

# QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS AND DEACONS

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While the roles of elders and deacons are quite different their qualifications are very similar. The qualifications are found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The qualifications for both offices are almost exclusively relate to a man's character with the exception being that elders must be able to teach. This is to be expected from the spiritual leaders of the church.

## I. Qualifications for Elders

The following qualifications taken from 1 Timothy 3 are not exhaustive but are representative for the office of elder.

- He must be a man (all the uses of the masculine pronoun “he”).
- He must aspire to the office, having a desire for it (v. 1)
- He must be a man of character.  
He must be above reproach, which includes being “the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive” (vv. 2–5)
- He must not be a recent convert (v. 6)
- He must be well thought of by outsiders (v. 7)
- He must be able to teach (v. 2)

## II. Qualifications for Deacons

The following qualifications taken from 1 Timothy 3 are not exhaustive but are representative for the office of deacon.

- Like an elder, a deacon must be a man of character.  
He must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain (v. 8). Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well (v. 12).
- Their wives must also be women of character not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things (v. 11)
- They are to be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless (v. 10)
- They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (v. 9)

## III. Further Resources

*Church Leadership: A Study of Elders and Deacons* by John MacArthur (available for free online at <http://www.gty.org/resources/study-guides/40-5187/church-leadership-a-study-of-elders-and-deacons>).

*The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* by Mark Dever

*40 Questions About Elders and Deacons* by Benjamin L. Merkle