

# 1 Timothy 3 - Godliness in the Ecclesia

## 3v1-7 Selection of Ecclesial Overseers (Bishops/Elders):

2nd faithful saying, cp. 1v15

**Bishop:** Gk. *episcopus*, means an overseer. Elsewhere they are called "Elders", overseeing the ecclesia: **1 Pet 5v1-2**.

These are fundamental issues of character (v2 "must be...")

Bishops are teachers: **v2**.

Deacons have a different, but vital role of serving (v8-13).

It is fundamental that Ecclesial elders have faithful children and stable homes: **Titus 1v5-9**

## The Importance of Faithful and Godly Ecclesial Shepherds:

Bishops are shepherds who feed the flock and who warn of danger: **Acts 20v28-32; 1 Peter 5v1-4**. They follow in Christ's footsteps. Christ is our "chief shepherd": **1 Pet 2v25**. Elders don't boss others around. Rather they lead by example. Shepherds are **watchmen** who look for danger and protect the flock from wolves: **Mic 2v12; 4v8; Ezek 33v3-9; 1 Cor 14v8**. David and Moses learned by experience as shepherds to care for Israel: **Psa 77v20; 78 v70-72**. Paul tells Titus that he is to appoint elders in each city: **Titus 1v5**. Elders appointed in every ecclesia: **Acts 14v23; 1 Thess 5v12**. Elders are to be servants as Christ: **2 Tim 2v24-26; Lk 22v26-27**.

**v2 One wife:** Literally means "a man of one woman" ie. faithful

**Sober:** Self-restrained, self-controlled, tr. "discreet" in **Titus 2v5**.

**Hospitality:** Literally means "to love strangers". He doesn't just spend time with his close friends. He invites others in. He thinks outwardly. He cares for the lonely. See also **Titus 1v8; Rom 12v13; Heb 13v1-2; 1 Pet 4v8-9**. Are we willing to go out of our comfort zone to reach out to the lonely? **These are vital lessons!**

**Able to teach:** Also in **2 Tim 2v24**. In Malachi's day, the priests led the people astray and were condemned for it: **Mal 2v7-8**.

**v3 Not given to wine:** Many examples where alcohol resulted in tragedy: Noah (**Gen 9v18-27**); Lot (**Gen 19v30-38**); Amnon (**2 Sam 13v28-29**). **Prov 31v4-5** "It is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes, strong drink, lest they drink and forget the law."

**Greedy of filthy lucre:** See **Prov 15v27; 1 Pet 5v2, 1 Tim 6v10**.

**Patient:** **1 Cor 13v4** "Love suffers long", also **Lam 3v26**.

**Not a brawler:** Same as in **Titus 3v2**. NIV "not violent but gentle"

**v4** NIV "he must manage his family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect". He does not exasperate his children, but carefully educates and trains them in Godly ways: **Col 3v12; Eph 6v4; Prov 22v6**. **Key Verse: 1 Cor 4v15:** "ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet **not many fathers.**"

## CHAPTER 3.

<sup>a</sup> Qualifications of bishops and deacons. <sup>15</sup> Of the church, and the blessed truth taught therein.

**T**HIS is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

<sup>2</sup> **A** bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

<sup>3</sup> Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

<sup>4</sup> One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

<sup>5</sup> (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall

**v5 Rule his own house:** Managing the home with care, love and discipline: **Heb 12v9-13** (quoting **Isa 35v3-4**, a vision of the saints' role in the Kingdom). Eldership is much more than being a teacher. More importantly it is being a father to God's family. Managing one's family is therefore an ideal grounding for the ecclesial role. Illogical that brethren lead the ecclesia when their own children are unruly or disrespectful: **Titus 1v6**.

**Take care:** Only other place this is found is **Luke 10v34-35**, the good Samaritan binding up a stranger's wounds with compassion.

**v6 Novice:** NIV "not be a recent convert". Literally means a "young and tender plant" without roots, cp. **Eph 3v17, Col 2v7**. Plants symbolise converts to the Truth: **Matt 15v13, 1 Cor 3v6,7**. **Lifted up:** Pride is a terrible thing and must always be guarded against: **Prov 16v18; 18v12; 29v23**.

**v7** NIV "he must also have a good reputation with outsiders". This is another dimension. Are our ecclesial shepherds respected as decent and honest in their workplaces and in the community? **Matt 5v16**. **The devil:** NIV "into the devil's trap". Gk. *diabolos*. Ungodly human desires that produce sin. Translated "false accuser" in **Titus 2v3; 2 Tim 3v3** and "slanderers" in **1 Tim 3v11**. The devil will be eventually destroyed: **Rev 20v10-11**.

## 3v8-13 Ecclesial Servants (Deacons):

**Deacon:** Literally means a "servant". Not a teaching or oversight role. Translated as "minister" in **Matt 20v28; 27v55** and "serve" in **Lk 22v26-27**. Most of the qualifications of deacons are the same as bishops in **v2-4**. Includes the "serving" of tables: **Acts 6v2**.

