (cf. the Sept. of <Exod. 3:16; Isa. 10:3; Jer. 10:15>), is rendered “office,” in <Acts 1:20>, RV (KJV, “bishoprick”); in <1 Tim. 3:1> “the office of a bishop,” lit., “(if any one seeketh) overseership,” there is no word representing office.

Note: The corresponding verb is episkopeo, which, in reference to the work of an overseer, is found in <1 Pet. 5:2>, RV, “exercising the oversight,” for KJV “taking the oversight.” See OVERSIGHT.

1Tim. 3:1. *If a man seeketh the office of a bishop,*

If anyone	overseership	seeks,
Ei tis	episkopees	oregetai
1536	1984	3713

Some have claimed a man must seek the office. That is certainly commendable but is not what it says. The attitude necessary to receive the office is specified in 1Peter 5:1-4:

“Tend [#4165 poimaino] the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight [#1983 episkopeo], not of constraint, but willingly, according to (the will of) God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

1Tim. 3:1. *he desireth a good work.*

good	work	he desires
kalou	ergou	epithumei.
2570	2041	1937

#2041 ergon; from a primary (but obsolete) ergo (to work); toil (as an effort or occupation); by implication, an act:e overseer

KJV-- deed, doing, labor, work.

Eph. 4:12. *“for the work of the ministry”*

1Thes. 5:13. *Esteem those having the oversight [1Pet. 5:2 #1983 episko-peoo] highly for their works sake.*

Some have denied that eldership is an “office.” Based on the statement, “he desires a good **work**” they claim it is only a work. It is a work but the fact that hands were laid and the repeated use of the word, “appoint” plus qualifications that exclude others, and even being paid, all show it is also an office. Everything necessary is present.

1Tim. 3:2. *The bishop therefore must*

must	therefore	the	overseer
dei	houn	ton	episkopon
1163	3767	3588	1985

#1163 dei; third person singular active present of #1210; also deon; neuter active participle of the same; both used impersonally; it is (was, etc.) necessary (as binding):

KJV-- behooved, be meet, must (needs), (be) need (-ful), ought, should.

Titus 1:7 “For the bishop must be blameless”

Compare:

Acts 4:12. *“name given among men whereby we must be saved”*

Tit. 1:11. *“Mouths must be stopped”*

Heb. 11:6. *“He that comes to God must believe that he is”*

Jn. 3:7. *“Ye must be born again”*

1Tim. 3:2. *be without reproach,*

blameless	be,
anepilepton	einai,
423	1511

#423 anepileptos; from #1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of #1949; not arrested, i.e. (by implication) inculpable:

KJV-- blameless, unrebukeable.

1Tim 6:14 *unrebukeable, until the*

Compare: Titus 1:6, 7 “bishop must be blameless (#410 anegkletos)”

“Without reproach” seems to be the general introductory statement with the things that follow covering what this includes.

1Tim. 3:2. husband of one wife,¹

of one	wife	husband
mias	gunaikos	andra
3391	1135	435

#435 aner; a primary word (compare #444); a **man** (properly as an individual male):

KJV-- fellow, husband, man, sir.

#3391 mia; irregular feminine of #1520; **one** or **first**:

KJV-- a (certain), + agree, first, one, X other.

Titus 1:6 “*Husband of one wife*”

Revised Standard Version: “*married only once*”

Compare:

1Tim. 3:12. Deacons to be husbands of one (#3391 mia) wife.

1Tim. 5:9. Widows to have been wife of one (#1520 heis) man.

a. Does, “*husband of one wife,*” mean he must be married?

The parallel statement in 1Tim. 5:9 concerning widows would seem to indicate the phrase was not intended to be require marriage. Since all widows have been married, it does not appear that she is being told she must have been married.

b. Does it mean he can be married to only one woman?

It would seem to exclude multiple polygamy, but most commentators think that is not the focus. The reason is because the culture of the times did not accept multiple wives. Of course, God could have included it because He knew there would be places and times in the future when it would be prevalent.

Also, the same phrase, in 1Tim. 5:9 concerning widows would seem very unlikely to have reference to a woman having more than one husband. Polyandry was entirely unknown.

¹ Suggested reading: Article by Carl Ketcherside in Don DeWalt's Bible Study Textbook commentary on the letters of Timothy and Titus, 1961 ed., College Press, under Special Studies, p. 289.

While the statement may not clearly require marriage, the context relating to ruling his house etc. may presume it. Because it could be either way, I would not ordain an unmarried man. However, neither would I call for an unmarried elder's dismissal on that ground alone. If he is morally and spiritually above reproach and rules competently, I feel the basis for removal is insufficient, unfair to him, a loss to the church, and possibly divisive.

c. Does it mean he can have been married only one time?

It seems that if it meant the person was only to have been married one time it would have more clearly specified, perhaps by use of the past tense. It also seems if it were requiring both marriage and excluding more than one, it would have been more specific. In any case, the specification, "one" indicates the man must not have more than one woman.

These problems are mostly resolved if the requirement is viewed as a matter of moral uprightness under the general introductory requirement, "*without reproach.*" He must be a "one woman man" --not a womanizer. This also fits with the requirement for widows – of good moral character.

If we press beyond the issue of morality Many questions are left unclear. Is a man the husband of one wife if he remarries after his wife's death? In such cases, some would require an elder to resign, but that does not seem to be encompassed in the introductory requirement "*without reproach.*" There is no reproach in one's wife dying. The requirement is in the present tense. Since his first wife is dead, he has only one. This would not seem to violate the requirement.

Would a previous divorce, perhaps before he became a Christian, bar him from the ministry either while his first wife was still living or after she was dead? Could a Christian who's unfaithful wife divorced him and he remarried, qualify? Since the present tense is used, it is questionable whether we can apply it to the past. However, the divorce situation could become a point of conflict.

Many honest people sincerely disagree concerning the full intent of some of these requirements. Some of these issues are less than conclusive. Mostly, it seems best to be conservative and not force issues.

Peace in the church should be preserved. It is best to proceed with caution. Paul warns us to avoid striving about words to no profit (2Tim. 2:14). In any case, a minority view should abide by the decision of the majority. However, many times, unless dealing with factionalists, it is wise for the majority to respect the feelings of the minority (see Romans 14).

#1135 gune; probably from the base of #1096; a **woman**; specially, a **wife**: KJV-- wife, woman.

1Tim. 3:2. temperate,

vigilant,
nephalion,
3524

#3524 nephaleos; or nephalios; from #3525; **sober,** i.e. (figuratively)

circumspect:

KJV-- sober, vigilant.

1Tim 3:11. *wives must be sober, faithful in all*

Titus 2:2. *Aged men sober, grave, temperate,*

1Tim. 3:2. sober-minded,

sensible,
soophrona,
4998

#4998 sophron; from the base of #4982 and that of #5424; safe (sound) in mind,
i.e. self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion):

KJV-- discreet, sober, temperate. ***. ta. See #3588.

