

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Leadership 1
Ecclesiology 2
Week 1 - Leadership in the Local Church

Introduction

Leadership matters:

A local church may have a clear understanding of its role in evangelism and discipleship, a biblical mission statement, and well-organized programs. But if it does not apply the biblical principles of leadership, growth – both qualitative and quantitative – is unlikely.

- **Get the right people in! (Titus 1:5)**

The way the church is led and by whom has profound impact on the church's ability to fulfill God's purposes.

The pastoral epistles provide the primary substance of the descriptions and criteria for leaders. But there is also the specific passage in Titus 1:5 ("set in order" → 1st thing is appointing of leadership – elders).

- **Create an ethos of aspiring to leadership! (1 Timothy 3:1,13)**

In building the church, we want to develop in people an ethos to aspire to leadership, for the right reasons.

1 Timothy 3:1 – it is noble to aspire.

1 Timothy 3:13 – "high standing" probably referring to the bema and "greater confidence" in this life (dependence on God).

Therefore, it is a realistic expectation that a great many people, the majority of people, would be able to lead, and would want to lead as well! Eventually, through God's maturing process in our life, transforming our character and developing a ministry sphere, we would be ready to lead a home church.

Discuss reasons for becoming a leader/servant. Why would spiritual leadership be any more important than any other activity?

Because the church is the most important entity in the whole world (Col. 1:24-29; Eph.3:3-8) – what an incredible privilege of grace to be called to this, to serve in this way & even to suffer in this cause which is greater than myself!

1 Tim. 3:13 – there are so many benefits in the next life as well as this.

Because of the 1st two, that is why we want this church to have the prevailing consensus of 1 Tim. 1:1,13.

Because it is more important than anything in the world, in a good church we would expect to see people on a path of downward mobility, even giving up jobs for full-time Christian work (not a necessity by any means in order to be spiritual, but we would see some of this, and do in Xenos).

Offices in the New Testament

First, we need to distinguish between spiritual gifts and offices (all Christians have gifts but not all have offices). These are roles with delegated authority. As we survey the New Testament, there are only two offices evident in the New Testament church: elders and deacons. This does not mean all local churches have both.

Elders

Elders vs. Bishops: *The office of elder is synonymous with the office of bishop.* The church has often misinterpreted or misapplied this by separating these as referring to two offices.
Acts 20:17,28 and Titus 1:5,7 - *the two terms are used interchangeably*

"Elder" comes from the word *presbeuteros* which means an older (spiritually mature) person, and therefore describes a person who is relatively mature spiritually.

"Bishop" comes from the word *episkopos* which literally means an overseer. Therefore, this term describes what the person does (i.e. oversees the local church).

Shepherding is descriptive of the type of ministry of the elder.

Shepherding role - three general aspects to their ministry:

- **Provide** – the word of God, above all, and an example of godly living (1 Peter 5:3; 1 Tim. 4:12,13)
- **Protect** – we have an enemy who is trying to take the church down (Acts 20:29), and sin will also destroy the church. The elders must lead by willingness to discipline.
- **Direct** – the shepherd leads the sheep to pasture. The elder leads in the way the church should go (more next week). Includes giving vision as well as developing structures that will help us accomplish our mission, oversight of money (which is part of getting the job done).

Plurality of eldership - The New Testament church appears to have consistently established a plurality of eldership in each local church.

Acts 14:23 - "... appointed elders (plural) in every church (singular). . . "

Titus 1:5 - "... appoint elders (plural) in every city (singular). . . "

1 Peter 5:2 - "... shepherd the flock (singular) of God among you (plural). . . "

Why is plurality important? Ask this question to the class.

- *Protection against bad doctrine or abuse* (it doesn't guarantee it, but it helps to check it). It is easier for the evil one to take one person down, than several. The blend of gifting, temperaments, and experiences from a group of elders helps to insure biblical wisdom being applied to situations.
- *It models the body of Christ.* Community is a key feature of the church and group leadership is a logical element of this. Group leadership models this necessity of community.

Also, when one leader goes through a significant struggle that threatens to "take them out," the other leaders can rally around them. Rather than the hurting leader needing to quit, the other leaders demonstrate to the rest of the body how support, encouragement, and comfort is what is provided to a hurting member.

