

Quarter 4 Lesson 8
Sixth Grade
Elders and Deacons

Memory Verse: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

2 Timothy 3:16

In our last several lessons we have learned more about how God wants Christians to live. We have looked at some of the advice that Paul gave to the early church. Today we will focus on the organization of the church.

We know from studying the New Testament that the apostles appointed elders in the different congregations. But why?

Every organization needs a leader or leaders to keep it focused on meeting its goals. Our government has federal, state, and local leaders: President, Vice-President, Congress, governors, mayors, etc. Businesses have owners, CEOs, boards of directors, and other positions of importance. School systems have boards of education, superintendents, and principals. It is good to note that in all earthly organizations there is a chain of authority.

The church has its own leader, Jesus. In Matthew 28:18 He tells His disciples, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."** **Jesus is the head of the church--His church. He is the authority.** He came to earth to live, to die, and to be raised from the dead so that we might have salvation. Through His death and resurrection, **He established His church.** To become a member of His church, we must hear and believe His word, repent of our sins, confess our belief that He is God's Son, be buried in baptism, and live faithfully.

Even though Christians all over the world make up the **one church**, those who live near each other and come together to worship make up the local congregation. The elders of each congregation are given the responsibility of making sure that the work of the Lord is being done. That takes leadership. In addition to the term "elders," the Bible also refers to these men as "overseers, pastors, shepherds, stewards." We commonly refer to our local leaders as elders.

These are the elders of our congregation:



Jim Estes

Larry Morgan

Tommy Baragona

Buster Green

Qualifications of Elders

Can just anyone who wants this position be an elder? No. Have you ever noticed that we have no women elders? Why? God is very specific in His Word about who can and who cannot be an elder. **READ 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-15 AND TITUS 1:1-9 TO FIND OUT THE KIND OF PERSON WHO CAN BE AN ELDER.**

_ **blameless**, above reproach: one who has given others **no reason** or occasion to blame, condemn, or criticize him

_ husband of **one wife**: Only men can be husbands!

_ sober-minded: having an earnestly thoughtful character or demeanor; unhurried; **calm**; subdued

_ **self-controlled**

_ **respectable**

_ **hospitable**: given to generous and cordial reception of guests

_ **able to teach**

_ **not a drunkard**

_ not violent but **gentle**

_ **not quarrelsome**

_ not a lover of money: **not greedy** for money

- _ must manage his household well keeping his children submissive--having a **well disciplined family**; having children who show honor and respect
- _ not a recent convert: not a new Christian; someone who is **well-grounded in the faith**
- _ must be well thought of by outsiders: having a **good reputation** among those are not members of the church
- _ must have **children who are believers**: generally understood to mean that the children must be Christians and are not unruly or disobedient
- _ **not arrogant**: not self-willed; not wanting his own way; not very opinionated
- _ **not quick-tempered**
- _ a lover of **good**, upright, holy, disciplined
- _ holding firm to the Word, able to give instruction in sound doctrine and rebuke those who contradict it: must **know the scriptures** well enough that he would recognize if anyone came into the congregation who was teaching error and know how to correct that person

As you can see from these scriptures, it takes a special kind of Christian man to be an elder! 1 Peter 5:2-3 says of elders, "**shepherd the flock** of God that is among you, **exercising oversight**, not under compulsion, but willingly, **as God would have you**; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but **being examples** to the flock." Elders are tasked with the huge responsibility of leading the local church in a way that will bring honor and glory to God. Are elders perfect? No. As humans, none of us is perfect. Do elders make mistakes? Yes. Everyone makes mistakes. So how are we to act toward our elders?

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV) says, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls..." According to 1 Thessalonians 5:13 (ESV) we are "...to esteem them very highly in love because of their work..." In other words, as long as elders are following God's Word as they lead and make decisions, we are to obey them and have respect for them.

Qualifications of Deacons

In Acts 6 we learned how the apostles had become so busy helping the new Christians in Jerusalem who were in need that they were not able to devote the time necessary to teaching the gospel. To remedy this situation, they asked the brethren to choose seven good men from among them to take on this responsibility. We commonly refer to these men as the first deacons.

These are the deacons in our congregation:



Front row: Luther Moorman, Adrian Edge, Mike Timbes, Jeremy Jones

Second row: Billy Martin, Ricky Green, Wayne Taylor, Dale Kendrick, Randy Moore

Third row: Brent Mauney, Ronny Johnson, Myrl Crowe, J.T. Beard, Guy Gardner, Beau Gross

Back row: James Hester, Brandon Elliott, Milton Floyd (Retired), Aaron Foster, Joel Johnson, Jr. (Retired), Jerry Barrett, J

The Bible also tells us the kind of men who are to serve as deacons. According to 1 Timothy 3:8-10; 12-13, deacons should be:

_dignified

_not double-tongued: deceitful, lacking integrity

_not addicted to wine

_not greedy for dishonest gain: not greedy for money or things gotten dishonestly

_must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience: understand how the Old Testament was fulfilled by the coming of Jesus and the establishment of His church

_must be tested first: must prove their dedication to the faith and have good character

_blameless

_husband of one wife

_manage their children and households well

We can see from this scripture that deacons are also expected to be strong and faithful Christian men. They are to serve the local church fulfilling their duties as directed by the elders.

Even the wives of our leaders must display specific characteristics.

1 Timothy 3:11 says they:

_must be dignified

_must not be slanderers: one who spreads lies

_must be sober-minded: calm; subdued

_must be faithful in all things

Boys, will you aspire to one day become a deacon or elder? Girls, will you aspire to one day become the wife of a deacon or elder? Will you aspire to become the kind of Christian who honors and glorifies God in your speech and in your actions? Let us all aspire to live faithfully so that one day we can spend eternity in heaven!!