Titus 1:8. Bishop must be... sober,

Titus 2:2. Older men to be sober, grave, temperate,

Titus 2:5. Younger women to be discreet,

1Tim. 3:2. orderly,

good behavior,
kosmion,
2887

#2887 kosmios; from #2889 (in its primary sense); orderly, i.e. decorous:

KJV-- of good behavior, modest.

1Tim 3:2 *good behavior*

1Tim 2:9 *women dress in modest apparel*

(cf. 1Pet. 3:1-6)

1Tim. 3:2. given to hospitality,

hospitable
philoxenon
5382

#5382 philoxenos; from #5384 and #3581; fond of guests, i.e. hospitable:
KJV-- given to (lover of, use) hospitality.
Titus 1:8 *But a lover of hospitality,*
1Pet 4:9 *Use hospitality one to another*

1Tim. 3:2. apt to teach;
able to teach;
didaktikon,
1317

#1317 didaktikos; from #1318; instructive (“didactic”):
KJV-- apt to teach.
2Tim 2:24 *apt to teach, patient,*

How “apt” should he be? Titus 1:9 says, “holding the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.”

1Tim. 3:3. no brawler
not given to wine
mee paroinon,
3361 3943

#3943 paroinos; from #3844 and #3631; staying near wine, i.e. tippling (a toper):
KJV-- given to wine.
Titus 1:7. not given to wine,

What is being prohibited? The Greek word, “paroinon” here is a combination of two words—“par” and “oinos.” “Par” means, “with,” and oinos means, “wine.” Thus it literally means, “Not with Wine.” The basic Greek etymology seems to exclude being with or beside wine. However, many translations render it as “brawler,” “drunkard” etc. Such a translation would seem redundant since the following words specify that he was not to be a smiter, but gentle.

To prevent drinking too much and angering Jehovah God, when serving at the altar Priests were prohibited from drinking wine (Lev. 10:9). As priests of God in the church (1Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6), should we abstain from drink? While wise and commendable, there is no allusion to this in the New Testament, and without it the analogy is questionable. The priests were required many things not applicable to us.

Nazarites likewise were dedicated to God and drank no wine. Lest some try to manipulate the command, they were even prohibited from eating grapes or raisins (Num. 6:3). Again, the analogy is questionable.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; And whosoever erreth thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1). Solomon warned his son that kings should not drink wine because it distorts judgment (Prov. 3:4-5). The warning is good but not overcome the many passages where wine was permitted.

It seems best to approach the problem from the perspective of Christian love. Today, in view of the fortified high alcoholic nature of wine, and the common use of distilled spirits, the matter of Christian example and expediency should put all indulgence in alcohol beyond any consideration. Alcohol is a powerful drug and today the most destructive of all drugs. Small quantities may be used legitimately for medicinal purposes but it has no place in our lives as a beverage.

This principle is sustained by Paul in 1Corinthians concerning eating meats sacrificed to idols.

In chapter 8 he answers their objection that they knew that an idol is nothing. He says that “*knowledge puffs up but love edifies*” (I Cor. 8:1).

Then he says,

I Cor. 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; 11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. 13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

He also said,

“It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbles or is offended, or is made weak.” (Romans 14:21).

In 1Corinthians, chapter 9, Paul answers their objection that in Christ they were free to do as they pleased. He responds that he was free to take their money but for their sakes he did not.

In chapter 10, he responds to their claim that it would not hurt them because they were “strong.” He warns them, *12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

In verse 14 he tells them that the way to avoid falling is to **flee** temptation. He goes on to warn them that sitting in the idol's temple is inconsistent with eating at the Lord's table.

So, I must ask, how can a Christian sit in a bar and drink? Is this not that the same sort of thing Paul warns against? Does not such behavior pose a problem for the weak?

Deacons were prohibited from "much wine" (1Tim. 3:8). Such an example would undermine their ministry and damage the church. Certainly elders were required to be as above criticism as deacons. "Paroinos" may not require total abstinence but at least it prohibits from being "beside" it--that is, social drinking.

Some say they only use it in the privacy of their homes. They maintain that it is better to teach one's children to "drink properly" than for them to learn it outside. This rationalizes around the fact that we are dealing with a dangerous drug. Even non-Christians recognize and warn of the danger of teaching young people to drink. We must also be concerned about being good examples to our children.

In Bible times it was difficult to preserve juices without them becoming wine. It could be done by making them into jelly, or by raisins, which could be reconstituted by adding water or boiling. However, wine was a natural product. Those wines were low in alcohol because even with honey added the alcohol created by the yeast would kill the fermentation at a maximum of around 14%. Adding alcohol to make wine "fortified" may bring the content up to 24%. Natural wine normally as probably around 8%.

Note that even though this wine was low in alcohol, the Bible warns of its danger and indicates abstinence as an ideal, particularly with regard to leadership roles and example. One could get drunk on it. Because of this there is historical indication that it was commonly diluted with water.

To exclude all drinking, some have sought to show that wine in the Bible drunk by Christians was nothing but grape juice.² There is some evidence that unfermented grape juice was also called, "wine" (Matt. 9:17; Jer. 48:33) but much Biblical mention indicates the possibility of drinking too much, clearly indicating the effect of alcohol.

Why tell elders not to be "with wine" and warn deacons against "much" if it could not intoxicate? Why would Timothy be reluctant to drink grape juice (1Tim. 5:23)? Why else warn people to not be drunken with wine (Eph. 5:18)? Why, if

² Bible Wines, booklet by Farrar Fenton, M.R.A.S, M.C.A.A. etc., Translator of the Complete Bible into Modern English. Reprinted by Don DeWalt in his commentary on Timothy and Titus, College Press, Bible Study Textbook series, Joplin Missouri, 1961.

wine was not intoxicating, would Paul be concerned about causing people to stumble by drinking it (Rom. 14:21)?

The purpose is well meaning but such claims do more harm than good. The attempt is to answer the claim that drinking wine is Biblically justifiable. However, a “little wine” never was the problem. The problem is “MUCH” wine and HIGH ALCOHOL content.

Beware of the trap of getting maneuvered into using arguments that make us look foolish and undermine our credibility. My message is not that all drinking is a sin but that Jesus calls for us to show the kind of love that will not bring injury to others. True Christians will not exploit their “liberty” to the spiritual damage of others (Rom. 14:21). --especially not those who are to be “examples to the flock.”

In ancient times, with its natural preservation as a food and low alcoholic content, the use of wine was reasonable. However, with the numerous varieties of drinks and fruit juices available to us through improved transportation and modern methods of preservation, there is no need for the beverage consumption of alcohol. With the fast pace of modern society, even Biblically acceptable quantities become inconsistent with Christian ethics of concern for the welfare of others.

