

Pastoral Epistles - No. 8

I TIMOTHY 3: 1-7

Another Faithful Word (Verse 1)

"The office of a bishop" is the recognised function of watching ("overship" - the basic meaning gives us the word "skeptical") what goes on in a Christian church, and acting appropriately for the good of its members. One who wishes to serve the church in this way "reaches out" for this office, for he (the pronoun is masculine; more about elder sisters later) yearns to serve in this way. He must, however, be qualified for it.

Qualifications of Overseers (Verses 2-7)

An aspirant for recognition must be qualified in a variety of relevant particulars. Note that most items are disqualifications, rather than qualifications (see also Titus 1: 5-9), suggesting that more would-be leaders are excluded than are recognised.

- * Not vulnerable to rebuke, reproach or accusation
- * "A man of one woman" - this excludes celibacy or polygamy, but probably not widowhood
- * Temperate, self-controlled, modestly behaved ("got it all together")
- * Hospitable and skilled in teaching (see Titus 1: 9-11)
- * Not an excessive drinker, not quarrelsome, not eager or greedy for wealth
- * Not immoderate, not a fighter ("macho"), not miserly
- * A capable ("up-front") leader in his own household, respected by his children for his integrity and dignity. "Subjecting"=creating order. Probably most would-be overseers fail on this point. Paul amplified it to show its importance. Commitment to care of the home is a prime test of true commitment to the Church of God (a term used eleven times in the New Testament for local churches)
- * Not a comparatively new Christian who is the more vulnerable to pride, the sin which led to Satan's fall from heaven (see Luke 10: 18).
- * He must have a good testimony to people outside the church, lest he give the church a bad reputation. Pride in prominence is a deadly snare which betrayed the devil himself (see II Timothy 2: 26)