



## **1 Timothy 3: Being Led Into God's Truth, 25-26 February**

### **Personal Preparation 1**

#### **Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13**

From reading this passage, are you able to tell much about the difference in duties between an 'overseer' and a 'deacon'?

If the main focus isn't so much on their duties, what is the big focus in this chapter?

From your experience/observation of churches, what titles are given to different types of leaders today? Try to list as many as possible.

There are two things to consider when we come to the topic of church leadership structures today. Firstly, the letters of the New Testament don't come to us like a church manual with each role neatly explained alongside a list of their duties. Secondly, in the New Testament there seems to be an overlap in words used for church leaders. For instance, the word 'overseer' is the word that some churches take to mean a distinct level of leadership – 'bishop'. But that same overseer word is used to describe the leaders of the Ephesian church (Acts 20:28), who are also called 'elders' (Acts 20:17).

Within the Presbyterian system, there are two men at freshchurch who have been made elders – Steve Buchanan and Garnet Swann. Garnet has the overall responsibility for teaching and is paid so he can focus on all the duties of church leadership.

## Group Discussion

Share with the group a memorable time when either you were interviewed for a job or you were part of the interviewing process? Were questions answered badly? Was there a lot of nervousness? Did it all go smoothly and the job was given on the spot? etc.

1 Timothy 3 offers the qualities that are needed for a person to take on the 'job' of an overseer/elder or a 'deacon' in the church. Chapter 3 tells us how we are to pick the right man for the job.

### Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7

1. Verse 1 starts with 'Here is a trustworthy saying' – in other words, here is something well worth remembering and following – in this case, 'If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.' Why do you think being an overseer is a noble task? ie. a job well worth doing?

2. Filling in the table below – work out what are the necessary qualities for a person to be an elder.

What an overseer must be like	What an overseer must not be like

3. As you go through that list, are there any particular qualities that surprise you or that you don't often think about as necessary characteristics needed for a church leader?

4. Most of the qualifications for an overseer are about character rather than skill, but what is the one skill that is mentioned?

5. Why is this skill so important?

6. If the overseer is not temperate and self-controlled, what ungodly 'uncontrolled' characteristics can come out?

7. Do you think such ungodliness is a danger for church leaders today? Why?

8. What is the measure of an overseer's ability to manage his family?

9. Why is this a good measure of his ability to manage God's family, the church?

Note: In verse 6, Paul tells us that the overseer must not be a recent convert. It doesn't mean that the elder needs to be 'elderly' or older than any other particular person, but he must have Christian maturity.

### **Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13**

The word for 'deacons' in verse 8 comes from the word 'servants'. For many, 'servant' might not sound like an impressive job title, but that was the role that Jesus took on himself. We're not really sure what the role of these deacons were, but it appears they had a support role to the elders. Acts 6:1-7 mentions the choosing of seven men who would help with the daily distribution of food. Maybe the deacons' role included this type of compassionate care.

10. In their qualifications, what is similar about the overseers and deacons?

11. Why do you think character is so important in church leadership?

12. According to verses 14-15, why is Paul writing these instructions to Timothy?

13. Paul has been showing Timothy the type of godliness that is needed in church leaders, but according to Paul, where do we look to know what godliness looks like?

Please pray for Christian leaders.