

Leadership in the church Ross Pettigrew

In looking for great leaders, the world values qualities of vision, decision making, diplomacy, administration, charisma, ability to persuade people and decisiveness. But are the qualifications for leaders in the church the same? How should a church determine who should be their "leader"?

The key concept of leadership spoken by Jesus is that church leaders are not there to be served, but to serve (Matt 20:25-28). He is our example in that he humbled himself to go to the cross and washed his disciples feet. Servant leadership contrasts with what our society expects: wealth, status and privilege should not be part of leadership in a local church.

There are 2 passages (1 Tim 3, Titus 1) that list qualifications essential for church leaders. Three groups of leaders are described in 1 Timothy 3. Church **overseers** (v1) sometimes called **elders**, reflect 2 Greek works. *Presbuteros* (elder) refers to their maturity, not just age but spiritual maturity. *Episkope* (overseer, bishop) refers to their task of overseeing the work and ministry of the church. Another word *poimen* (shepherd, pastor) illustrates their work in the church as shepherds, feeding, protecting and caring for the flock. Men called **deacons** (v8) (*diakoneo*), are servants performing a particular task in the church. **Women deacons** (v11) are also described as serving the church but identified in a specific category.

Qualifications

The qualifications for elders and deacons are clearly set out in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It appears that Timothy was having problems with leaders at Ephesus, so Paul gave these clear guidelines. It should be noted that Paul does not provide a "job description" of the work, nor does he describe any basic training. Training may be useful for leaders but it is not essential. Instead Paul lists qualities of **character** not ability! While desiring the work is commended (1 Tim 3:1), it is not the key factor as often applies outside the church. From the qualifications given and the context of these instructions (1 Tim 2:12), it is clear that women were not to be church elders.

For **elders**, there are 4 areas of character that are examined in 1 Timothy

1. Moral character.

The overarching description of moral character is "above reproach" or "blameless". No one should be able to point an accusatory finger at him. The list includes his devotion to his wife, avoidance of wine, self controlled and respected, hospitality to strangers and his ability to teach. Suitability to teach is a moral quality for the

Moral	Character
Elders	Deacons
Above reproach	Sincere
A one woman man	A one woman man
Temperate (wineless)	(temperate)
Self controlled	Holding the faith
Respectable	Respectable
Hospitable	
Able to teach	
Not drunk, violent, quarrelsome, money lover	Not a drunkard, money lover

essence of all teaching is being an example. This ability to teach is the only quality that specifically relates to the work of an elder.

2. **Family life.** The management of an elder's family is the best test of his authority, wisdom and love that are needed to oversee and shepherd the church. His authority in the home makes it advisable for children to obey. His wisdom makes it natural and reasonable to obey. His love for the family makes it delightful to obey. Getting the right balance is important.

3. **Maturity**, particularly spiritual maturity, is strongly linked with humility. A new convert (*neophytos*) may become puffed up with his own importance and fall into the same sin as Satan, i.e. the sin of pride.

If you are new or visiting; a special warm welcome to you. We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

This Morning
Speaker Ross Pettigrew

This Evening
• JCF 5.00pm
• Creation Evangelism 7.00pm

Next Sunday
2 August. Ross Pettigrew

Thursday Kidz Club
6:30 - 8:00 pm
7 - 12 year olds
Ph: Allan Maguire - 4767197

Prayer Items

Continue to pray for the outreach opportunities we have with OAC.

Graham and Betty, Guatemala write: For years we have been praying for water at our camp and we thank those who have joined with us in prayer. This week we have a well digger, who assures us there is water, starting to dig. Please pray he will find abundant water. At the moment we only have rain water off the roof, but in the 6 months of dry season which we then have to buy it and have transported up to camp.

Lawrence and Elaine, Papua New Guinea, ask; Please pray as we present our proposal to the Governor to start up MicroFinance Bank. It is a great opportunity to impact the whole of the Gulf Province as there is currently no bank in the province now

Reputation. People outside the church must also recognize him as a good and trustworthy man. He needs to have a reputation for honesty and integrity.

