

Qualifications for Deacons

In General

Tested . . . beyond reproach (1 Tim. 3:10). Before a man is asked to serve as a deacon, he is to be observed over a period of time to see if he is qualified for that ministry. If he is found to be beyond reproach (if there are no violations in the qualities needed to serve), he may then be chosen to serve as a deacon. This is a warning against hastily choosing men for ministry for whatever reason (the pressure of needs, to fill a quota, etc.). Time is needed so his qualifications can become clearly apparent.

As to God and His Word

Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (1 Tim. 3:8). “The mystery of the faith” refers to the body of Christian doctrine to which we hold (believe and live by) through faith. “With a clear conscience” means he seeks to honestly live by the truths of Scripture. He keeps short accounts with God.

As to Self

(1) *Men of dignity* (1 Tim. 3:8). He is one who takes his life and work seriously as a part of his devotion to the Lord. He has a vision for his life’s purpose.

(2) *Not double tongued* (1 Tim. 3:8). He is not a hypocrite who says one thing to one person and something contradictory to another. He speaks the truth, is honest. He does not destroy his credibility by words that are contradictory.

As to Things

(1) *Not addicted to much wine* (1 Tim. 3:8). Is he free from any form of substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, etc.) or any kind of addiction which might take control of his life, cause belligerent and irresponsible behavior, and cause weaker Christians to stumble (Rom. 14:13-21)?

(2) *Not fond of sordid gain* (1 Tim. 3:8). As with an elder, he must not use the office for personal gain, or be controlled by the desire for material wealth. Wrong motives kill a man’s ability to serve the Lord and love others. He cannot serve God and mammon or self-seeking goals.

As to Family

(1) *A husband of one wife* (1 Tim. 3:12). Literally, a one-woman man. He is a man totally devoted and faithful to his own wife so that he is not distracted by other women?

(2) *Good managers of their children and their own households* (1 Tim. 3:12). Does his wife love, respect, and follow his leadership, and are his children under control, respectful of authority, and responding positively to God?

There is one word which truly summarizes these qualifications. It’s the word **SERVANT**. A deacon, as with an elder, is to be a servant of God and a servant of men (Mark 10:43-45).

Taken from Qualifications for the Evaluation of Elders and Deacons by J. Hampton Keathley.