The qualifications for elders generally fall into three categories:

1. *He must be functionally effective in spiritual leadership.*

John 10:4 - Just as Jesus said sheep would know the voice of their shepherd, it seems likely that those considered for eldership in the early church had already demonstrated the ability to lead. The sheep follow because they trust the shepherd has their best interests in mind because of their servant leadership.

We don't bestow the title of "leader," we recognize those who are already leading. We look to see if people are following them and in a godly direction. And we listen for unsolicited comments about these people.

NOTE: this is applicable to home church leadership as well. With elders, we look to those who have successfully planted home groups.

Someone who really believes that the Christian life is fulfilling (Jn. 13:17; Acts 20:35).

Someone who shows up in the Spirit, ready to serve.

Someone who is thinking about others (Heb. 10:24).

Someone who is encouraging and challenging where needed (Heb. 10:24; 1 Thess. 15:14).

Someone who has a heart for the lost.

Someone who is demonstrating they are thinking of the group as a whole.

Someone who does not expect to be served but finds others to help grow.

Someone who lives to give.

This is *probably* why Paul waited for a while after starting the churches in Ephesus and Crete before he had Timothy (chapter 3) and Titus (chapter 1) appoint elders.

It took time for the true leaders to naturally emerge.

2. *He must be skilled at teaching. Didasko – skilled at teaching.*

The ability to lead others in spiritual matters is also implied by the fact that the elder must be "skilled at teaching" (**1 Timothy 3:2**), or, "able to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict" (**Titus 1:9**). Able to use the word skillfully.

This does NOT mean that all elders have to be gifted at teaching (1 Tim. 5:17), but all must have demonstrated effectiveness in the use of the word to provide and protect and direct.

A teacher is not skillful unless his students learn. Learning includes how to do God's will, not just how to know it. (James 1:22-25)

3. *He must be morally upright and consistent.*

The emphasis in the Bible is on character even over and above function – there are more character requirements listed than functional. You can study a list of the qualifications for elders along with suggested definitions for each.

Note that these qualities are really just a picture of sanctification that we should all aspire to.

Examples from the 80's – individuals who are functionally qualified, but lacking in character.

What about female eldership?

The New Testament example was male eldership.

There is no clear evidence of female elders in the New Testament. Why is this? This is apparent in Ephesus (1 Timothy 3).

- **Were there compelling theological reasons or other factors (cultural, historical, societal)?**

The only passage in the Bible that seems to prohibit a theological basis for no women elders is 1 Tim. 2:12-15.

- **Traditional/theological interpretation:** Appealing to creation appears to make this a theological, trans-cultural prohibition. “Teaching” is not included in this since we have examples of women teaching elsewhere, and “leading” does not mean deacons for the same reason. By process of elimination and the context, we believe this is referring to the office of elder. But what is it telling us?
- **Historical interpretation:** We believe that there is compelling evidence that there was a historical reason for this prohibition. Historically, there was a heresy being taught in the church that Eve was 1st in creation and that she was the source of spiritual enlightenment. He is refuting that here.

“exercise authority” – *authenteo* (not *exousia* as is usual); this is rare, not used anywhere else in the New Testament. It is where we get “absolute authority” “author” – it means to undermine or usurp authority. He is prohibiting their domination.

(v. 15 – it is an obscure passage and likely, because of context, refutes another gnostic heresy being taught that if a woman bears a child she will lose her salvation).

Additional New Testament evidence for freedom in ministry for women:

- **Galatians 3:28**
- **Paul's implementation of Galatians 3:28 (women teaching, prophesying, leading as deacons, etc.** Paul was a leader in putting this into practice in the church.

Therefore, it is better to see lack of mention of women in eldership as cultural (weren't as educated, wouldn't have been well accepted so a strategic choice of when or where to put women in this role).

Deacons

The function of the deacon

Their role is not delineated in the New Testament. “Diakonos” is just a servant or a minister. They are distinguished by their ministry (we don't bestow the title, we recognize them). More than just greeters, counters of money, mowers of the churchyard. Where does the church get this impression?