In our modern drug-dominated society with alcohol the most damaging of all, trying to justify alcohol seems worse than folly. In old times when a man mounted up to go home, at least one of the two still had a little “horse sense.” Today, when a man climbs behind the wheel and kicks in 180 blind “horses” under the hood he needs all the sense he can muster to keep control. Alcohol, even in small quantities, slows responses and there is nothing good about the peril it brings. The same may be said about use of power tools and work for an employer in our fast-moving environment. Drinking any amount puts others and us at risk. That is not consistent with Christian love.

1Tim 3:3. no striker;

no **striker**
mee pleektreen,
3361 4131

#4131 plektes; from #4141; a smiter, i.e. pugnacious (quarrelsome):

KJV-- striker.
Titus 1:7. Elders ...no striker

1Tim. 3:3. but gentle,

but **patient**
all' epieikee,
235 1933

#1933 epieikes; from #1909 and #1503; appropriate, i.e. (by implication) mild:
KJV-- gentle, moderation, patient.
Phil 4:5. *Let your moderation be*
Titus 3:2. *gentle*
James 3:17. *gentle,*
1Pet 2:18. *gentle*

1Tim 3:3. *not contentious,*
no brawler,
amachon,
269

#269 amachos; from #1 (as a negative particle) and #3163; peaceable:
KJV-- *not a brawler.*
Titus 3:2. *to be no brawlers,*
cf. 2Tim. 2:23-25

1Tim. 3:3. *no lover of money;*
Not greedy of filthy lucre,
aphilarguron,
866

#866 aphilarguros; from #1 (as a negative particle) and #5366; unavaricious:
KJV-- without covetousness, not greedy of filthy lucre.
Heb 13:5. *without covetousness;*

This requirement is often the least considered in choosing elders. If a man dresses well, has a nice car and home, and is well-educated, his qualifications are rarely questioned. Unfortunately, I have known men to seek leadership in the church who have had terrible business reputations --even to exploiting handicapped brethren out of thousands of dollars.

1Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:7; 1Pet. 5:2. cf. Acts 20:33; 1Tim. 6:5-10; 2Tim. 3:6-7

1Tim. 3:4. *one that ruleth well his own house,*
tou of him household well **One that rules,**
the idiou oikou kaloos proistamenon
3588 2398 3624 2573 4291

#4291 **proistemi**; from #4253 and #2476; to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by implication) to practice:

KJV-- maintain, be over, rule.

Rom. 12:8. *Let him that rules, do it with diligence*

1Thes. 5:12-13. *Know them that are over you and esteem them highly*

1Tim. 3:4. *having (his) children in **subjection***

children	having	in	subjection
tekna	echonta	en	hupotagee
5043	2192	1722	5292

#5292 **hupotage**; from #5293; subordination:

KJV-- subjection.

QUESTIONS: Is this saying he must have children, or is it saying that his children must be well behaved? Must he have more than one? Must his children be young enough to still be “in subjection” (1Tim. 3:4)? May an adopted child be counted? May a child from a previous marriage (such as when he marries a woman with children) be counted? Must he resign if he has two children and one dies after he has been ordained?

There is reasonable doubt that the above statement requires children. The requirement that his children must be in subjection is related to the preceding statement that he is to rule his house well, and the following question, “if he cannot rule his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God?” However, again the peace of the congregation is more important than pushing someone in over objections.

1Tim. 3:4. *with all **gravity**;*

with	all	respect
meta	pasees	semnoteetos
3326	3956	4587

#4587 **semnotes**; from #4586; venerableness, i.e. probity:

KJV-- gravity, honesty.

1Tim 2:2. *That we may live quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness and honesty.*

1Tim 3:4. *Bishop's children in subjection with all gravity;*

Titus 2:7. *in doctrine shewing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity,*

Note: #4586 semnos; from #4576; venerable, i.e. honorable:

KJV-- grave, honest.

Note that there is nothing in this passage requiring children be believers.

Compare with Titus 1:6.

1Tim. 3:5. *(but if a man knoweth not how to **rule** his own house,*

if	but	anyone	the	of them	house	rule	not	know
ei	de	tis	tou	idiou	oikou	prosteenai	ouk	hoide,
1487	1161	5100	3588	2398	3624	4291	3756	1492

#4291 proistemi; from #4253 and #2476; to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by implication) to practice:

KJV-- maintain, be over, rule.

Rom 12:8. *ruleth, with diligence;*

1Thes 5:12. *and are over you in the*

1Tim 3:4. *elder...One that ruleth well his own house*

1Tim 3:12. *deacons ..ruling their children*

1Tim 5:17. *Let the elders that rule well receive double honor*

1Tim. 3:5. *how shall he take care of the church of God?)*

how	church	of God	will he care for?
poos	ekkleesias	theou	epimeleesetai;
4459	1577	2316	1959

#1959 epimeleomai; middle voice from #1909 and the same as #3199; to care for (physically or otherwise):

KJV-- take care of.

NOTE: Here, #1959, "take care of," is used as synonymous with #4291, "rule"

1Tim. 5:17. *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor.*

Luke 10:34. *The Samaritan took him to an inn, and took care of him.*

1Tim. 3:6. *not a novice*

Not	new convert
mee	nesphuton,
3361	3504

#3504 neophutos; from #3501 and a derivative of #5453; newly planted, i.e. (figuratively) a young convert ("neophyte"):

KJV-- novice.

(Note: found only here.)

See 1Tim. 5:22. *"Lay hands hastily on no man."*

This term did not deal with age but with Christian experience. How much experience is not specified. It seems to presume that this is sufficient caution for those appointing him.

However, there is the question raised by the word, “elder” that, at least in its original concept, indicated an older person. Had it come to mean just senior in position? If age is in view, how old? Older than who? Again, this seems to be left to those making the choice but it is difficult to see this as being applied to anyone less than 30 years old--the age Jesus began his ministry. While in Jewish usage it would have been around 60, the lack of setting any age restrictions would seem to indicate the age is left to local judgment.

1Tim. 3:6. *lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

lest	being	puffed up	into	judgment	he fall	of the	devil
ina	mee	tuphootheis	eis	krima	empesee	tou	diabolou
2443	3361	5187	1519	2917	1706	3588	1228

This seems to suggest that he must beware lest pride lead him into the same condemnation as was the case with the devil.

1Tim. 3:7. *Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without*

must	but	also	report	good	have	from	the	outside.
dei	de	kai	marturian	kaleen	echein	apo	toon	exoothen,
1163	846	2532	3141	2570	2192	575	3588	1855

#3141 marturia; from #3144, Feminine Noun
Evidence given (as before a judge):
KJV-- record, report, testimony, witness.

1Tim. 3:7. *lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil*

Lest		into	reproach	he fall,	and	a snare	of the	Devil.
hina	mee	eis	oneidison	empesee	kai	pagada	tou	diabolou.
2443	3361	1519	3680	1706	2532	3803	3588	1228

2. QUALIFICATIONS LISTED IN TITUS 1:5-9

Titus 1:5 “For this cause I left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; 6 if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For the bishop must be blameless, as God's

steward; not self-willed, not soon angry, no brawler, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; 8 but given to hospitality, as lover of good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled; 9 holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers.”

