

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | OCTOBER 27, 2019



Class 3 – Vital Leadership Roles

PURPOSE: Determining what biblically warrants a given congregation formalizing their church membership, as it becomes a springboard for genuine church growth.

Introduction

- Past classes on church membership covered various Bible verses highlighting the importance of the local church.
- There is no specific direction as to church membership, *however it is implied.*
- The local church exists for the building up of believers into a growing structure with Christ as the “cornerstone.”
- Once believers start meeting on a regular basis, they need organization, as well as the Lord’s direction. This brings us to today’s topic.

From the *Jeremiah Study Bible (Essentials on Church Leadership)*:

In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, Paul details the qualifications for elders (or overseers); the qualifications for deacons and their wives are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Churches were expected to use these lists as they appointed leaders in every city where new congregations were established (Titus 1:5). These elders, according to Paul, needed to be established in the faith and “blameless” – not perfect, but free from scandal and condemnation in their personal and family lives (3:2-7). They were also responsible for the teaching and preaching in the church (3:2), activities necessary for combating false teaching. As the churches matured, their leaders and positions of leadership became established. The writer to the Hebrews suggests that the churches that would receive his letter were being shepherded by second-generation leaders (Heb. 13:17).

I. Overseers/Elders: 1 Timothy 3:1-7

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. ² An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴ He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), ⁶ and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷ And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

- A. Point 1: This man outwardly pursues the position while inwardly he is driven by a strong internal desire. He should be able to lead, teach, help others and care for the church.
- B. Point 2: He needs to meet the list of character qualities.

From the *MacArthur Study Bible* (on above passage):

The word “overseer” identifies the men who are responsible to lead the church (cf. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7). In the NT the words “bishop,” “elder,” “overseer,” and “pastor” are used interchangeably to describe the same men (Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2). Bishops (pastors, overseers, elders) are responsible to lead (5:17), preach and teach (5:17), help the spiritually weak (1 Thess. 5:12-14), care for the church (1 Pet. 5:1,2), and ordain other leaders (4:14).

“blameless” = there is no valid accusation of wrongdoing that can be made against him.

“husband of one wife” = moral and sexual purity.

“temperate” = alert, clear-headed, able to think clearly.

II. Deacons: 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,⁹ but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.¹⁰ These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.¹¹ Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.¹² Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

- A. Point 1: Deacon has meaning related to service. He serves where needed and at the direction of the overseer.
- B. Point 2: The mystery of the faith in verse 9 appears to refer to truth once hidden but now revealed in Christ.
- C. Point 3: The last verse is a summary of the truth of the gospel.

Conclusion

Why Paul writes all this: 1 Timothy 3:14-16

I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;
¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. ¹⁶ By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

- Believers are members of God's household and must act accordingly.
- The last verse is a summary of the truth of the gospel.

Membership Matters Course Outline:

- Introduction
- Local Church as a Growing Structure
- Local Church for Building Up a People
- Vital Leadership Roles
- Examples of Accountability in the NT
- More Examples of Accountability in the NT
- Unique Cases & Cautions with Membership
- Failed Systems of the Past
- (Thanksgiving Break – No Equipping Hour)
- *Trellis and the Vine* Book Review - Part 1 of 2
- *Trellis and the Vine* Book Review - Part 2 of 2