

## I Timothy 3, Sermon #25

I Timothy 3

We have been studying a very important issue – the leadership of the church  
We have two positions: elders (overseers, pastors) – deacons

The word “deacon” means “to serve,” so the deacon is a servant to the church.  
He is not the overseer or pastor, but he serves in an administrative position to assist in  
the organizational ministries to provide for the needs of the congregation.  
It is an important office because God has given qualifications for it.

Today we will be studying the deacon’s family—first, his wife and then the deacon’s  
home life. “Now preacher, I am not a deacon’s wife.” You may not be but if you  
want to be a godly woman, you will live up to these standards.

I have entitled today’s sermon “The Elders and the Deacons, God’s Leadership Team  
for the Church” – Part 4 of 5

I Timothy 3:11

Let us stand for the reading of God’s Word

I Timothy 3:11-13

Let us pray

You may be seated

## The Elders and the Deacons, God's Leadership Team for the Church

God lists five character qualifications for deacons in I Timothy 3:8, 9:

- Men of dignity – be grave
- Not double-tongued
- Not addicted to much wine
- Not greedy
- Holding to the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience – he knows the New Testament and he is in line with it.

After giving these qualifications, the Bible insists that each candidate for deaconship be publicly examined and approved before serving as a deacon.

After all this, the Bible says, “even so” – vs. 11

Here we have the qualifications for wives who assist their deacon husbands

These women are closely associated with the deacons – they are married to them.

And we know that a man's home life affects his ministry. The leaders in the church are qualified by their families, vs. 4 & 5.

So a deacon's family can disqualify him from the position even though he personally is qualified.

I Timothy 3:8-12 divided into three sections

Deacons [male] ... 8, 9, 10

wives/women – female in vs. 11

Let deacons [male] ... 12

In the Greek (. . . goo-NAY) “gynecologist” is the standard word for an adult woman or wife.

The context of the Scripture determines if *gonay* should be translated as "woman" or "wife."

In the passage before us, the only persons clearly called deacons are men.

It is obvious from the context that the official title "deacons" refers to male deacons only

The only discussion of the office of deacon in the New Testament is in this passage—

I Timothy 3:8-13

God addresses women in verse 11, and in verse 12, where the official title "deacons" appears a second time, he again addresses men.

God requires that deacons be the "husbands of one wife" and that they manage their homes.

So both times the word "deacons" appears in I Timothy 3, it applies only to men.

So, we conclude that the elders and the deacons are to be male—six-part series on the Biblical role of the women in the church, 2:9-15.

Back to 3:11 – these wives, must be of good moral character or the deacon is disqualified.

So the examination process for deacons is to include his family.

So in actuality, this is another qualification necessary for one who would be a deacon.

Thus the wife's qualifications are part of his qualifications for the office.

And after giving the qualifications for the deacon's wife, Paul then goes on to the deacon's commitment to his wife and his children and thereby completes the picture of his family life (v. 12).

Because if a man is not leading at home, he should not be leading in the church.

Therefore, when deacons are examined for office (verse 10), their wives must also be included in the examination process, since they serve as helpers to their deacon husbands.

If a prospective deacon's wife isn't willing to help or doesn't meet the qualifications mentioned in verse 11, the prospective deacon isn't eligible.

"But why," people often ask, "are the wives of deacons mentioned and not the wives of Elders?"

The answer lies in the nature of the deacon's office, which is not a teaching, governing office like the eldership.

Elders teach and govern the whole church.

Their wives are not to assist in the governing of the church.

The deaconship, on the other hand, provides loving service to the congregation.

Wives can assist their husbands in this service without violating their God-ordained role in the local church.

Indeed, at times their assistance may be demanded, as in cases involving the care of women, single mothers, children, the sick or elderly women.

The wives are not official deacons.

They don't hold the office of deacon or any special title.

However, they must measure up to certain standards.

God requires them to meet **four** qualifications.

God lays down four requirements for deacons' wives in verse 11 . . .

Let's examine these qualifications in more detail.

What must a wife be? – Four areas – by the way, all women should strive to meet these

**I. First**, her spirit – in reference to her spirit – she must be

**Grave** – dignified: a woman worthy of respect, honest and honorable – not loud and obnoxious

Her demeanor commands respect from people

**II. Secondly**, her tongue – she must **not be a slanderer** – not a malicious gossip: not slanderous – a woman who controls her tongue and speaks wisely and lovingly

James 3:3-8

The Greek word for slander – “*diablos*” It is the same word from which we get the word “devil”

The devil is the chief slanderer. He is the accuser of the brethren.

