

## I TIMOTHY 3:1-7

We noted in chapter two that men are to be praying as members of a local assembly and that this requires a right relationship with God and with others.

We also noted that women are to be evidencing submission. This is to be evidenced in the way they dress and the quiet manner in which they serve.

Now we come to the leaders in a local assembly. Notice while there are people used in various positions in the ministry of a local church there are only two offices in the local N.T. church - pastor and deacons.

We note there are two responsibilities involved here. Those who serve in these positions must fulfill certain qualifications and members of a local assembly should follow. Biblically the pastor is to be the leader, the deacons are to assist him in the ministry and the members are to follow God's undershepherd. Hebrews 13:7,17 makes this mandate clear.

Notice there are two problems associated with leadership in the local church. There is the problem of individuals not meeting the qualifications as leaders and then there are those who will not submit to pastoral leadership and will not follow the leader in a local church.

In verses 1-7 we are given the qualifications which a pastor must meet to serve as the leader in a local church.

V - 1. The word "bishop" means "overseer" and has to do with overseeing the work which is done in a local church.

There are two other terms given in the N.T. which describe the leader. The word "elder" means a mature individual and has to do with spiritual maturity.

If you will compare this list with Titus 1:5-9 you will see that bishop and elder is referring to the same person to fulfill one certain position.

The other word used in the N.T. for the leader is "pastor" and it means "shepherd" and has to do with his work of feeding and caring for the flock of God's children.

Verses 2 - 7 set forth some 16 qualifications which must be met for a person to serve as the leader in a local assembly.

V -2. A bishop or pastor must be "blameless." This word means "not to be laid hold of." In other words if an accusation is raised no evidence can be laid hold of to substantiate the accusation. It has the idea of a person whose life is above reproach.

The husband of one wife. This immediately rules out women to serve as preachers and pastors (church sign: Pastors Mr. & Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_).

Some take this to mean that a pastor must be married but this would rule out young unmarried men such as Timothy and Titus who served in this position.

Some take this to mean that a pastor is to have one wife at a time and not be a polygamist. But a polygamist would not have been accepted into a local church in the first place.

Notice a pastor's homelife is addressed in this passage and one's ability to manage the affairs of a local church is predicated upon one's ability to manage his own marriage and homelife.

"The husband of one wife" means that a pastor must not be divorced and remarried. This meaning is substantiated in I Tim. 5:9. Where it refers to widows who are to be enrolled for church care. They have to be "the wife of one man."

Notice this requirement does not prohibit dedicated Christians who have been divorced and remarried from serving in other positions in the local church.

They are prohibited however from serving as pastors or deacons.

Let me also address the issue of divorced persons serving as teachers. Some people attempt to impose standards which are not laid down in the N.T.

V-2. The word "vigilant" means "temperate" or one who avoids extremes and keeps his head about things.

V-2. "Sober" means "sober-minded" or one who thinks clearly and seriously about spiritual things and is not frivolous about eternal matters. To some people everything is a joke.

V-2. "Of good behavior" means "orderly" and is the same word meaning modesty in I Tim. 2:9. It means a pastor is to be one who is organized in his thinking and living as well as in his teaching and preaching.

V-2. "given to hospitality" means a "lover of strangers." This was especially important in N.T. days as believers tracked from place to place. Likewise a pastor is to be willing to take others in and help them by making his home a part of his ministry.

V-2. "apt to teach" means one who is qualified to teach. Eph. 4:11 substantiates that a pastor is to be a teacher or one who can rightly divide the Word of God. Someone has said - "the pastor who is lazy in his study is a disgrace in the pulpit."

V-3. "not given to wine" describes a person who sits long with the wine and drinks to an excess and is addicted.

From other N.T. Scriptures it is clear that total abstinence was not demanded in that area for believers. Because Timothy was exhorted to drink a little wine for medicinal purposes (I Tim. 5:23) and some of the Corinthian believers got drunk at their love feast (I Cor.11:21).

There are three things we need to note in this connection. First it was the practice of the Jews to dilute their wine to prevent intoxication. Secondly, there is a vast difference between drinking diluted wine in Bible days and supporting the alcohol industry of our day. One's testimony has to be considered also. Drinking leads to quarreling, fighting, broken homes, and loss of lives. In a culture such as ours where water is made safe to drink, there should be no place for wine in the believer's life.

V-3. "no striker" means a pastor is not to be a violent person who loses his temper and strikes out at others.

V-3. "not greedy for filthy lucre" means greed for money should not characterize a pastor. People greedy for money will lie, cheat, and steal to acquire more money. (one pastor took a church for more money with stipulations on his preaching).

V-3) "patient" literally means "gentle" and means that a pastor should be able to take criticism without reacting and retaliating.

V-3. "not a brawler" means being uncontentious and being a peace-maker instead of a trouble-maker. Someone has said "short tempers do not make for long ministries."

V-3. "not covetous" means not fond of money. Here the emphasis is on love for money rather than spiritual things.

V-4-5. Intimates that a pastor must have a godly homelife. This means his children under his rule in the home should be in subjection. This also means a pastor cannot be one thing at church and another thing at home. He must have a consistent life and rule or govern his home in a godly fashion.

V-5. We see here a question of comparison is used to argue the point. If a man can't lovingly govern a small number who are his own flesh and blood, how can he govern a larger number who are his brothers and sisters in Christ?

Note the words "take care of " is used in the parable of the good Samaritan and suggests the kind of personal ministry a pastor is to have in meeting the needs of these in the church.

V-6. "not a novice" means a pastor can't be a new convert or a person who is young in the faith. The reason is given why not. Without time to mature in spiritual things he could be lifted up by pride as the devil was and bring reproach upon the Lord.

V-7. Points out that a pastor must have a good testimony outside the church. Does he pay his bills? Does he have a good reputation with whom he does business? (one pastor: they hated to see him come into their place of business).

Someone has said that the snare of the devil lays hold of those whose lives are not consistent with their profession then it holds them up to ridicule and contempt before others.

In conclusion it must be that some don't meet the qualifications laid down for pastors in the local church. Women don't - and neither do many who choose the ministry as a profession are not called of God.

The point that members need to see is that a pastor is a gift to the local church (Eph. 4:11). God has called him to lead by his example and to teach and care for the flock as a good shepherd would do.

The question is are you willing to follow the leader in your local church. Some won't refer to their leader as pastor. Some won't pray for their pastor. And some won't follow the example he sets or take heed to his biblical exhortations. What about you?