

Discussion Guide

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Opening Prayer

Guided Prayer: Pray asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance in understanding and applying the truths discussed.

Recap

Recap of the Sermon and Summary of the Text

In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Paul outlines the qualifications for deacons, emphasizing the importance of their character and conduct. Deacons are to be dignified, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must hold to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. Potential deacons should first be tested and, if proven blameless, can then serve. Paul also addresses the wives of deacons, noting that they should be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded and faithful in all things. Additionally, deacons must be the husbands of one wife and manage their children and households well. Those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

In Acts 6:1-6, the early church addresses the practical need for deacons. The apostles appointed seven men to oversee food distribution, ensuring that the apostles could focus on prayer and ministry of the word. These men were chosen for their good reputation, wisdom, and being full of the Spirit.

Understanding the Text

1. **Qualifications for Deacons:** What specific qualifications does Paul list for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-13?
2. **Testing of Deacons:** Why does Paul emphasize that deacons must be tested and found blameless before serving?
3. **Role of Wives:** What qualifications are given to the wives of deacons, and why might these be important?
4. **Household Management:** Why is the ability to manage one's household well considered an important qualification for a deacon?
5. **Benefits of Serving Well:** What does Paul say are the benefits for those who serve well as deacons?

Practical Application

1. **Personal Reflection:** Reflect on the qualifications listed for deacons. How do these qualities apply to your own life and service in the church?
2. **Community Support:** How can the congregation support the deacons in their roles and responsibilities?
3. **Spiritual Growth:** In what ways can deacons encourage spiritual growth within the church community?
4. **Serving with Integrity:** What steps can deacons take to ensure they are serving with integrity and sincerity?
5. **Family and Ministry:** Should a deacon be married, how can he balance his responsibilities between his family and his ministry in the church?
6. **Role of Wives:** How can the wives of deacons support their husbands in their ministry, and how can the church support these women?

7. **Praying for Leaders:** How can you incorporate regular prayer for the deacons and their families into your spiritual practices?
8. **Learning from Acts:** What lessons can we learn from Acts 6:1-6 about the importance of delegation and the role of deacons in the early church?

God Has More to Say

1 Timothy 3:8-13 outlines the qualifications and duties of deacons in the church, emphasizing qualities such as dignity, honesty, temperance, and faithfulness. Here are related biblical passages that illuminate these themes:

1. **Acts 6:1-6:** This passage describes the selection of the first deacons in the early church to assist with the daily distribution of food and to ensure fair treatment of all members. The chosen men were of good repute, full of the Spirit and wisdom.
2. **Philippians 1:1:** Paul addresses the letter to "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons," acknowledging the established role of deacons in the church.
3. **1 Timothy 3:1-7:** This passage provides the qualifications for overseers (bishops/elders), which closely parallel the qualifications for deacons, emphasizing the importance of character and integrity in church leadership.
4. **Titus 1:5-9:** Paul outlines the qualifications for elders in the church, which include many of the same qualities expected of deacons, such as being blameless, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, and holding firmly to the trustworthy message.
5. **1 Peter 5:1-3:** Peter exhorts the elders to shepherd God's flock willingly and eagerly, not lording it over those entrusted to them but being examples to the flock, reinforcing the importance of exemplary conduct in church leadership.
6. **Romans 12:6-8:** Paul encourages believers to use their various gifts according to the grace given to them, including serving, teaching, encouraging, and leading, highlighting the diverse roles within the church.
7. **Matthew 20:26-28:** Jesus teaches that whoever wants to become great must be a servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave, just as He came not to be served but to serve, emphasizing the servant-leadership model.
8. **Galatians 5:22-23:** Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit, which include qualities like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, all of which are relevant to the character of deacons.
9. **2 Timothy 2:24-25:** Paul advises that the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, and not resentful, which aligns with the characteristics expected of deacons.
10. **James 3:13:** James emphasizes that wisdom should be shown by a good life, by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom, which reflects the call for deacons to be dignified and sincere.
11. **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13:** Paul encourages the church to acknowledge those who work hard among them, who care for them in the Lord and admonish them, esteeming them very highly in love because of their work, which includes recognizing the role of deacons.
12. **Ephesians 4:11-12:** Paul speaks of Christ giving various ministry gifts to the church, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, building up the body of Christ, which encompasses the service role of deacons.

Prayer - End with prayer, focusing on specific requests related to the sermon's themes, personal struggles, and applications.