Titus 1:5. *For this cause left I thee in Crete,*

this	cause	I left	you	in	Crete,
Toutou	charin	katelipon	se	en	kreetee,
5127	5484	2641	4571	1722	2914

Titus 1:5. *that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting,*

that	the	things lacking	you set in order,
ina	ta	leiponta	epidiorthoosee,
2443	3588	3007	1930

Titus 1:5. *and appoint elders in every city,*

and	appoint	each	in city	elders,
kai	katasteesees	kata	polin	presbuterous,
2532	2525	2596	4172	4245

#2525 kathistemi; from #2596 and #2476; to place down (permanently), i.e. (figuratively) to designate, constitute, convoy:

KJV-- appoint, be, conduct, make, ordain, set.

Matt 25:21. Steward: *I will make thee ruler over many things*

Matt 25:23. Steward: *I will make thee ruler over many things*

Acts 6:3. Deacons: *appoint over this*

Heb 2:7. Jesus: *didst set him over the*

Heb 7:28. Priests: *For the law maketh men*

Heb 8:3. High Priest: *ordained to offer gifts*

Another word translated, “appoint” is found in Acts 14:23, when Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey. It says they *appointed elders in every church*. Because it indicates the outstretched hand, some have suggested it was a vote of the congregation. I consider it both scriptural and wise for the church to take a vote, but it appears that such a meaning presses this passage too far. Paul and Barnabas were the ones who “stretched out their hands” to appoint elders.

#5500 cheirotoneo (khi-rot-on-eh'-o); from a comparative of #5495 and teino (to stretch); to be a hand-reacher or voter (by raising the hands), i.e. (generally) to select or appoint:

KJV-- choose, ordain.

Acts 14:23. Paul and Barnabus *ordained them elders*

2Cor 8:19. *chosen of the churches to carry the collection*

Acts 6:1-6 provides an excellent example of how choices might have been made. It concerns those chosen to relieve the apostles. There were three steps.

1. The apostles authorized the action and specified the qualifications for serving (#1247 diakoneoo).
2. They had the people do the choosing, based on qualifications.
3. The Apostles then did the appointing by laying on hands.

This system is ideal since it meets the need and yet has good checks and balances against overlordship by leaders, or of a popularity vote by people without considering qualifications. The “multitude” knew these men personally, perhaps better than the Apostles. The Apostles knew the word and had the final say. There is no excuse for power struggles between the congregation and the leadership. Surely, this was included in scripture as a pattern for us.

The pattern was set with Jesus who admonished that those who wished to lead, be “servants of the rest” (Matt. 23:1-12). Peter specifically states that elders are not to function as lords over God's heritage but to be examples to the flock (1Pe. 5:2-4). Those who lead should be seeking to serve the Lord in meeting the needs of the church.

New Testament congregations are repeatedly spoken of as participating in decisions. How did they do this? Was it a secret or open ballot? Did they use a written vote, or a show of hands? Did they poll the people individually and privately or was it at a general meeting? It appears that the choice of method is irrelevant, so long as it is agreed among the people.

Acts 9:30. The brethren at Jerusalem sent Paul to Tarsus.

Acts 11:29-30. The people of the church at Antioch sent an offering.

Ac. 15:2. The Antioch church appointed Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem about the dispute over whether circumcision should be bound upon the gentiles.

Acts 15:22. At Jerusalem the people are said to have agreed in sending the message to the churches of the Gentiles.

Acts 15:40 the church at Antioch commended Paul and Silas to the second missionary Journey.

Acts 17:14 the brethren at Beroea “sent” Paul away.

In the matter of discipline the people clearly share in the matter. Matthew 18:17 says that if a problem could not be resolved between the individuals it was to be told to the church. In 1Corinthians 5:4, instead of telling the leaders to put the offender out, Paul says for the church to be gathered together for that purpose. 2Cor. 2:6 says it was done by the many. This was no back room action.

Likewise, the need for knowledge of the qualifications of elders and deacons, suggests that in some way the people were communicating in the process. Whether or not they voted formally, they must have expressed their knowledge of the candidates.

J. HOW SHOULD THE APPOINTMENT BE MADE?

Passages in which hands were laid to appoint to jobs.

Acts 6:4. After praying apostles laid hands on the those appointed to look after the widows.

Acts 13:3. Paul and Barnabas sent out by fasting, praying and laying on of hands.

1Tim. 5:22. The admonition not to hastily lay hands on any man indicates Timothy participated in the appointment.

Titus 1:5. *as I gave thee charge;*

as	I	you	ordered;
hoos	egoo	soi	dietaxameen;
5613	1473	4671	1299

#1299 diatasso; from #1223 and #5021; to arrange thoroughly, i.e. (specially) institute, prescribe, etc.:

KJV-- appoint, command, give, (set in) order, ordain.

Matt 11:1. commanding his twelve

Luke 3:13. which is appointed you.

Luke 8:55. commanded to give her

Luke 17:9. commanded him?

Luke 17:10. commanded you

Acts 7:44. appointed

Acts 18:2. Claudius had commanded

Acts 20:13. he appointed

Acts 23:31. was commanded them

Acts 24:23. And he commanded

1Cor 7:17. And so ordain I

1Cor 11:34. rest will I set in order

Titus 1:5. I had appointed thee:

Titus 1:6. *if any man is blameless,*
If anyone is **blameless,**
ei tis estin anegkleetos,
1536 2076 410

#410 anegkletos; from #1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of #1458;
unaccused, i.e. (by implication) irreproachable:
KJV-- blameless.
1Cor 1:8. *may be blameless*
Col 1:22. *unreproveable*
1Tim 3:10. Elders: *blameless*.
Titus 1:6. Bishops: *If any be blameless*
Titus 1:7. Bishops: *must be blameless*

Titus 1:6. *the husband of one wife,*
of one wife husband
mias gunaikos aneer,
3391 1135 435

(See 1Tim. 3 concerning elders, above)

Titus 1:6. *having children*
children **having**
tekna echoon
5043 2192

#2192 echo; including an alternate form schein; used in certain tenses only; a primary verb; to hold (used in very various applications, literally or figuratively, direct or remote; such as possessions; ability, continuity, relation, or condition):

KJV-- be (able, X hold, possessed with), accompany, + begin to amend, can (+not), X conceive, count, diseased, do + eat, + enjoy, + fear, following, have, hold, keep, + lack, + go to law, lie, + must needs, + of necessity, + need, next, + recover, + reign, + rest, + return, X sick, take for, + tremble, + uncircumcised, use.

A question arises as to whether this requires him to have children. Most of our brethren read it that way, and that may be the safest view. That choice generally avoids conflict with those who read it as requiring children and for this reason, if no other, it may be best to leave it that way.

However, it may be that it simply means that any children he has must be well behaved. That is the best understanding of the parallel statement in 1Tim 3 and it

raises fewer problems about things that do not seem to relate to whether a man can successfully do the job.

