

Qualifications of Worship Leaders

Key Verse: “*Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*”
—*I Timothy 3:9*

Selected Scripture:
I Timothy 3:1-13

AS WE SEE IN THE WORLD

today, many religious teachers are preaching themselves rather than preaching the Gospel—the good tidings of the kingdom. They are seeking to be heads of churches, instead of having all of the members of the body look directly to the Lord as their head. The Apostle Paul observed these same things with respect to the religious leaders of his day. He speaks of their “having a form of godliness,” but denying its power. (II Tim. 3:5) They were great proponents of days, forms, ceremonies, special authorities, and for being highly esteemed among men. According to the Apostle, these things were, and are, displeasing in the sight of the Heavenly Father. The true followers of the Lord, as his sheep, must not only be careful to recognize the voice of their Shepherd and follow him, but they must also remember to follow only those who are approved by the Lord.

The Lord has given to us in the Scriptures the necessary qualifications of all who desire to be leaders in the church. The scriptural account in I Timothy 3:1, uses the expression, “the office of a bishop.” This should be understood to refer to an overseer, or an elder, and not to the exalted position historically associated with that word.

The Apostle Paul says, “not a novice.” (vs. 6) This clearly shows us that a leader should not be an inexperienced or untried person, but should be a student of the Word, well-founded and settled. For this reason, everyone who is deemed worthy to serve those in the church as elder should be sufficiently matured and well known by its members to justify this confidence.

Paul gives very explicit advice concerning whom an ecclesia, or church, might properly recognize for the humble position of an elder. He describes in detail what should be the candidate’s character and fitness to serve the church. In his letter to Timothy on this subject, he details the qualifications, making sure that there can be no doubt concerning what these are. In addressing Titus also (Titus 1:5-11), he describes again an elder’s duties toward the church. The Apostle Peter, on the subject, says, “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, . . . Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof; . . . not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”—I Pet. 5:1-3

Elders should be generous men, men of pure lives, having no more than one wife; and if they have children it should be easily noted that they have had a positive influence on them. They are not to be double-tongued or deceptive, and not a brawler or a contentious person. They should also have a good reputation outside of the church. This is not to say that the world would ever come to love or appreciate those who are sacrificing saints of God, but that nothing derogatory could be said of them concerning their characters. They should be honest, upright, moral, and truthful.—I Tim. 3:2-8

The qualifications of these overseers are so important because they are ‘holding the mystery of the faith.’ They have been given the keys to understand the divine plan of the ages. They have an understanding through the Holy Spirit of “the deep things of God.”—I Cor. 2:10 ■