

## 1 Tim 3

vs 1 An overseer is traditionally called a bishop which is 'episkope' in Greek. God sets up overseers of the flock. (Acts 20:17,28) elders who are Christ's undershepherds. They watch for the flock's safety and that the food is good and sufficient. To desire to become an undershepherd is to desire a noble ministry. It appears that in some cases they were appointed – but it may also be that they were recognized by the flock for doing the job without appointment and then given official recognition especially those who taught Scripture well with support by gifts from the congregation. 1Tim 5:17 Like the Apostles who devoted themselves to the word of God and prayer, (Acts 6:4) some elders devoted themselves to this ministry. It surprises me that Paul encourages those who set their heart on being an elder until I consider how they lived as opposed to many pastors today. The mutual accountability amongst a group of elders kept them from being power mongers. The continual service, the low or no financial support, was not an incentive. The constant sacrifice for the flock and greater possibility of imprisonment and martyrdom made it a job that not many would set their heart on unless drawn by God. Now Paul lays out the requirements, or the life that must accompany the desire.

Vs 2 Here are the requirements, #1 Seminary training preferably a Master of Divinity Degree. - NOT- No, the #1 requirement is being above reproach. The only way people could know if an elder is above reproach is that his life is lived before them. They do not call him from another area. Nothing can be said against his way of life. Husband of but one wife. The Greek is actually more like 'a one woman kind of man'. This would indicate his passions are in check and he has chosen to set all his physical passions on his wife alone. Some would say that this excludes divorcees. I don't think so if the grounds were Scriptural. Temperate – not given to extremes in anything. "Let your moderation be known to all" Self controlled – a fruit of the Spirit. Men who lead must first discipline their own soul and body to be an example. Self control makes a life in the word and prayer possible. Respectable – some may be above reproach and yet not be respectable. Hospitable – Reaches out and includes others, sharing what he has. This was more difficult then and required more of you but was also a greater need in that time and culture. It shows love for others. Able to teach – a knowledge and revelation of the word that can be conveyed so as to instruct others. This is part of feeding the flock.

Vs 3 Not given to drunkenness – no vices that impair judgement and show lack of self control should be evident. Not violent but gentle - Gentleness is also a fruit of the Spirit. Most men are not naturally gentle and shows that the Lord has done a work in their heart. A shepherd is gentle yet firm with his sheep not wishing to hurt them in any way. Not quarrelsome – arguing often shows a self consciousness and low self esteem, needing to prove your are correct instead of

listening and learning and knowing when speaking is useless. Not a lover of money – for being an elder is not a path to wealth, unless it is corrupted. The love of money is the root of all evil.

Vs 4,5 The home is the testing ground for the elder. If he cannot lead his home how can he lead the church. This is one of the most overlooked requirements for an undershepherd.

Vs 6 Babes may show great zeal and promise. Remember the seed that grew up on stony ground? It looked very promising but soon withered. When people set up the babes as leaders they are setting the flock up for disappointment and are giving the babe a challenge they are not ready to bear. Pride usually eats them alive or they become discouraged with failure and become a quiet recluse Christian.

Vs 7 Outsiders must also respect this person. He must be the same man to the flock and to the world. Christian graces and fruits make the world admire a person. Jesus grew in favor with God and man. The early church was respected by the world. Acts 2:47

We should remember that the calling of elder is just one part of the body. It is not above the other parts. It is not more important than the other parts. Like all parts it is needed and important and should be directed by the head. The Scriptures do encourage the flock to submit themselves to elders as undershepherds. Heb 13:17