They are subordinate to elders. They are always referenced after elders and we aren't certain that every church even had them.

Acts 6:1-6 seems to support the case: deacons selected to take care of a service type ministry. The traditional church says this role is “non-relational, non instructive”

However:

Note that *diakonia* is used of the apostles ministry of the word in vs. 4. It is not talking about the office's role, just what people were doing.

Also, notice vs. 8. Stephen was very powerful in Word and action. Would be a very high level for a deacon to match.

There is nothing restrictive about this narrative. We shouldn't be going to this passage to demonstrate what a deacon is. Character requirements suggest a much higher level of responsibility.

We conclude rather, that this role is better understood as under-shepherds, shepherding under the oversight of overseers. In Xenos, the group of deacons is called the Servant Team (738) and is comprised of primarily our home group leaders (427), plus others who have demonstrated the character and ministry qualities of a deacon.

Compare with typical number of deacons in a church.

Requirements for Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-15)

Similar to elders' requirements: emphasis on record of spiritual service and godly character

Different from elders' requirements: But as expected, the requirements don't seem to be quite as high. There are a few distinctions between the deacon and the elders' requirements:

- **Level of ability in biblical instruction:** While the deacons had to "hold fast the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience" (1 Timothy 3:9 – understand the word, believe it, are trying to live life according to it), they evidently do not have to be skilled teachers like elders.
- **Amount of time as a Christian:** The elders are told specifically that they cannot be a new convert, while deacons have to be “tested”. Evidently, they could be younger in the Lord than Elders. This criteria was likely placed there out of concern both for the individual and the church (elaborate).

Servant team nomination process: In Xenos therefore, part of the Servant Team nomination process involves a question about where the nominee has been through testing in their walk. It also includes being fiscally responsible, completing coursework, etc.

What about Female deacons? Read from Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, p. 144.

“Deaconesses? Only two verses in the New Testament might possibly support the existence of deaconesses in those days. In Romans 16:2, Pheobe is called a “servant” (the word is deacon). The question is whether this is an official (deaconess) or unofficial (servant) use of the word. Probably it is unofficial (as in 1 Cor 16:15). The other relevant verse is 1 Timothy 3:11 where certain women are mentioned. The question is whether these are the wives of the deacons or deaconesses (the word in the original is simply that for women). If there were deaconesses one would expect that they would be mentioned after verse 13

when the discussion of the deacons was finished rather than inserted right in the middle of the paragraph about deacons. That seems to point to the conclusion that they were the wives of the deacons. It is highly doubtful that there was an office of deaconess in the early church.”

Romans 16:1,2: Ryrie really glosses over this- the language (and evidence) is very strong as the church is called on to help her in anything she needs.

Diakonos - In verse 1, Pheobe is called a “diakonos” of the church at Cenchrea, and then in

Prostasis – In verse 2 she is said to have been a “helper” of many, including Paul. The word translated “helper” in the Greek is *prostasis* – which is a **derivative of *prohistami*** – the word is translated *lead, manage, or rule* in other passages! IE → She is obviously a LEADER of many.

Probably not a leader “of” Paul, but placed there “by” Paul. (**Romans 12:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 3:4,5,12; 1 Timothy 5:17**).

She is the **first person mentioned in this list of key workers and leaders**, demonstrating a position of leadership.

Why would there be requirements for deacons wives...? 1 Tim. 3:11 If these are requirements just for deacons wives, why wouldn't he say something like this for elders' wives where the stakes are much higher?

“Likewise” (v. 11) also implies that he is still talking about deacons. The context is qualifications for deacons.

Types of Church Polity

"Polity" means government and here refers to the type of social and clerical organization used within a church and to the relation between a local church congregation and other congregations. That is, the term denotes the way a local church is run and indicates the arbiters of authority that the church recognizes. There are several types of church polity and on occasion more than one type may be mixed in the organization of a church [Baptists are both--depending upon what is emphasized--congregational and presbyterian]. Sometimes a church may have a nominal polity of one type and an effective polity of another type [Methodists are technically episcopal in polity--they have bishops--but often local churches act as if they were completely autonomous or congregational].