For example, must he have more than one child? Must he have a plurality of children “in subjection” (1Tim. 3:4)? May a child who is adopted be counted? May a child from a previous marriage (such as when he marries a woman with children) be counted? Is a child that has grown up, still viewed as “in subjection” (1Tim. 3:4)? Must an Elder resign if a child that would qualify him dies? It may seem incredible to most but there have been some nasty church fights over such things.

Titus 1:6. “**faithful** children,” (King James Version)
“**that believe**” –A.S.V.

pista,
4103

4103 pistos {pis-tos'} ♂ from 3982; TDNT - 6:174,849; adjective
♂ AV - faithful 53, believe 6, believing 2, true 2, faithfully 1, believer 1, sure 1; not tr 1; 67 times

1) trusty, faithful

1a) of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties

1b) one who kept his plighted faith, worthy of trust

1c) that can be relied on

2) easily persuaded

2a) believing, confiding, trusting

2b) in the NT one who trusts in God's promises

2b1) one who is convinced that Jesus has been raised from the dead

2b2) one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and author of salvation

a. **Places where pistos is translated “faithful”**

Matt 24:45; Luke 12:42. *Who then is a faithful and wise servant*

Matt 25:21. *thou good and faithful servant:*

Matt 25:21, 23; Luke 16:10. *thou hast been faithful over a few things*

Matt 25:23. *good and faithful servant;*

Luke 16:11-12 *And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?*

Luke 19:17. *because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.*

Acts 16:15. *if you have judged me to be faithful*

1Cor 1:9. *God is faithful*

1Cor 4:2. *a man be found faithful.*

1Cor 4:17. *and faithful in the Lord,*

1Cor 7:25. *of the Lord to be faithful.*
 1Cor 10:13. *god is faithful,*
 Gal 3:9. *faithful Abraham.*
 Eph 1:1. *to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*
 Eph 6:21. *Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord*
 Col 1:2. *faithful brethren*
 Col 1:7. *who is a faithful minister*
 Col 4:7. *beloved brother, and a faithful minister*
 Col 4:9. *With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother*
 1Thes 5:24. *Faithful is he that*
 2Thes 3:3. *But the Lord is faithful,*
 1Tim 1:12. *counted me faithful,*
 1Tim 1:15. *This is a faithful saying*
 1Tim 3:1. *This is a true saying,*
 1Tim 3:11. *faithful in all things*
 1Tim 4:9. *This is a faithful saying*
 1Tim 6:2. *they are faithful and*
 2Tim 2:2. *commit thou to faithful men*
 2Tim 2:11. *It is a faithful saying:*
 2Tim 2:13. *abideth faithful: he*
 Titus 1:9. *Holding fast the faithful word*
 Titus 3:8. *This is a faithful saying*
 Heb. 2:17. *that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest*
 Heb 3:2. *Who was faithful to him*
 Heb 3:5. *faithful in all his*
 Heb 10:23. *is faithful that*
 1Pet 4:19. *unto a faithful Creator.*
 1 John 1:9. *he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins*
 3 John 1:5. *Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest*
 Rev. 1:5. *Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness*
 Rev. 2:10. *be thou faithful unto death,*
 Rev. 3:14. *the faithful and true witness*
 Rev. 17:14. *they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*
 Rev. 19:11. *he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True,*
 Rev. 21:5. *Write: for these words are true and faithful.*
 Rev. 22:6. *These sayings are faithful and true:*

b. Places where *pistos* is translated to indicate belief

John 20:27. *be not faithless, but believing.*
 Acts 10:45. *believed were astonished,*
 Acts 16:1. *Jewess, and believed; but*
 2Cor 6:15. *believeth with an unbeliever*
 1Tim 4:3. *which believe and know the truth*
 1Tim 4:10. *specially those that believe.*
 1Tim 4:12. *example of the believers,*

1Tim 5:16. *believeth have widows,*
1Tim 6:2. *believing masters, let*
Rev. 2:13. *and hast not denied my faith,*

MUST AN ELDER HAVE BELIEVING CHILDREN?

Does the Greek word, *pistos* (Strong: #4103) require an elder's children to be believers? The King James Version translates it, "faithful children." Most others use some equivalent to "believing." It is clear from the above passages that *pistos* does not always mean, "believing," and indeed, out of 66 times in the King James Version, it is translated with some form of "believe" only 10 times. Lightfoot (p. 157 on Galatians) indicates the meaning must be determined by the context and that it means a responsible person. Barnes Notes agree.

The first thing that aroused a question in my mind was when I tried to match the two lists of qualifications in Timothy and Titus. I found that many of the words were the same. Nearly all the rest were synonymous. There were some different words but the meanings generally roughly corresponded. However, in this instance Timothy and Titus seemed to differ greatly.

1Timothy says, "*One that rules his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity.*"

Titus 1:6 (in the A.S.V.), "*having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly.*"

Titus 1:6 (in the K.J.V.), "*having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.*"

Why did Timothy not require believing children? It did not seem logical that qualifications for elders at Ephesus should differ substantially from those in Crete. Further checking showed that "faithful" is repeatedly used in the sense of being loyal, trustworthy or responsible. If that is the correct meaning it resolves the difficulty. If not, then it would appear that in some way the words in Timothy must convey the necessity that they have believing children.

The only possibility seems to be that "with all gravity" means, his children must believe. Examination of the dictionary definition and uses, both of the word itself and its related forms, fails to substantiate this. At least, it is not what Timothy would seem to convey from ordinary sense of the words.

"Faithful," rather than "believing," resolves a number of questions. Must he have more than one child that believes? Must they all be believers? What if a man has another child after he becomes an elder? What if one of two children dies after they have become believers? What if a man has several children--must they all grow up and become believers before a man can serve? What if, after leaving home, one falls away from the faith? A man can control the behavior of children in his home but how can he be held accountable for the free choice of his children to believe? Such a

reading excludes great numbers of competent people. It excludes a man for many years, and perhaps forever, who may have children later in life. He must wait until they all grow older and accept Christ.

A child has a free will. If the parent is to be held responsible for a child not believing, that seems to make conversion nothing but a clever manipulation by parents. Can children's faith simply be programmed? I would dread laying that kind of blame on parents who have a child that failed. I know many who have been highly successful with several children and had one to fail for no apparent reason. Was God to blame for Adam and Eve's fall?

It seems likely that it is saying that the elder's children must be well-behaved. If not, he would not have the respect and trust of the people in leading the church.

Titus 1:6. *who are not accused of riot or unruly.* (cf. 1Tim. 3:4)

not	in	accusation	of looseness	or	unruly.
mee	en	kateegoria	asootias	ee	anupotakta.
3361	1722	2724	810	2228	506

#810 asotia; from a compound of #1 (as a negative particle) and a presumed derivative of #4982; properly, unsavedness, i.e. (by implication) profligacy:
KJV-- excess, riot.

