

Pastoral Epistles - No. 9

I TIMOTHY 3: 8-16

Deacons (Verses 8-13)

A deacon is a member of a local church who serves it in some important way. An overseer is also a deacon, but a deacon is not necessarily an overseer. Teaching God's Word is a function of either office (see Matthew 23: 11; Romans 13: 4; I Corinthians 3: 5). Most of the qualifications of a deacon resemble those of an overseer. The deacon must be:

- * of good character, blameless, one who tells it like it is, not greedy for wine or money, and what he believes is clear to all
- * of proven efficiency in service ("using the office of a deacon"=serving)
- * the husband of one wife, as with overseers; the verse applies also to his wife as deaconess (as in Romans 16: 1-2), and the household orderly

The godly deacon gains the respect of the church. This is his "degree" and it is bestowed by his brethren, not his university. He is confident (does not dither) and forthright (does not dissemble).

Another Faithful Saying (Verses 14-16)

Paul hoped to come again to Ephesus, but if he did not, then knowledge of basic Bible doctrine was more important anyway. What follows was probably part of an ancient hymn. It set forth the full deity of Christ, and was much amended in ancient manuscript copies of the New Testament. Also other great and undoubted statements (supports, mainstays) which Christians everywhere accepted, and leaders of local churches ("houses of God", the congregation not the building) knew well, for these affect Christian behaviour:

- * "godliness" (=piety), i.e. the "mystery" of persons relating to the unseen
- * God ("God" or "He" or "who", the words are closely similar when written) came to us as true Man, perfectly righteous in His innermost Being
- * angels saw it all happen (see Matthew 26: 53; Luke 22: 43)
- * this was proclaimed to the nations for the belief of faith (see Mark 16: 15)
- * and He is now glorified once more (see John 16: 28; Acts 1: 11)