The basic types of church polity are:

Episcopal

Presbyterian

Congregational

Episcopal

Episcopal - derived from the Greek word for bishop *episkopos* (occurs 5 times in NT)

epi = over

skopos = look out

Primary spiritual authority is placed with a bishop with several layers of clergy and people beneath him. Found in Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox...

Bishop is viewed as the primary channel by which God expresses his authority on earth.

Viewed as successors to the apostles (Apostolic Succession)

Authority that the first century Apostles had

Christ → Apostles → apostles today

A Bishop's authority transcends that of ordinary ministers.

Objections:

This presumes a clergy-laity distinction which is not biblical.

It is based on Apostolic Succession. This is against the biblical position that the Apostles were a finite group that are gone. Has led to many of the doctrinal aberrations in that church.

Presbyterian - church government by elders

Ecclesiastical decisions are made by elders and ministers in a pyramidal hierarchy. Found in Presbyterian, Lutheran and occasionally Baptists.

Key position is the elder, a position that goes back to the Jewish Synagogue

Elders in the NT - Acts 11:30; 14:23; 20:17

Once elected or appointed by the church, the elders function on behalf of or represent the individual believers. Authority is then exercised in a series of governing assemblies.

Objections:

Rooted in a hierarchy of governing bodies, little support found in scripture.

Governing assemblies are not found in the Bible but local elders are.

Congregational - the local church is "politically" and spiritually autonomous from other congregations (Baptists, Congregationalist, most Lutheran).

Autonomy and democracy

Autonomy = local congregation is independent and self-governing

Based on NT church government - Acts & Epistles primarily focus on the local church

No command to form inter-church unions

Each church is self governing, selects pastor, sets budget etc.

Democracy = every member of the local congregation has a voice

Authority rests with individual members, based on the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9)

Some appointed to positions, but are really representatives and servants of the church

One level of clergy - bishop, elder and pastor are considered different names for the same office

Support for Congregational Polity

Local autonomy seems biblical.

It will be more motivating for high-participation from all the believers. Therefore also easier to raise up leaders.

Objections:

Requires official local church membership rolls. Modeled after democratic ideals.

Gives carnal members equal say in spiritual matters.

What about Xenos?

Started with with a blank slate filled in with New Testament principles. Resulted in a type of blend between Congregational and Presbyterian model with offices of deacon and elder.

We are an elder-led church with a deaconate that has decision making roles (including the choosing of elders). This includes financial matters.

No standing extra-local government - have had occasional “councils”.

Character Qualifications for Deacons

Requirements are relative requiring interpretation, which is primarily the job of the overseers. We are not saying that people have to be perfect in all of these areas, but it does mean they cannot be discredited in any of these areas. Stated positively, a leader is able to inspire people to follow Christ by their lifestyle. Careful to not to set the “bar” to high or too low.

Grace perspective on how to handle areas of character weakness.

- *Acknowledge your weakness to God. Ask Him to help change you and walk in the Spirit.*
- *Acknowledge this weakness to spiritually minded friends in your home group. Give them permission to give unsolicited input.*
- *If possible look to models of strength or those who have dealt with this area successfully.*
- Develop a personal strategy for helping your/your disciple’s struggle in this area. (internet porn example)

Character Qualifications for Deacons Workshop

Instructions:

Break the class into groups and assign specific qualifications for them to discuss. Their 5-minute presentation should answer:

1. Why is this specific quality important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?
2. Develop a personal strategy for helping your/your disciple’s struggle in this area. Find practical steps – for each character weakness there will be keys to success, (internet porn example)

(NOTE: This does not mean – “they need to pray” – that’s a means of growth and is obvious)

The following qualifications are all of a subjective nature, and therefore must be understood as *comparatively* true for deacons, never as *absolutely* true. Also, we recognize that this is our particular interpretation (the author does not elaborate on the meaning), applicable to Xenos Christian Fellowship. The English is taken from the NASB. 1 Timothy 3:8-12

***Not double tongued* means not insincere--not saying one thing to one and something different to another. Not a liar. They are straightforward.**

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

Cannot trust a leader who is prepared to lie.

