

Elders, Deacons and the Headship of Christ

1 Timothy 3:1-13
October 10, 2021

MAIN POINT: Elders are to be men of Christ-like character who are to be servant-leaders in the church, and deacons are to be men of Christ-like character who are to be leading-servants in the church. Both elders and deacons, along with the whole body of Christ, are to sit in glad submission to Jesus, the Head of the Church.

I. SERVANT-LEADERS IN THE CHURCH (vv. 1-7)

- **The Nobility of the Office of Overseer (1 Tim. 3:1)**
 - Overseer, elder, and pastor are different titles for the same office (cf. Acts 20:28; Titus 1:6-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
 - Overseer and pastor describe the what of the office, while elder describes the who of the office.
- **The Character and Capability of Elders (1 Tim. 3:2-7)**
 - The character of elders is preeminent in this list.
 - Elders must be capable of teaching, and that to the church (cf. Titus 1:9).
 - This consists of teaching sound doctrine that accords with the glorious gospel, and refuting those who teach contrary to it.
 - As elders teach soundly, conduct themselves in an exemplary Christ-like way, and serve with pastoral sensitivity, the church is called to submit to their leadership (cf. Heb. 13:7, 17).

II. LEADING-SERVANTS IN THE CHURCH (vv. 8-13)

- **The Office of Deacon is One of Service (1 Tim. 3:8; cf. Acts 6:1-7; Phil. 1:1)**
 - The noun “deacon” literally means “servant,” and the verbal form of deacon means “to serve.”
 - Jesus Christ is described as a servant (Rom. 15:8), Paul and Apollos are described as servants (1 Cor. 3:5), and all followers of Jesus Christ are to have the posture of servants (cf. Matt. 20:26).
 - While the office of deacon is unique, “deaconing” should be the posture of God’s people.

- **The Character and Capability of Deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13)**
 - Similar character is seen between deacons and elders (cf. Titus 1:5-9).
 - The capability of deacons is holding the mystery of the faith rather than being able to teach, which is distinctly said of elders.
 - Why does Paul mention deacons’ wives in v. 11?
 - Mercy ministries would likely require, at times, the assistance of deacons’ wives, thus requiring their godly character.

III. THE HEADSHIP OF JESUS OVER THE CHURCH (Col. 1:18-20; 1 Peter 5:1-5)

- **The Whole Church Sits in Submission to Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18-20)**
- **Elders and Deacons Must Sit in Glad Submission to Christ Jesus, the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4)**

RECOMMENDED READING:

Biblical Eldership by Alexander Strauch
Minister of Mercy: The New Testament Deacon by Alexander Strauch