Eph 5:18. *wine, wherein is excess*;
Titus 1:6. *not accused of riot or*
1Pet 4:4. *excess of riot, speaking*

#506 anupotaktos; from #1 (as a negative particle) and a presumed derivative of #5293; unsubdued, i.e. insubordinate (in fact or temper):
KJV-- disobedient, that is not put under, unruly.

1Tim 1:9. *disobedient*,
Titus 1:6. *unruly*.
Titus 1:10. *For there are many unruly*
Heb 2:8. *for there is nothing that is not put under him*.

Titus 1:7. *For the bishop must be blameless,*

must	For	the	overseer	blameless	to be
dei	gar	ton	episkopon	anegkleeton	einai,
1163	1063	3588	1985	410	1511

#410 anegkletos; from #1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of #1458; unaccused, i.e. (by implication) irreproachable:
KJV-- blameless.
(see verse 6 above)

Titus 1:7. as God's steward;

as of God **a steward,**
hoos Theou oikonomon.
5613 2316 3623

#3623 oikonomos; from #3624 and the base of #3551; a house-distributor (i.e. manager), or overseer, i.e. an employee in that capacity; by extension, a fiscal agent (treasurer); figuratively, a preacher (of the Gospel):

KJV-- chamberlain, governor, steward.

Luke 12:42. *wise steward, whom his*

Luke 16:1. *had a steward;*

Rom 16:23. *chamberlain of the city*

1Cor 4:1. *stewards of the mysteries of God*

1Cor 4:2. *it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*

Gal 4:2. *governors until the time*

1Pet 4:10. *stewards of the manifold grace of God*

Titus 1:7. not self-willed,

not **self-pleasing,**
mee authadee,
3361 829

#829 authades; from #846 and the base of #2237; self-pleasing, i.e. arrogant:

KJV-- self-willed.

Titus 1:7. *of God; not self willed,*

2Pet 2:10. *self willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries*

Titus 1:7. not soon angry,

not **passionate,**
mee orgilon,
3361 3711

#3711 orgilos; from #3709; irascible:

KJV-- soon angry.

(Found only here but orgee (#3709 noun), and orgizoo (#3710 verb) forms, have many references on anger)

Titus 1:7. no brawler,

not **given to wine,**
mee paroinon,
3361 3943

#3943 paroinos (par'-oy-nos); from #3844 and #3631; staying near wine, i.e. tippling (a toper):

KJV-- given to wine.

1Tim 3:3. Elders: *Not given to wine,*
(See discussion at this verse above)

Titus 1:7. Elders: *not given to wine,*

Titus 1:7. no striker,

not a **quarreler,**

mee pleektreen,

3361 4131

#4131 plektes; from #4141; a smiter, i.e. pugnacious (quarrelsome):

KJV-- striker.

1 Tim 3:3. *no striker,*

Titus 1:7. *no striker,*

Titus 1:7. not greedy of filthy lucre;

not **greedy of ill gain,**

mee aischrokerdee,

3361 146

#146 aischrokerdes; from #150 and kerdos (gain); sordid:

KJV-- given to (greedy of) filthy lucre.

1Tim 3:8. elder: *not greedy of filthy lucre*

Titus 1:7. elder: *given to filthy lucre;*

Titus 1:8. but given to hospitality,

but **a lover of hospitality**

alla philoxenon,

235 5382

#5382 philoxenos; from #5384 and #3581; fond of guests, i.e. hospitable:

KJV-- given to (lover of, use) hospitality.

1Tim 3:2. elder: *given to hospitality,*

Titus 1:8. elder: *a lover of hospitality,*

1Pet 4:9. to everyone: *Use hospitality one to another*

Titus 1:8. a lover of good,

a lover of good,

philagathon,

5358

#5358 philagathos; from #5384 and #18; fond to good, i.e. a promoter of virtue:
KJV-- love of good men.

Titus 1:8. *a lover of good men*

Titus 1:8. sober-minded,

discreet,

soophrona,

4998

#4998 sophron; from the base of #4982 and that of #5424; safe (sound) in mind, i.e. self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion):

KJV-- discreet, sober, temperate. ***. ta. See #3588.

1Tim 3:2. elders: *sober*,

Titus 1:8. elders: *sober*,

Titus 2:2. aged men: *sober*,

Titus 2:5. younger women: *To be discreet*,

Titus 1:8. just,

just,

dikaion,

1342

#1342 dikaios; from #1349; equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively): 81 times

KJV-- just, meet, right (-eous).

Matt. 1:19. Joseph was a righteous man

Acts 10:22. Cornelius was a righteous man

Rom. 1:17. The righteous shall live by faith

(Many passages)

Titus 1:8. holy,

holy,

hosion

3741

#3741 hosios; [8 times] of uncertain affinity; properly, right (by intrinsic or divine character; thus distinguished from #1342, which refers rather to human statutes and relations; from #2413, which denotes formal consecration; and from #40, which relates to purity from defilement), i.e. hallowed (pious, sacred, sure):

KJV-- holy, mercy, shalt be.

Acts 2:27. Jesus: *thine Holy One*

Acts 13:34. *give you the sure mercies of David*

Acts 13:35. *Holy One to see*

1Tim 2:8. *lifting up holy hands, without*
 Titus 1:8. Elders: holy, *temperate*;
 Heb 7:26. *became us, who is holy,*
 Rev 15:4. holy: *for all nations*

Titus 1:8. *self-controlled*;
temperate,
 egkratee,
 1468

#1468 egkrates; from #1722 and #2904; strong in a thing (masterful), i.e. (figuratively and reflexively) self-controlled (in appetite, etc.):
 KJV-- temperate.
 Titus 1:8. Elders: *temperate*;

Titus 1:9. *holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching,*
 clinging to the according to the teaching faithful word,
 antechomenon tou kata teen didacheen pistou logou,
 472 3588 2596 3588 1322 4103 3056

that he may be able to exhort
 that able he may be both to exhort
 ina dunatos hee kai parakalein
 2443 1415 5600 2532 3870

in the sound doctrine,
 in the teaching of the sound,
 en tee didaskalia tee hugiainousee,
 1722 3588 1319 3588 5198

and to convict the gainsayers.
 and contradicting to convict.
 kai tous antilegontas
 2532 3588 1651

II. THE OFFICE OF DEACON

1Timothy 3:8

8 Deacons in like manner (must be) grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10

And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless. 11 Women in like manner (must be) grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling (their) children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

1Timothy 3:8.