The leader must be willing to speak the truth even if there is a potential “cost” (EG. Are they unwilling to confront if the person might become defensive?)

People will not have an example/source of inspiration for a courageous integrity.

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple’s life, what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

Learn the principles that apply to the situation and choose to be principle-oriented.

Solicit input from others when dealing with difficult situations (Contra: autonomy, confusing “gossip versus conferral”, etc.).

Confess lies – go back and clean-up your mess...

Not addicted to much wine means no abuse or dependence on any drug--may include regular use of alcohol even though not getting drunk, if inappropriate dependence is demonstrated. There should be a demonstrated freedom not to drink.

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

Difficult to promote dependence on God when you’re chemically dependent.

Irresponsible – difficulty in getting things done, especially when the work is difficult.

It is a bad witness to non-believers.

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple’s life, what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

Identify the times they get drunk – late at night, when depressed.

Calling when they are struggling (accountability and availability).

They need to learn to thank people who speak into their life.

They need to develop a godly response to trials.

They need to develop a sacrificial, victorious love output.

Limit their drinking to times with mature workers – tie to relationships (Qualification: if there is a dependence problem, professional counsel needs be solicited. Some addicts cannot even socially drink).

Not fond of sordid gain. Not willing to manipulate or resort to illegitimate means for personal gain, either for money or recognition (motives to serve), especially in the area of ministry. The person demonstrates a proper values system, including a willingness to give up money-making opportunities for the sake of the gospel.

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

Gross conformity to the culture.

Luke 16 principle – “...not faithful in the little things...” – “Why isn’t our home church growing?” “Why am I ineffective in evangelism?” Might we look no further than

here to discover why God hasn't entrusted more valuable things to us (like peoples' salvation)? Have we been consumed with the economic downturn? Is God showing us we are more focused on money than we should be?

God will challenge our motives for serving him. People who lead in order to be recognized by others are not ultimately serving the Lord and he will reveal this, unwillingness to continue to lead when critiqued about *how* you lead, resentment at being too busy, etc.

Idolatry will be bad for the church (James 4)

Being a good model doesn't ensure the flock will follow, but being a bad one ensures they will...

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple's life, what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

Hold off on handing over responsibility until they can demonstrate progress in this area.

This also implies that the deacon should be giving consistently and sacrificially of his/her money.

They need to invest in ministry. People will never get out of materialism, unless they get involved with ministry.

Financial counseling is often times appropriate.

Holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. "Holding fast" speaks of knowing the Word, and "clear conscience" speaks of doing the Word. This includes having a clear conscience with regard to the service being rendered to the church (i.e. sins of omission are also wrong).

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

Ignorant activist - no spiritual gain without the word at the core.

Ivory tower theologian - knowledge without love

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple's life what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

Study the Bible, take classes, commit to study with a friend, become a reader.

Get used to asking what does the Bible have to say about this.

Don't put the ivory tower teacher into the rotation until they have personal ministry.

Tested first and beyond reproach. Deacons must have a proven ability to do the work of shepherding and service effectively and without any grounds of accusation. In other words, we don't decide that someone is a deacon, we recognize that someone already is a deacon.

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

Leaders failing demoralizes the group and individual

Qualifier: don't use this as an excuse to avoid taking a step of faith

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple's life what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

Learn Luke 14 – seek the lower seat and resist the urge for recognition

***Not malicious gossips.* They demonstrate care not to exaggerate or to abusively speak of others. This implies the ability to keep a secret where appropriate. If the failings of others are shared, it is only with those in a responsible position and for proper reasons.**

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

Kills openness and trust within the community

Leaders have to be able to handle sensitive information in a righteous way.

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple's life what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

They have to apologize

Challenge yourself on sharing information with people

Learn to forgive, resolve conflict and deal with bitterness

Work hard on speaking well of others, especially some one you compete with

***Temperate* comes from a word meaning serious, not given to excess, self-controlled and emotionally stable.**

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

Leaders are under a lot of pressure, so you need a steady hand on the wheel.

Communicates a lack of trust in God

Miss more pressing issues – evangelism, discipleship

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple's life what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

Seek objectivity and God's perspective

Identify and articulate areas where we are not depending on God.

