

## I Timothy 3, Sermon #26

I Timothy 3

Today is our fifth and final message in a series entitled – **The Elders and the Deacons.  
God's Leadership Team for the Church.**

God names two final requirements that relate to the deacons' family life.  
To God, the deacons' marital and family life is of supreme importance.

I Timothy 3:12

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

I Timothy 3:12-13

Let us pray

You may be seated

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

Vs. 12 tells us: THE NEED FOR MARITAL PURITY AND FAMILY QUALIFICATIONS AMONGST GOD'S LEADERS.

### **Vs. 12**

God's leadership must uphold marital faithfulness and sexual purity.

This is a principle of first order for the local church.

This principle cannot be violated without the deadliest of consequences

Knowing this, Satan employs his full arsenal of seductive devices to tempt and destroy the marriages of God's people.

Tragically, most Christian denominations have learned absolutely nothing from the Past about the sure dangers of compromise with worldly standards of sexual behavior, marital fidelity, and family structure.

In nearly every major Christian denomination-Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, God's laws regarding marriage, divorce, sexuality, and gender differences are being discarded and replaced with corrupt human practices.

Basically, man is doing what he wants to do – even in the church, irregardless of the Word of God.

Adultery and other sexual sins among religious leaders are at epidemic levels. Not a week goes by that this corruption is not seen in newspapers, magazines or the news.

In some denominations, divorce and remarriage among the leadership is hardly an issue. Some major Christian denominations have appointed practicing homosexuals and lesbians as pastors without shame.

Many say that sex is a private matter; nothing could be farther from the truth according to the Word of God.

God speaks pointedly and frankly on this subject. He highlights specifically leaders in the church. They are to have Godly homes and marriages. And God tells us what makes up a godly home and The Church needs to say so.

John the Baptist did! John the Baptist condemned the unlawful marriage of Herod Antipas and Herodias, Herod had taken his brother's wife. John the Baptist said it was wrong. We don't hear many preachers say what's right and what's wrong. We need to. John the Baptist ended up losing his head for speaking against the sin (Matthew 14:4-12 and Mark 6:17), he wasn't afraid to speak the truth.

He would probably lose his head in many churches today, if he spoke against the ungodly practices of many Christians.

There seems to be an absence of moral courage among religious leaders when it comes to disciplining the scandalous marital and sexual behavior of many professing, church-going Christians. People sleeping together, living together, attend church regularly and no one says anything!

So we see - THE NEED FOR EXEMPLARY CHURCH LEADERS

We must understand that the local church isn't a country club nor is it a self-help group. The church is a congregation of redeemed saints who are consecrated to God. The church is God's lighthouse in a dark world. It is "the pillar and ground of the truth" Ephesians 5:3, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints."

The glory of the Gospel is that when the Church is obedient, it is different from the world, she invariably attracts it.

The world may hate it at first, - love their sins, but when the truth is accepted than regeneration and revival comes. When the church is like the world, the church has lost its power, impact and relevance.

Our ambition folks should be – to be like Christ, the more like Him the better, and the more like Him we become, the more we shall be unlike everybody who is not a Christian.

I am absolutely convinced that a Godly marriage lived according to God's Word is meant to be the means of untold blessing and is the best protection from the corrupting influences of this sinful world.

It is certainly the very best protection and hope for our children and our churches.

But a family can't stand alone in a morally degraded and hostile environment.

So God, in His perfect wisdom, has given us a community of families—the local church—to help keep us pure wickedness.

The local church is perfectly designed to protect, support, and teach each Christian person and family.

Therefore, Christians need the local church.

We need sound Biblical teaching. – Fluff, lies, entertainment for the family, watered down – We need the Word

We need to be shown God's wonderful design for the Christian home even if it is contrary to the culture.

We need to see good role models of husbands, wives, fathers and mothers and singles.

We need to be under the authority of the church.

A local church that is healthy and functioning properly can help many families—perhaps even hundreds of families.

Elders and deacons are chief among those who model God's design for the Christian home and family life.

This is why God demands that their homes and marriages be in order.

Doesn't that make sense?

A crucial step in Satan's strategy to destroy God's people is to destroy the marriages and families of those who lead the church.

If he defiles the leaders, he can undercut, discredit, short-circuit the effectiveness of that local church.

To protect the local church, God has placed specific marital and family qualifications for elders and deacons.

Therefore, the church must insist that its leaders meet these qualifications before they serve and while they serve.

If not, the local church will sink into the toxic wasteland of the world's marital and family values.

In marriage, child rearing, and general home management, deacons and elders must model God's design for faithful marriage and for a loving, disciplined, Christian home.

In these fundamental areas of the Christian life, deacons must be above reproach.

They must be the "husbands of one wife". **vs. 12**

The phrase, "husbands of one wife," occurs three times in the New Testament in the context of qualifications for either overseers or deacons.

I Timothy 3:2

I Timothy 3:12

Titus 1:6

The words "one wife" are placed first in an emphatic position to stress to us of "one wife."

