

Recap of 3/18/18 (1 Timothy 3:1)

1. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul addresses the need for qualified leadership in the church at Ephesus. He deals primarily with two main offices in the church, Overseers (vv. 1-7), the primary leadership group, and Deacons (vv. 8-13)
2. The words “overseer” (episkopos), and “elder” (presbuteros) are used interchangeably of the same group, which is also referred to by the word “pastor” or “to shepherd” (poimen, poimaino). Overseer refers to the function of the office; Elders to its dignity and authority and maturity; and Pastor or Shepherd to the manner in which the ministry is conducted. (see Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5,7; and 1 Peter 5:1,2).
3. Elder/Overseers are always referred to in the plural, i.e. the New Testament knows nothing of a solitary elder/overseer in a church. Elders/Overseers were appointed, not elected (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). Elder/Overseers were responsible for the totality of the ministry, both spiritual and practical issues, including handling money. Their duties have been described as pastoral, instructional, and administrative. As needed they could appoint Deacons to assist them.
4. The Elder/Overseers were to be servant-leaders not “lording it over others.” They were to exercise authority after the model of Jesus (Matthew 20:17ff; Mark 10:35ff; 1 Peter 5:1-3). This view of authority is expressed well in The Men’s Devotional Bible: “It is no wonder that there are so many pitfalls, in the exercising of authority: he who wields authority wields a God-given weapon, and he must constantly be on guard lest he misuse it for selfish ends. Authority must never be exercised in an arbitrary, unreasonable manner.”
5. In 1 Timothy 3:1, Paul lays out two truths. To desire church leadership is a good thing. To serve in church leadership is a noble thing. In verse 2 he introduces another truth, and that is, that a man needs to have more than just the desire to serve and the willingness to serve, but must meet the qualifications to serve.