*Deacons in like manner (must be) **grave**,*
 deacons likewise **reverent**
 diakonous hoosaoutoos semnous,
 1249 5615 4586

#4586 semnos; [4 times] from #4576; venerable, i.e. honorable:

KJV-- grave, honest.
 Phil 4:8. *whatsoever things are honest,*
 1Tim 3:8. *Deacons: be grave,*
 1Tim 3:11. *Wives: be grave, not slanderers,*
 Titus 2:2. *aged men: grave,*

1Tim. 3:8. not double tongued,

not **double-tongued**,
 mee dilogous,
 3361 1351

#1351 dilogos; [1 time] from #1364 and #3056; equivocal, i.e. telling a different story:

KJV-- double-tongued.
 (Only one use in N.T. in this form)
 cf. James 5:12

1Tim. 3:8. not given to much wine,

not wine much attendance to,
 mee **oinoo** polloo prosechontas,
 3361 3631 4183 4337

3631 oinos {oy'-nos} [33 times] ♂ a primary word (or perhaps of Hebrew origin 03196); noun masculine ♂ AV – wine 32, winepress + 3125 1; 33 ♂ 1) wine 2) metaph. fiery wine of God's wrath

Luke 1:15; 7:33. John the Baptist did not drink wine
 Luke 5:37-38. New wine is not put in old wineskins lest they burst
 Luke 10:34. Wine used to cleanse wounds
 John 2:9-10; 4:6. Jesus made wine for the feast
 Rom. 14:21. It is good not to drink wine which may cause a brother to stumble.
 Eph. 5:18. Not to be drunken with wine.

1Tim. 3:8. Deacons not to be given to much wine.

1Tim. 5:23. Timothy told not to be only a drinker of water but to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities.

Tit. 2:3. The aged women are not to be given to much wine

cf. Tit. 1:7 Bishop must not be given to wine,

1Tim. 3:8. *not greedy of filthy lucre;*

not **greedy of ill gain**
mee aischrokerdeis,
3361 146

#146 aischrokerdes; [3 times] from #150 and kerdos (gain); sordid:

KJV-- given to (greedy of) filthy lucre.

1Tim. 3:3. Bishops: *not greedy of filthy lucre;*

1 Tim. 3:8. Deacons: *not greedy of filthy lucre;*

Titus 1:7. Elders/Bishops: *not given to filthy lucre;*

1Tim. 3:9. holding the mystery of the faith in **a pure conscience.**

having the mystery of the faith with a clean conscience.
echontas to musteerion tees pisteoos en kathara suneideesei.
2192 3588 3466 3588 4102 1722 2513 4893

#2513 katharos (kath-ar-os'); of uncertain affinity; clean (literally or figuratively):

KJV-- clean, clear, pure.

1Tim. 3:10. *And let these also first be proved;*

also these And **let be tested** first,
kai houtoi de dokimaxesthoosan prooton,
2532 3778 1161 1381 4412

#1381 dokimazo; [28 times] from #1384; to test (literally or figuratively); by implication, to approve:

KJV-- allow, discern, examine, X like, (ap-) prove, try.

Rom 12:2. *that ye may prove what is*

1Cor 11:28. *But let a man examine himself*

2Cor 8:8. *to and prove the*

2Cor 8:22. *have oftentimes proved*

2Cor 13:5. *faith; prove your own*

Gal 6:4. *But let every man prove*

Eph 5:10. *Proving what is*

1Thes 5:21. *Prove all things; hold*

1Pet 1:7. *be tried with fire, might*

1Jn 4:1. *every spirit, but try the spirits*

“Proved” may mean merely that a check is made of their credentials. As in the case of elders, it may suggest the need that they should not be a “novice.” It may also indicate a period of time to test how they would do in the job before formal ordination. I have found that a trial period is wise.

1Tim. 3:10. *then let them serve as deacons,*

then **let them minister,**

eota diakoneitoosan,

1534 1247

1247 **diakone,w** diakoneo {dee-ak-on-eh'-o} ᾠ from 1249; TDNT - 2:81,152; v ᾠ AV - minister unto 15, serve 10, minister 7, misc 5; 37 times

Luke 22:26-27. *but he that is chief among you, let him become as... he that doth serve.*

Acts 6:2. The seven were chosen to “serve tables” – to see that the widows were not neglected in the *daily ministration*.

1Tim. 3:10. *let them use the office of a deacon*

1Tim. 3: 13. *they that have used the office of a deacon gain to themselves a good standing,*

1 Pet. 4:11. *if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, let him do it as of the strength which God supplieth:*

1Tim. 3:10. *if they be blameless.*

without reproach being.

anegkleetoi ontes.

410 1510

#410 anegkletos; [5 times] from #1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of #1458; unaccused, i.e. (by implication) irreproachable:

KJV-- blameless.

1Cor 1:8. *may be blameless*

Col 1:22. *and unreprouvable*

1Tim 3:10. *blameless*

Titus 1:6. *If any be blameless,*

Titus 1:7. *blameless, as the steward*

CONCERNING WIVES

11 Even so *must their wives be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

1Tim. 3:11. *Women in like manner*

wives	likewise
gunaikas	hoosautoos
1135	5615

#1135 gune; [221 times] probably from the base of #1096; a woman; specially, a wife:

KJV-- wife, woman.

Eph 5:28. *their wives as their own*

Eph 5:31. *joined unto his wife, and*

Col 3:18. *Wives, submit yourselves*

Col 3:19. *love your wives,*

1Tim 3:2. *husband of one wife,,*

1Tim 3:11. *Even so must their wives*

1Tim 3:12. *husbands of one wife,*

1Tim 5:9. *having been the wife of*

Titus 1:6. *husband of one wife,*

WERE THESE WOMEN DEACONS (DEACONESSES)?

Some have suggested that this has reference to deaconesses. This does not seem likely.

Since no qualifications are given for the wives of elders, and these qualifications for wives would certainly be necessary to the elder's success in his work, it seems likely that it was intended for wives of both elders and deacons. The roles of elders and deacons differed, so their qualifications differed. However, the requirement of a good example of their wives did not. There was no need to repeat the qualifications for the wives in both cases.

Note how the statement concerning women is sandwiched between two specific sets of qualifications for deacons.

The fact that it speaks concerning deacons, then turns to the women, and then back to the deacons indicates that the women in verse 11 are distinct from the deacons. By "deacons" it means men because 3:12 says "*Let deacons be husbands of one wife...*"

The strongest argument for it meaning deaconesses is that it specifies a series of qualifications. Qualifications could indicate an office. However, the things cited ("grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things") omit the parallel qualification to verse 12, "wife of one man" (Compare 5:9), as well as other things that would seem to be just as important in the qualification for office by women.

Also, the qualifications of the women include some restatements of qualifications for the deacons. If “deacons” referred to both men and women there would be no reason to restate any qualifications. On the other hand, if it is speaking of wives of the deacons, this is perfectly logical.

The strongest passage for woman deaconesses is Rom. 16:1.

I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant [“diakonos” #1249] of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

However, nothing in the passage clearly indicates she was an ordained officer in the church. All of the words used for various offices were also used in a generic sense. This may just as well refer to her in the general sense of one who serves, or one sent to take care of some business for the church.

Are there any other indications of paid female servants of the church? There does seem to be in case of the “widows indeed” (1Tim. 5:3-16), and it is possible that Phoebe belonged to this class. They were paid (5:16). They were “enrolled” (5:9). They met specific qualifications (5:5, 6, 9, 10). They performed service for the church (5:5, 13).

