



# Biblical Qualifications

## THE PASTOR'S COUNCIL

The Apostle Paul identifies nine qualifications for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. We list seven below. Not all might be applicable to you at this stage of life. Whereas the Bible charges elders with the tasks of teaching and leading the church, the deacons' role is more service-oriented. That is, they are to care for the physical or temporal concerns of the church. By handling such matters, deacons free up the Pastors to focus on shepherding the spiritual needs of the congregation. Yet even though deacons are not the congregation's spiritual leaders, their character is of utmost importance, which is why deacons should be examined and held to the biblical qualifications laid down in...

### 1 Timothy 3

**1. Dignified (v. 8):** This term normally refers to something that is honourable, respectable, esteemed, or worthy, and is closely related to "respectable," which is given as a qualification for elders (1 Tim. 3:2).

**2. Not double-tongued (v. 8):** Those who are double-tongued say one thing to certain people but then say something else to others, or say one thing but mean another. They are two-faced and insincere. Their words cannot be trusted, so they lack credibility.

**3. Not addicted to much wine (v. 8):** A man or woman is disqualified for the office of deacon if they are addicted to wine or other strong drink/substance. Such a person lacks self-control and is undisciplined.

**4. Not greedy for dishonest gain (v. 8):** If a person is a lover of money, they are not qualified to be a deacon, especially since deacons often handle financial matters for the church.

**5. Sound in faith and life (v. 9):** Paul also indicates that a deacon must "hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience." The phrase "the mystery of the faith" is simply one way Paul speaks of the gospel (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16). Consequently, this statement refers to the need for deacons to hold firm to the true gospel without wavering. Yet this qualification does not merely involve one's beliefs, for they must also hold these beliefs "with a clear conscience." That is, the behaviour of a deacon must be consistent with their beliefs.

**6. Blameless (v. 10):** Paul writes that deacons must "be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless" (v. 10). "Blameless" is a general term referring to a person's overall character. Although Paul does not specify what type of testing is to take place, at a minimum, the candidate's personal background, reputation, and theological positions should be examined. Moreover, the congregation should not only examine a potential deacon's moral, spiritual, and doctrinal maturity but should also consider the person's track record of service in the church.

**7. Marriage/Family (v. 11-12):** A deacon must love, lead and lift his spouse and family well. Like her husband or vice versa, the spouse must be dignified or respectable. All in on building Lifecentre. Secondly, they must not be a slanderer or a person who goes around spreading gossip. A deacon's spouse must also be sober-minded or temperate.



## **Additional Scriptures**

### **Titus 1:6-9**

An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

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### **Galatians 5:16-29**

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

*Adapted by an article by Benjamin Merkle appearing on the 9Marks website in in March 2010. Merkle is a professor of New Testament and Greek at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.*