

Essential Characteristics for Church Leadership

Elders

MUST Be:

- **Above Reproach** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6; Exodus 18:21): *Literally — “morally above question”*
- **The Husband of One Wife** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6): *The focus here is largely against someone being polygamous*
- **Sober-Minded** (1 Timothy 3:2): *Literally — “level-headed”*
- **Self-Controlled** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8): *Literally — “prudent, not prone to going over the top”*
- **Respectable** (1 Timothy 3:2) *Literally — “having those characteristics that invoke honor”*
- **Hospitable** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8): *Literally — “being generous with one’s own possessions”*
- **Able to Teach** (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9): *Not necessarily one who has volumes of schooling or an encyclopedic knowledge, but one who is able to communicate that which he has learned to others*
- **Gentle** (1 Timothy 3:3): *Literally — “courteous”*
- **Manage his Home Well** (1 Timothy 3:4): *Literally — “Exercises rule over his home well”*
- **Children Submissive to His Leadership** (1 Timothy 3:4): *Literally — “Children are obedient”*
- **Children are Believers** (Titus 1:6): *If the children are not believers, how should we expect that others will be drawn to Christ as a result of his work?*
- **Well Thought Of in the Community** (1 Timothy 3:7): *Literally — “have a good testimony among the gentiles”*
- **Lover of Good** (Titus 1:8): *Literally — “loving good moral character;” in the Roman world, this was a mark of high integrity*
- **Upright** (Titus 1:8): *Literally — “a just individual, righteous”*
- **Holy** (Titus 1:8): *Literally — “set apart by God for God’s use”*
- **Disciplined (Titus 1:8): Literally — “self controlled with respect to one’s emotions”**
- **Hold to the Word of God as Taught by Paul** (Titus 1:9): *One’s theology must be consistent and grounded on God’s word, not flighty and according to whim and preferences*
- **Able to Refute those who Contradict the Bible** (Titus 1:9): *It is not good enough for a leader to recognize Biblical error, but he must be able to refute said false ideas*
- **Ones who Fear God** (Exodus 18:21): *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge (Proverbs 1:7), Wisdom (Proverbs 9:10), and the fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27)*
- **Ones who Hate a Bribe** (Exodus 18:21): *Ties in with moral character of being “above reproach” — the Christian seeks justice not personal gain*

MUST NOT Be:

- **A Drunkard** (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7): *Literally — “addicted to wine”*
- **Violent** (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7): *Literally — “not a bully,” as Peter states, we do not lead under compulsion but by example (1 Peter 5:2-3)*
- **Quarrelsome** (1 Timothy 3:3): *Literally — “not a brawler;” a contrast to the Gentleness required above*
- **Lover of Money** (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7): *Literally — “not covetous”*
- **A Recent Convert** (1 Timothy 3:6): *We come into the kingdom like children but are expected not to remain there*
- **Open to the charge of Immorality or Insubordination** (Titus 1:6): *Literally — “Reckless living or Rebelliousness” — the Christian is a man under authority, Christian leaders must model that submission if they expect others to submit to their authority*
- **Arrogant** (Titus 1:7): *Literally — “Stubborn or hard-headed”*
- **Quick-Tempered** (Titus 1:7): *Literally — “Quick-tempered”*

Deacons

MUST Be:

- **Dignified** (1 Timothy 3:8): *Literally — “honorable or worthy of respect”*
- **Husband of One Wife** (1 Timothy 3:11)
- **Manage their Children Well** (1 Timothy 3:12)
- **Have good standing** (1 Timothy 3:12; Acts 6:3)
- **Full of the Spirit and Wisdom** (Acts 6:3)
- **Must hold to the Mystery of Faith** (1 Timothy 3:9)
- **Wives must be dignified, not slanderers, and soberminded** (1 Timothy 3:11): *This is the only expectation without parallel in the requirements for Elder — unique to the deacon...*
- **Tested and Proven without Blame** (1 Timothy 3:10)

MUST NOT be:

- **Addicted to much wine** (1 Timothy 3:8)
- **Double-Tongued** (1 Timothy 3:8)
- **Greedy for Dishonest Gain** (1 Timothy 3:8)

“If someone desires to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”
(Mark 9:35b)

“The one who is presumptuous brings strife; but with the one who receives counsel there is wisdom.” (Proverbs 13:10)

“There are six things that Yahweh hates; seven that are an abomination to his soul: arrogant eyes, a tongue that lies, hands that shed the blood of the blameless, a heart that plans injustice, feet that hurry to run to evil, a false witness who lies, and one who gives free reign for strife between brothers.” (Proverbs 6:16-19)