

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

Introduction

Leadership matters...

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

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

Offices in the New Testament

Elders

Elders vs. Bishops

Acts 20:17,28

Titus 1:5,7

"Elder" comes from the word *presbeuteros*

"Bishop" comes from the word *episkopos*

Shepherding role =

- Provide
- Protect
- Direct

Plurality of eldership

Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:2

Why is plurality important?

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The qualifications for elders generally fall into three categories

1.

John 10:4

We don't bestow the title of "leader;" we recognize those who are already leading.

2.

1 Timothy 3:2

Titus 1:9

3.

What about female eldership?

There is no clear evidence of female elders in the New Testament. Why is this?

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

The only New Testament passage that seems to provide a theological reason for prohibiting female elders is 1 Tim. 2:12-15.

- Traditional/theological interpretation

- Historical interpretation

Additional evidence that women should have as much ministry freedom as possible:

- Gal. 3:28
- Paul's implementation of Gal. 3:28 (women teaching, prophesying, leading as deacons, etc.)

Deacons

The function of the deacon

Acts 6:1-6

However

Requirements for Deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-15)

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

Different from elders' requirements:

- Level of ability in biblical instruction
- Amount of time as a Christian

Servant team nomination process

What about Female deacons? 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

diakonos

prostasis: derivative of *prohistami*,

(Romans 12:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 3:4,5,12; 1 Timothy 5:17)

First person mentioned in a list of key workers and leaders

Why would there be requirements for deacons wives . . . ?

Types of Church Polity

Episcopal

Presbyterian

Congregational

What about Xenos?

Character Qualifications for Deacons

The requirements are relative, requiring interpretation.

Grace perspective on how to handle areas of character weakness.

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Character Qualifications for Deacons Workshop

Instructions:

Discuss the specific qualification(s) assigned to your group. Your 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.

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, applicable to Xenos Christian Fellowship. The wording from the NASB is used - 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?

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

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?

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

Not fond of sordid gain. Not willing to manipulate or resort to illegitimate means for personal gain, either for money or recognition, 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?

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

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?

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

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?

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

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?

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

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?

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

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?

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

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?

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

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?

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

Memory Verses

1 Tim. 3**

Titus 1:5-9**

Assignment

Read Nee excerpt from *Spiritual Authority* and 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.