One statement that may suggest a formal commitment is that if they were enrolled and then decided to marry they were considered as “*waxing wanton against Christ, ... having condemnation, because they have rejected their first pledge.*” This sounds like they took some kind of pledge to spend the rest of their lives serving Christ.

This is the nearest thing we find that suggests a paid office for women in the church. However, this is certainly nothing like Catholic orders of nuns and has little in common with the “women” mentioned in 1Tim. 3. It exclusively refers to widows over 60 years of age who have reared children but now have no family to provide support.

I have no particular objection to the church appointing and paying women to lead or work in areas God ordained for them to serve. However, these arguments are commonly made to empower women to office in order to preach in the church, contrary to (1Cor. 14:34-35; 1Tim. 2:11-15). Nothing in the work of a deacon indicates they were teachers in the church. Also, we find no instance in the New Testament of laying hands on women to ordain them to office. Jesus himself did not include any women among the twelve apostles.

However, historically, as early as the second or third century A.D. women were recorded as being servants in the church.

1Tim. 3:11. *(must be) grave,*
reverent,
semnas,
4586

#4586 semnos; [4 times] from #4576; venerable, i.e. honorable:
KJV-- grave, honest.
Phil 4:8. *whatsoever things are honest,*
1Tim 3:8. *be grave, not*
1Tim 3:11. *be grave,*
Titus 2:2. *grave,*

1Tim. 3:11. *not slanderers,*
not **slanderers,**
mee diabolous,
3361 1228

#1228 diabolos; [38 times] from #1225; a traducer; specially, Satan (compare #7854):
KJV-- false accuser, devil, slanderer.
Eph 6:11. *wiles of the devil.*
1Tim 3:6. *devil.*
1Tim 3:7. *snare of the devil.*
1Tim 3:11. *be grave, not slanderers,*
2Tim 2:26. *snare of the devil, who*
2Tim 3:3. *false accusers,*
Titus 2:3. *false accusers, not given*
1Pet 5:8. *the devil, as a roaring*
1Jn 3:8. *devil sinneth from the*
1Jn 3:10. *children of the devil:*
Jude 1:9. *contending with the devil*
Rev 12:9-10 *Devil, and Satan, which is the accuser of the brethren*

1Tim. 3:11. *sober,*
temperate,
neephalious,
3524

#3524 nephaleos; [3 times] or nephalios (nay-fal'-ee-os); from #3525; sober, i.e. (figuratively) circumspect:
KJV-- sober, vigilant.
1Tim 3:2. Bishop ...*vigilant,*
1Tim 3:11. Wives ...*sober,*
Titus 2:2. Elders... *sober,*

1Tim. 3:11. *faithful in all things.*

faithful	in	all things.
pistas	en	pasi.
4103	1722	3956

#4103 pistos; [67 times] from #3982; objectively, trustworthy; subjectively, trustful:

KJV-- believe (-ing, -r), faithful (-ly), sure, true.

1Thes 5:24. *Faithful is he that*
2Thes 3:3. *But the Lord is faithful,*
1Tim 1:12. *counted me faithful,*
1Tim 1:15. *This is a faithful*
1Tim 3:1. *This is a true saying, If*
1Tim 3:11. *wives...sober, faithful in all*
1Tim 4:3. *which believe and know*
1Tim 4:9. *This is a faithful saying*
1Tim 4:10. *that believe.*
1Tim 4:12. *example of the believers,*
1Tim 5:16. *believeth have widows,*
1Tim 6:2. *believing masters, let*
1Tim 6:2. *they are faithful and*
2Tim 2:2. *commit thou to faithful*
2Tim 2:11. *It is a faithful saying:*
2Tim 2:13. *abideth faithful: he*
Titus 1:6. *having faithful children*
Titus 1:9. *Holding fast the faithful*
Titus 3:8. *This is a faithful*

V. DEACONS (continued)

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

1Tim. 3:12. *Let deacons be husbands of one wife,*

deacons	let be	of one	wife	husbands
diakonoi	estoosan	mias,	gunaikos	andres
1249	2077	3391	1135	435

#3391. Husband of *one* wife see “bishops” above (1Tim. 3:2)

1Tim. 3:12. *ruling (their) children and their own houses well.*

children	well	ruling	and	the	of them	households.
teknoon	kaloos	proistamenoι	kai	Toon	idioon	oikoon.
5043	2573	4291	2532	3588	2398	3624

#4291 proistemi (pro-is'-tay-mee); [8 times] from #4253 and #2476; to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by implication) to practice:

KJV-- maintain, be over, rule.

Rom 12:8. *ruleth, with diligence;*

1Thes 5:12. *and are over you*

1Tim 3:4. *One that ruleth well*

1Tim 3:5. *how to rule his own*

1Tim 3:12 *ruling their children*

1Tim 5:17. *Let the elders that rule*

This does not actually say they must have children. However, the requirement to rule their children well is usually presumed as indicating that.

1Tim. 3:13. *For they that have served well as deacons*

those	for	well	having ministered
hoi	gar	kaloos	<u>diakoneesantes</u>
3588	1063	2573	1247

gain to themselves a good standing,

a grade	for themselves	good	gain
bathmon	eautois	kalon	peroiountai,
898	1438	2570	4046

and great boldness in the faith

and	much	boldness	in	faith,
kai	polleen	parreesian	en	pistei
2532	4183	3954	1722	4102

which is in Christ Jesus.

those	in	Christ	Jesus.
tee	en	Christoo	Ieesou.
3588	1722	5547	2424

With the above, concerning deacons, Acts 6:1-6 should be considered.

1 "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations [#1248 diakonia]. 2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and

serve [#1247 diakoneoo] tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry [#1247 diakoneoo] of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.”

These appear to be deacons or a prototype of the office for the following reasons.

1. They were to “serve” (Acts 6:2 #1247 “diakoneoo,” verb form of the word, deacon). In 1Tim. 3:10. This word is translated “*let them use the office of a deacon.*” In 1Tim. 3:13. The same word is translated, “*they that have used the office of a deacon.*”

Their work was the daily “ministration” (Acts 6:1 #1248 diakonia) of caring for the widows while the Apostles were to care for the “ministry” (Acts 6:4 #1248 diakonia) of the word.

2. This seems to best fit the distinction in roles of bishops and deacons. Just as in 1Tim. 3, bishop must be apt to teach (3:2. cf. 1Tim. 5:17) and deacons serve (1Tim. 3:10, 13), this passage compares the ministry of the word and the ministry of tables.

The main objection against this is that the qualifications are not the same as in 1Timothy 3. That may be due to the fact that it was only a prototype, with the office not yet being fully formalized. Specification of being filled with the Holy Spirit may indicate the person would receive revelation as to what God required.

One of these men, Philip, exercised miraculous powers and was later called an “evangelist” (#2099 “euangelisteos” Acts 21:8. Cf. #2097 “euongelizo” Acts 8:12, 35, 40).