Slander is the devil's work. John 1:7-12; Rev. 12:10 – gossip and slander is the devil's work.

1 Tim. 3 – So the deacon's wife is to be a woman who controls her mouth.

Slander divides people – it hurts people.

Titus 3:2a, “*Speak evil of no man . . .*”

"Not slanderers" means they are not to be gossips. Deacon's wives must control their tongues.

A gossipy deacon's wife can cause much trouble in the church.

Do not participate in gossip.

It destroys churches.

Gossip creates division, hatred, and suspicions.

Gossip comes from anger, jealousy, bitterness, wounded feelings, pride, or mental disorder.

A malicious gossip spreads bad rumors, innuendos, criticisms, and lies about people.

". . . He who spreads slander is a fool"

Proverbs 10:18, *"he that uttereth a slander, is a fool."*

A woman who is a slanderer, isn't concerned with fairness or healing, only with striking back, tearing down, hurting, venting anger, or entertaining evil thoughts.

Therefore, a gossiping wife has no place in ministering to the needs of God's family and disqualifies her husband.

The **third** qualification has to do with the influences on her – she must be **sober** – same word as vigilant in 3:2 – temperate: possessing stable character, a woman who has balanced judgment and self-control – not intoxicated by outside influences. Targets beauty, fashion, weight, culture, standing in the community, by what people think of them. Go overboard.

Being sober minded denotes self-control, balanced judgment, and freedom from excesses. . . .the word describes a person who is stable, self-restrained, and clearheaded.

A woman lacking self-restraint, can be easily snared by the devil or false teachers. It is essential that wives working in close association with the deacon be mentally and emotionally stable and in control.

They must be able to remain composed in all circumstances.

And the last requirement:

IV. Her responsibilities. She is to be **faithful in all things**, vs.11

A faithful Christian woman who can be relied on to fulfill her Christian duty. She is trustworthy – she is conscientious – you can count on her

Can she be trusted with responsibility?

A few women had "already turned aside to follow Satan" (I Timothy 5:15).

So it was important for deacons' wives to be "faithful in all things."

"Faithful in all things" is a beautiful phrase. . . . some synonyms for "faithful" . . . are "loyal," "trustworthy," "reliable," or "dependable." . . . portrays an unshakeable loyalty, which is displayed in a number of ways."

When we examine the Bible, we see that faithfulness marked all the great men and women of God

Hebrews 3:5, *"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after."*

Colossians 1:7, *"As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ."*

In the work of God, faithfulness is of significant importance

Psalms 101:6, God said, *"Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve Me."*

It is the key measuring stick

I Corinthians 4:2, *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man or woman be found faithful."*

Since God is absolutely faithful to His promises and His people, He expects His people to be faithful as well.

"Faithful in all things."

She should be faithful to her husband, to Christ Himself, and to His cause.

The world, however, is characterized by infidelity.

It has no allegiance to anything but its own desires.

Thus, God's final and rather comprehensive qualification for deacons' wives is not perfection or skilled work; it is faithfulness in all aspects of life.

We might expect God to say that these women must be faithful to God or to their families.

Instead, he writes, ". . . faithful in all things."

That means they are to be faithful in every relationship and sphere of life: in their commitment to Christ and His Word, in their duties to their families, in their witness to neighbors, and in their responsibilities to the family of God.

Every aspect of their life is to be marked by faithfulness.

A woman who commits adultery or is flirtatious is untrustworthy.

A woman who neglects her family because of selfish ambitions, or neglects God's people, or walks in disobedience to the Word of God is unfaithful.

A fickle, selfish woman who changes her mind or breaks commitments to please her own whims is unreliable. The Bible says – confidence in an unfaithful man or woman in time of trouble – is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint. Painful

In helping their deacon-husbands in Church work, these women have an important responsibility to fill.

Thus we must insist that they, like their husbands, be Biblically qualified.

Let us not be indifferent to God's instruction regarding deacons' wives.

What must a wife be?

Four things a wife must be

1. Her spirit – respectful
2. Her tongue – not a slanderer
3. Her influences on her – sober minded
4. Her responsibilities – she is faithful

Let us stand for closing invitation

Ladies – what influences you?

How's your speech, edifying or gossip?

Are you faithful in all things?

Satan accuses us before God. Often times we are guilty

Stand guilty before God – doomed to Hell for eternity.

But God loved us and sent His Son to die for our sins and pay the price, become our  
substitute.

He did that on the Cross.

Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your payment for your sins?