For **deacons**, the character qualifications are similar. Their task is to assist the elders in specific administration tasks of the church. They are first identified in Acts 6 where their administration of the support of widows in the church freed the elders for prayer and ministry of the Word. They are described as “grave” (*semnos*) meaning dignified and serious. The character qualities are similar to the elders apart from the skilled teaching and hospitality qualifications. There needs to be a period of testing of deacons (of their faith) for their suitability to the task. Women as deacons are given specific mention in 1 Tim 3:11 and Romans 16:1.

Appointment

It is the Holy Spirit who appoints elders (Acts 20:28). How that is demonstrated will vary for the Holy Spirit is not bound by our rules and regulations. Elders should be aware of a clear call from God to serve the church. The church is not a democracy with various factions having representation on the eldership. For a new church, the evangelist may need to appoint elders (eg Titus in Crete only had novices so the spiritual maturity condition is not mentioned). In mature churches, the current elders will often suggest a person with the qualifications for the church to approve. Some churches have a formal induction for elders. Ultimately, elders are responsible to God for their running of the church and will be held accountable. Should elders retire? They may withdraw from active involvement in the running of the church but unless they have shown a major character flaw and are disciplined, they remain elders worthy of respect. We have created a category of “consulting elder” for these past elders.

Their Task

Acts 20:17-38 is Paul’s final injunction to the elders of the church he founded at Ephesus. It describes their responsibility as keeping watch over the flock and being shepherds (v28). He has left an example for them in his personal conduct. But he also warns of the need to protect the church from those who will come to split the church and distort the truth. A similar description of the elder’s task is given by Peter (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Your responsibility to your leaders

One of the primary tasks of the elders is to be an example to the church of godly living. (1 Tim 4:12) In fact, all the qualities required of an elder as described in 1 Timothy are to be encouraged for all God’s people. The last chapter of Hebrews encourages respect and submission to the authority that God has placed in the church.

1. Heb 13:7 Remember your leaders (in prayer) and imitate their faith.
2. Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They are accountable to God for you, not the other way round. You are accountable to God for your attitude to the elders.
3. 1 Tim 5:1 Do not rebuke elders but exhort and entreat them as you would a father.

Lessons for today.

1. What is my attitude to the leaders God has given at Cornerstone? Do I pray for them? Do I submit to their authority?
2. Is God preparing me for leadership in the future? Am I following their example and developing Christian character and the fruit of the Spirit in my life??

Small Groups

Tuesday

- Ladies Home Group - see Laura Hannah 473-7954
- Central Home Group - see Steve Clark 479-2070
- Brockville Home Group - see Geoffrey Stewart 476-7888

Thursday

- JCF Home Group - see Gideon Chang 488-2118
- Town Home Group - see Dave Smeaton 453 0569

Friday

- Friday morning Home Group - see Bethney Stewart 476-7888

Prayer Groups

Wednesday

- Men's prayer group meeting at Dan and Stepha from 6:30am till around 8am.

Thursday

- All Saints main church building from 5:15pm

Sunday

- All Saints Hall from 9.00am

NOTICES

- Crèche Roster
26th July - Vicki Halford, Jen Pettigrew
2nd August - Georgie Urguhart, Shana Copland
- If anyone is interested in forming a group of young men to attend this year's Promise Keepers, please see Alan Knight. There are on the notice board and church table a poster and registration forms. The conference will be in Dunedin 31 July - 1 August. The full cost is \$87.00
- There is a brochure with registration form promoting 'Arise' conference in Wellington 6 - 8 August 2009 Ross Pettigrew is speaking at Gore Christian Fellowship on Saturday 1st August at 4.00pm. Topic "Great Expectations" Choosing a life partner. There will be a poster on the notice board this Sunday and fliers on the Church Table.