

Titus 1:6-9 – Appoint Qualified Elders

Paul left Titus in Crete to complete unfinished business. One of the main tasks given to Titus was to appoint elders in every city. Since Paul did not mention replacing elders, some assume that the churches in Crete were fairly new. Any believers with a Jewish background would probably have been familiar with local elders serving as local leaders. Paul laid down guidelines and qualifications for the elders. While some of the qualifications would normally be desirable for any type of leader, some qualifications were unique to elders in a church. The people of Crete were known for their ungodliness. It was especially important to appoint church leaders who were people of high morals.

Read Titus 1:6-9.

Verse 6 begins with a general qualification to be “above reproach”. What do you think this qualification means and why is it important? Some translations use the word “blameless”. This word is not the same word used to describe Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke 1:6. “Above reproach” is not necessarily referring to God’s law only. It most likely applied to both how people in the church viewed the elders and also how those outside the church viewed the elders. Accusations of wrongdoing and poor moral character undermine a church leader’s ability to lead and it is a bane to the church.

After the general qualification, Paul used the person’s home life as a qualification to serve as an elder. The words translated “husband of one wife” is literally “a one woman man”. What does this qualification mean? Does this disqualify single people, including widowers, from being an elder? (1:6)

The next qualification involved the elder’s children. They needed to be “believers”. Other translations use the word “faithful”. The difference in translations is based on who is the subject and who is the object of the faith or belief. “Believers” interprets the word as meaning the children believe in Christ. “Faithful” interprets the word as meaning the parents can believe or trust the children, hence the children are faithful. Which translation do you think best fits the context? If children of elders need to be believers, would this disqualify someone with a 1 or 2 year old? The next qualification also applies to the candidate’s children. They must not be “open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination”. What does this qualification mean? Is this qualification a new qualification or an expansion on being “believers” / “faithful”? Do these requirements disqualify someone without children or someone with only one child? See the parallel passage in 1 Timothy 3:4 where obedience is mentioned but not “faith”. (1:6)

Why is it important for an elder to be a good leader in his own house? See 1 Timothy 3:5.

Verse 7 repeats the general qualification of needing to be “above reproach”. Two new words are used of an elder. The words are “overseer” and “steward”. What do these words imply about what the elder is supposed to do?

In verse 7, there are 5 traits that an elder must NOT have. What does each trait mean and why is it important for an elder not to be characterized by these traits?

- not arrogant
- not quick-tempered
- not a drunkard
- not violent
- not greedy for gain

In verse 8, there are 6 traits that an elder should be. What does each trait mean and why is it important as a qualification for an elder?

- hospitable
- a lover of good
- self-controlled
- upright
- holy
- disciplined

Verse 9 mentions some of the duties of an elder? What are these duties? Why is this important for the church?

Do all elders teach? In PCA churches there are two types of elders? There are ruling elders and teaching elders? What is the difference between the two types of elders?

Once someone meets the qualifications of an elder and is installed, what are the main duties?