***Faithful in all things* indicates reliability. It implies that we don't have to worry when this person is given a job to do--the deacon will do his/her best.**

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

They will tend to give up when the work gets hard

Flock will disperse – people are looking to us as an example

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple's life what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

Learn to resist change when something becomes distasteful

Husband of one wife. Literally a "one-woman man," this means specifically that there is at most one person of the other sex in the deacon's life. It means in principle that the deacon has his/her sexuality resolved and under control.

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

This includes flirting, porno habits, inappropriate "counseling" of the opposite sex, etc

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple's life what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

For singles – date only committed believers

This includes flirting, porno habits, inappropriate "counseling" of the opposite sex, etc

One who manages his own household well. The primary application is to married men meaning that their family life is good. In the case of the unmarried, it means that they have close relationships and that those relationships are generally healthy and stable. A pattern of broken relationships suggests an inability to get along with others (especially your own family and friends) and disqualifies a would-be deacon.

Why is this important? How would it hurt your home group to have a leader who is disqualified in this area?

Failure at home will sap your strength for ministry like no other failure can

Inability to lead well at home reveals a character weakness that will show up in the church as well.

Can be a negative witness to non-believers

If this is a weakness in your/your disciple's life what steps could you take/suggest to make progress in this area?

Ask for help, input from mature believers

Invest in your family –

Memory Verses

1 Timothy 3 **

Titus 1:5-9 **

Assignment

Read Nee excerpt from *Spiritual Authority* & Stedman article. Briefly write how their views of church leaders' authority differ and your personal critique and conclusions.

Key Points to Know for Exam

1. Argue for female deacons and elders.
2. Argue that deacons should not be limited to physical tasks such as mowing the lawn, dialoguing with Acts 6:1-6.
3. Be familiar with the character qualifications for deacons and the passages where these are found.

Character Qualifications for Elders (NOTE: This is a handout for the class)

Above reproach

(1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6,7)--*anepilempton*: unaccusable; *anegkleton*: unreprouvable

This is the summation of all other characteristics.

Not only the absence of disqualifying factors is in view, but positive things are evident

A good reputation spiritually (Acts 6:3; 16:2).

Husband of one wife

(1 Timothy 3:2)--*mais gunaikos andros*: "one-woman man"

This probably does not refer to polygamy (which was not common in the Roman empire), but rather that sexual morality is an established life-style.

This qualification does not exclude divorcees; present life-style only is in view (as with all of the qualifications).

This includes flirting, porno habits, inappropriate "counseling" of the opposite sex, etc.

Temperate

(1 Tim. 3:2)--*nephalion*: sober

This is the opposite of being mentally and spiritually dense. It is linked with alertness in 1 Thess. 5:6 and 1 Pet. 5:8.

The person has a clear perspective on life, and a correct spiritual orientation.

Prudent

(1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)--*sophrona*: thoughtful, self-controlled, sane

The person is mentally healthy (Mk. 5:15; 2 Cor 5:13).

He has an honest evaluation of himself which involves neither arrogance nor self-hate (Rom. 12:3).

The person evidences the ability to be reasonable, sensible, able to keep one's head (Titus 2:6; 1 Pet. 4:7).

Respectable

(1 Tim. 3:2)--*kosmion*: well-ordered

A habit of orderliness and stability has been established (see 1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:4).

Hospitable

(1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)--*philoxenon*: "lover of strangers"

The person takes a genuine interest in new people. This would include both an outreach orientation and the willingness to open his home to others (Heb. 13:2).

Able to Teach

(1 Tim. 3:2)--*didaktikon*: skilled at teaching

The elder must understand Scripture well enough to be able to effectively exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict (Titus 1:9).

This does not necessitate being a gifted large-group teacher.

"Grounded in the Word" means that the elder can explain and apply biblical concepts in your his words, and discern error when he hears it.

Not Addicted to Wine

(1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)--*me paroinon*: "not lingering over wine"

The person has a demonstrated freedom from drunkenness, or substance abuse. There is no dependence on alcohol or other drugs.