A "one-woman man" has an exclusive relationship with one woman.

He must not be unfaithful to his wife either in actual conduct with other women, or in his mind.

He is above reproach in his sexual and marital life. He exemplifies faithful, monogamous marriage.

Not only a faithful husband but a good father.

The emphasis in the text is on the word "well". Vs. 12b

So a candidate for the deaconship must supervise his family "well."

This means he must be a responsible Christian father and household manager.

He must provide for his family-financially, emotionally, and spiritually.

His home must not be on the verge of collapse.

Deacons are to be **good managers** not only **of their children**, but also of their money, possessions, and everything associated with **their own households**.

Having an orderly home means that the deacon's children must obey and submit to his leadership in the home.

Yet he is not to be a spirit-crushing tyrant who gains submission by harsh punishment.

The Bible implores the father to discipline and instruct his children, not provoke or exasperate them.

Ephesians 6:4, *"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*

Colossians 3:21, *"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."*

Children need constant training, discipline, and lots of love and affirmation.

A Christian father must never be passive about the training of his children. He cannot abdicate his position.

If he is diligent, his children will benefit greatly and so will he.

Please know there are no perfect, problem-free children.

Even the best Christian fathers and mothers have child-related problems, but these parents are working on the problems and are involved with their children in responsible, caring ways.

They guide their children through the many storms of life.

Now the reason for these last qualifications are obvious.

A man's ability to manage God's church is directly related to his ability to manage his own house.

If he can't care for his family properly, he can't care for the family of God.

In the family of God, a man's ability to manage his family is a crucial test as to whether or not he is qualified or disqualified to be a deacon.

Now this final verse, vs. 13, should be a source of enormous encouragement to deacons.

Here God declares that faithful deacons gain significant influence and honor in the church. **vs 13**

What God says about deacons in verse 13 applies to deacons "who have served well."

Only those who serve well receive "a good degree of high standing".

The word "well" indicates commendable service done in the right way.

There are two rewards which await those men who have served well as deacons.

First, they obtain for themselves a good degree of high standing - Can you hang this on a wall? Can it be framed? No- . . . literally refers to an elevated stand: An honorable position in the assembly.

Those who serve in humility – that's what a deacon does – will be exalted by God (James 4:10; I Peter 5:6), and by the church (I Thess. 5:12-13).

Faithful deacons will be respected and honored by those they serve.

What a tremendous privilege it is to have an honorable standing in God's house!

It is better than having a good standing in the highest government position or in a high level, prestigious position in a university, God's household – His church – is the most important institution on the face of the earth.

So the first reward is high standing.

Secondly, vs. 13 – they will attain/gain great (boldness) confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. This boldness is often used of speech (cf. Acts 4:13) when they saw the

boldness of Peter and John. They had been with Jesus. Speaking for the Lord boldly is attained by faithful service.

Notice that the faith God describes in I Timothy 3:13 is not rooted in the deacons' own intelligence, skill, energy, or financial resources.

This faith is rooted "in Christ Jesus." Biblical faith points to Christ, not to self.

It is Christ-centered faith, and the object of our faith makes all the difference.

It is faith in the One who empowers and sustains us.

It is faith in the anointed Son of God, Jesus Christ our Savior.

In Acts 6 – we see seven deacons. Some of them quickly transitioning to verbal ministry

Stephen – would you say Stephen had great boldness verbally? So much so that they took up stones. Yes, he did.

Philip – two men were both bold!

Proverbs 28:1b, "the righteous are bold as a lion."

Not only do deacons who serve well gain a good standing and reputation in the church, they also gain "great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."

With this we conclude our series on God's leadership team for the church.

Let us stand for closing invitation.

God's leaders – high standards

God gives the requirement not just for the deacons but for all of us to strive for.

Are we faithful to our spouse?

Are we involved with our children spiritually?

Are we bold for the Lord Jesus Christ?

Pastor – I'm living with my boy friend, girl friend.

I'm having pre-marital sex.

Will you confess that to God as sin? It's wrong.

The marriage bed is undefiled but every thing else outside of marriage is sin.

Preacher, what do I do?

Christian repent, Godly sorrow.

Confess to God. Ask Him for forgiveness.

Ask the woman or the man you're sinning with to forgive you.

Not a Christian?

Come to God for forgiveness and salvation.

That's why Jesus died on the Cross to pay for the sins of mankind.

## Rear of Document

First, they face the temptation to discouragement.

Failing to live up to the high standards they set for themselves can bring discouragement.

People who fail to grow or respond, who fall away, or fail to live up to the leader's expectations can also be a source of discouragement.

Second, leaders are tempted to indifference.

Third, leaders are tempted to compromise.

They avoid saying what ought to be said for the sake of pleasing men.

Finally, leaders face all the temptations common to other Christians.

He then closes by mentioning the reward for those who serve faithfully.

It is a serious matter to serve the local church.

### Temptations of Leaders

Leaders face many temptations from the very nature of their position, without unnecessarily adding others.