**Double-tongued:** Saying one thing to one person, something else to another: **Jms 1v8**.

**v9-12 Mystery of the Faith:** Once hidden, but now revealed to true believers: **Rom 16v25-26; Eph 3v3-6**. This one true faith was ultimately revealed in Christ's life: **1 Tim 3v16; Heb 1v1-3; Rev 1v1**. **Pure conscience:** Contrast with "seared conscience" in **4v2**. Based on knowledge of God's word: **2 Cor 4v6-7**, cp. **Titus 1v15**. A pure conscience is from a pure heart: **Psa 24v3,4; Matt 5v8; 1 Tim 1v5; Jms 3v17**. **Proved:** purified, tested as metal in fire, cp. **v6**. **Even so:** "likewise". Wives play a vital supporting role. **Slanderers:** Same Gk word as *devil* in **v7** (*diabolos*). **Husbands/houses:** Father's role, as in **v2,4**.

**v13** If we serve now we will serve in God's Kingdom ("purchase" means "gain")

he take care of the church of God?)

<sup>6</sup> Not <sup>a</sup> novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

<sup>7</sup> Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and <sup>d</sup>the snare of the devil.

<sup>8</sup> Likewise must the deacons be <sup>f</sup>grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

<sup>9</sup> Holding the mystery of the faith in <sup>a</sup> pure conscience.

<sup>10</sup> And <sup>h</sup>let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

<sup>11</sup> Even so must their wives be grave, not <sup>m</sup>slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

<sup>12</sup> Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

<sup>13</sup> For they that have <sup>i</sup>used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

<sup>14</sup> These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

<sup>15</sup> But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in <sup>p</sup>the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and <sup>q</sup>ground of the truth.

<sup>16</sup> And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was <sup>r</sup>manifest <sup>s</sup>in the flesh, <sup>t</sup>justified in the Spirit, <sup>u</sup>seen of angels, <sup>v</sup>preached unto the Gentiles, <sup>x</sup>believed on in the world, <sup>b</sup>received up into glory.

**v15 Tarry long:** NIV "If I am delayed". **Behave:** To be active. **House of God:** God's family: **Num 12v7; 1 Pet 4v17; Heb 3v6; 10v21**. We are a spiritual house of living stones: **1 Pet 2v4-8**. Christ is the chief cornerstone: **Eph 2v20-21**. **Ecclesia:** Called out ones: **Acts 15v14; Rev 18v4**. **Pillar:** In **Gen 28v18** Jacob set up a pillar which represented Christ. "Holy City", "temple" and "New Jerusalem" are also symbols of believers in immortality: **1 Cor 3v16; 2 Cor 6v16; Rev 11v1-2; 21v2**. **Living God:** **2 Cor 6v16; 1 Thess 1v9**. **Ground:** tr. "stedfast" in **1 Cor 15v58**, "settled" in **Col 1v23**, ie. stability!

**v16 Mystery of Godliness:** The revealing of Christ. Also, development of the perfect and unified body of Christ. The powerful influence of God's Word revealed in **the character** of believers. Godliness is a key theme: **1 Tim 2v2,10; 3v16; 4v7,8; 6v3,5,6,11**. **1. In the flesh:** The Word made flesh: **Jn 1v14**; **2. Justified in Spirit:** Christ's resurrection: **Rom 1v4**; **3. Seen of angels:** Angels at the tomb: **Mk 16v5** and Christ's disciples (messengers): **Mk 16v9-14**. **4. Preached:** **Mark 16v16; Rom 16v26**. **5. Believed:** All nations, languages: **Rev 14v5-6**. **6. Received into glory:** Jesus into heaven: **Psa 110v1**, Saints in Kingdom: **Rom 8v29-30; 1 Jn 3v2**.

## Jesus Christ – Father and Shepherd:

Shepherds in Israel used a rod to mark sheep with a red dye to number them. Similarly, Jesus knows **all** his sheep **by name**: **Jn 10v2-4**. He cares for **each** of his sheep **personally**. A shepherd cares for the ecclesia when it is threatened: **John 10v10-16**. Jesus is the **father** of the future age: **Isa 9v6; Matt 23v37**. Being like God is what it means to "**know the Father**": **Ex 34v5-8; Psa 103v7-13; Jn 10v15**.

## These character attributes are vital for all of us:

**1 Cor 4v15**. We can all live out these **principles**. There are always younger ones looking up to us. If we love Christ we will feed his **lambs** and **sheep**: **Psa 23v1-6; Jn 21v15-17**. A father cares, loves, nurtures, protects: **Isa 40v11** (links shepherds and fathers, also **Matt 18v3-14**). **Isaiah 49v15** likens Yahweh to a mother feeding a child. **Hosea 11v3** likens Him to a dad teaching his child to walk. Elijah was a father to Elisha: **2 Kings 2v12**. Paul called Timothy his "beloved son": **2 Tim 1v2**.

**Colour code:** Blue (God & Jesus); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words & phrases); Purple (return of Jews to the land); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for Study Week 2010.

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