Able to give up freedom to avoid stumbling a weaker brother (1 Cor. 8)

Not self-willed

(Titus 1:7)--*me authade*: not a usurper

This is linked with rebelliousness in 2 Pet. 2:10, and with usurpation of rightful authority in 1 Tim. 2:12.

There should be a proven ability to defer to others.

Avoids a "my way or the highway;" attitude.

To "defer" means that you actively get behind the others' way and help it to succeed.

Implies he is able to apologize

Not quick-tempered

(Titus 1:7)--*me orgilon*: not inclined to anger

The person is not vengeful or violent, brooding or bitter (see Eph. 4:29,31), especially when he doesn't get his own way.

When Moses struck the rock (Num. 20) he was refused entry into Canaan. When leaders misrepresent God by making him seem more angry than he really is, it's a serious thing (Jas. 1:19,20)

Leaders may get angry, but they should be slow to anger rather than having a short fuse.

The leader must be under control, avoiding violent outbursts

Elders must be able to drop offenses, not hold onto them

Not pugnacious

(Titus 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:3)--*me plekten*: not a striker

The person is not prone to physical or verbal abuse (i.e. slander, put-downs, etc.)

Not a fighter

Gentle

(1 Tim. 3:3)--*epieike*: gracious, forbearing

The person is not unduly rigorous or legalistic in his treatment of people.

He is kind, empathetic and patient with all people.

The opposite of quick-tempered, or pugnacious.

People are fragile. We need to consider how our words and actions will affect them. See 2 Tim. 2:24,25; 1 Thess. 2:7; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:12,13; 1 Tim. 6:11; Gal. 5:22,23; Jas. 3:17.

Uncontentious

(1 Tim. 3:3)--*amachon*: peaceable

This means not looking for ways to disagree or oppose; not loving to fight or quarrel.

The person possesses a positive and constructive point of view.

This is the opposite of being self-willed.

Free From the Love of Money

(1 Tim. 3:3)--*aphilagruron*: not greedy

This means the ability to be content with what one has materially (1 Tim. 6:8).

The person is not motivated by financial considerations in ministry goals (see Acts 20:33)

True love for Christ and his work will become eclipsed by greed (see Mat. 6:24). Our day is replete with newsy examples of the error of money-love in the church.

See 1 Tim. 6:6-11,17-19. Mature elders should give away much to others, and should live a simple life-style in order to curb temptation.

Manages own household well

(1 Tim. 3:4,5; Titus 1:6)--*prohistemenon*: to stand before; manage; to lead, used of an army commander standing before his men

This is a demonstrated ability to lead spiritually and effectively in marriage and/or a rooming situation

The elder's family should respect him and voluntarily follow his leadership

Examining one's family life tends to ensure that the person is spiritually authentic and not two-faced.

Christian leader's first responsibility is to their own family. Prioritizing and practicing biblical principles with family and home is crucial in cooperating with God

Not a new convert

(1 Tim. 3:6)--*me neophuton*: "newly planted"

The person has been a walking Christian long enough to be tested by God (see 1 Tim. 3:10)

The person should have experienced success without becoming conceited

Having a good reputation with those outside

(1 Tim. 3:7)--*exotheren*: used by Paul for non-Christians (Col. 4:5)

Non-Christians are unable to discredit the person.

They speak well of him generally, and accusations are easily exposed as false (1 Pet. 3:16).

The person is spiritually authentic and not two-faced. This has important, obvious implications for evangelism.

The elder resists a Christian ghetto mentality, and fosters a constant awareness of the watching world

Loving what is good

(Titus 1:8)--*philagathon*:= loving good

The person's lifestyle demonstrates that God's way is enjoyed (see Rom. 12:2)

There is no questionable dichotomy between the person's recreational life and ministry

Just

(Titus 1:8)--*dikiaon*:

The person is fair and impartial in his dealings with people (1 Tim. 5:21).

When favoritism and particular biases are adopted, the biblical concepts of righteousness and goodness fade, and with that, God's agenda and priorities.

To gain victory in this area, one must be well aware of what his own bias tendencies are, and must resist those in favor of biblical truth

Devout

(Titus 1:8)--*hosion*: Practical seriousness and zeal for God's will

A single-mindedness for God and His work.