

## Ministry Qualifications and Evidence

Recently we have looked at what are commonly called the “five-fold ministries”, or office-gifts in the church, specified in Eph. 4:11 – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (aka bishops, elders), and teachers. We looked at what they are, and how they are called and recognized, their different functions and common purpose.

Now we should look at the qualifications for these ministries. **We should look at these qualifications not merely as a checklist for ministry candidates, but as the norms of Christian behavior that should be in every one of us.**

### Qualifications for Pastor/Bishop/Elder

1 Tim. 3:1-7 – “If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be ...”

Trait	Comment
Blameless	Not altogether perfect, or nobody would qualify, but there must be no glaring moral inconsistencies that would invite accusations, suspicions, or ridicule.
The husband of one wife	Obviously not a polygamist, but also not a “serial husband” through divorce. This does not preclude a man from being a pastor if he is a widower who remarries. Basically it means that he has a valid marriage and is therefore less likely to fall under sexual temptations. Celibacy as a requirement for ministry is not only unscriptural, but dangerous, as we have seen in the Catholic church the last few years. Perhaps people pay more attention to the “one wife” part than on the fact that he should be a married man.
Vigilant	Paying attention to the spiritual needs of the flock, as well as to possible dangers coming from the world or from outside religious impostors.
Sober	Thoughtful, calm, grave, serious. Not flighty or inclined to speak or act rashly.
Of good behaviour	(Obvious)
Given to hospitality	Not stingy, but generous and open in his household and community
Apt to teach	Not “apt” as in “likely to”, but as in “able, proficient, knowledgeable”. While he has different and broader responsibilities than a teacher, obviously teaching should be a large part of the pastoral role.
Not given to wine	Doesn’t mean total abstinence. 1 Tim. 5:23 – “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake, and thine often infirmities.” But there is a difference between “a little wine” and a lot of beer or whiskey. However much a man drinks, it must never be enough to make him drunk or impaired. He would be not only unable to lead others, but would become an evil example for them to follow, or would bring reproach on the name of Christ.
No striker	Not one who impulsively resorts to physical and violent force. As a pastor, he must use persuasion, not force.
Not greedy of filthy lucre	Not motivated by the love of money, or inclined to use immoral means of obtaining funds. Some “pastors” are seeking to have the biggest and fanciest church building and grounds, more than spiritual growth and vitality.
Patient	Especially important when dealing with church members. He shouldn’t lash out in exasperation at the foolish or ignorant. 2 Tim. 2:24-26
Not a brawler	Some men actually enjoy getting into a fight and duking it out. Not a pastor.
Not covetous	Covetousness implies selfishness and is the opposite of what is required of a pastor.
One that ruleth his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (not riotous or unruly)	Not that his children never sin, or act foolishly, but his children should reflect his leadership in his own family, as an indicator of how he would be able to lead the flock.

Not a novice	Novices are those who are so new to the faith that they have had neither the time nor the spiritual and life experiences to be entrusted with leadership. Such men are in danger of being snared by pride.
Must have a good report of them which are without	Must be seen in the community (believers <u>and</u> unbelievers) as being upright. Why would we want a pastor who is seen by the outside world as a cheat or shady character? The world may hate and despise us, but we should not be led by someone against whom there are obvious and valid complaints.

Tit. 1:5-9 – Paul gives similar instructions to Titus, to set things in order in Crete, and to ordain elders in every city. Verses 5 and 7 make it apparent that in this context, “elder” and “bishop” are synonymous. Most of the list in Titus is the same as in 1 Tim., but he does add:

Not self-willed	Self-will is the opposite of what it takes to be a successful pastor. Rather, he is to be self-giving. Mt. 20:25-28
Not soon angry	Not that he never gets angry, or we would have precious few pastors, but he is not easily enflamed with anger. We could also say, one who recovers quickly from it, and is able to humble himself in apology if necessary.

### Qualifications for Deacons

1 Tim. 3:8-12 – Qualifications for deacons are shorter, but very similar to that of bishop, and it also adds:

Grave	Serious, dignified; not a goof-ball or jester. A healthy sense of humor is good, but a “Christian comedian” should not be a pastor or a deacon
Not double-tongued	His word should be trustworthy. If he says it, he means it, and will hold to it.
Holding the mystery of the faith in a good conscience	He is not perfect, but one who can honestly say he is living up to the standards of Christianity as he knows them, and is determined to advance spiritually.
Wife – grave	Not a silly, vain, “poofy” person but serious and dignified.
Wife – not a slanderer	Not a gossip, and especially not a slanderous one.
Wife – sober	Not just from alcohol, but sober of character – calm, not rash

### Qualifications for Teachers

Teachers are to be “faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). That is, their lives are to be exemplary in faithfulness to the Lord and to the teachings they have received (from their instructors and from the Bible), and they should be capable as teachers. Just knowing the truth doesn’t mean a person has the ability to be an effective teacher, but a real teacher has been given the ability to speak publicly, and to make the truths of the Word understandable and inspiring.

### Qualifications for Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists

While there are not many specific personal qualifications listed for apostles, prophets, evangelists, or even teachers, it should be obvious that their moral, personal, and spiritual qualifications should be generally as strenuous as those for pastors and deacons. We should be able to discern between true and false ministries. Look at their message, and look at their lives. What kind of fruit do they bear?