

Qualities of the Biblical Elder

Objective:

To remind one another of the characteristics of Godly leaders.
To know that Paul's description of qualities is not a simple "checklist" of qualifications.
To encourage and lead one another to grow in the qualities and habits of Christlikeness.
To encourage members to participate in the upcoming elder nomination process.

Intro:

Today, we continue our study on eldership. Recall that last week we explored the words used to describe the role and function of elders in the New Testament.

In this second lesson, we will be focusing on the qualities of elders as described in **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:5-9**.

Godly Leadership:

In the Bible, elders are spiritual leaders within the church, often entrusted with the care and oversight of the congregation. The New Testament provides guidance on the qualities and character of elders. These qualities emphasize spiritual maturity, moral integrity, and the ability to lead by example.

Text: Read **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:5-9** together.

Qualities of Character: To begin, we want to stress that these verses are not to be thought of as a "checklist" to meet the qualifications of an elder (it should be noted that Paul does not refer to them as qualifications). Instead, Paul emphasizes the "qualities" that reflect the character of Christ. The heart of a leader is revealed in how they live their lives each day. Paul's words give guidance in recognizing the qualities and habits of mature Christian living.

Group Breakout: Have your class break into groups and give them time to read and go over the handout list together (give them about 5 min):

In your groups discuss:

Q:1. Which one of these qualities grabs your attention first?

Q: 2. Why do you think these qualities and habits of character are important in the church, especially for its leaders?

Q: 3. Which of these do you think are most relevant today? Which ones do you think need more discussion or explanation?

Come back together and share with the class.

The Church Growing in Christ:

God desires that we all grow in Christlike character and habits. We note that God expects Christlike character in every member of the body of Christ. See **Titus 2:1-10** where Paul lists similar qualities of character for older men, older women, younger women, younger men, etc. Several of Paul's letters list instruction and encouragement in the practices and habits of Christian living that echo the qualities described for elders (example **Romans 12:9-21** or **Gal. 5:22-23**).

It is essential for leaders to embody these qualities so that by their example others can learn from them and become mature in the faith. In the church, Christians learn much from what they see modeled in the habits of their leaders. By the Spirit, God has equipped the local church with all that it needs to grow in Christ.

(Eph. 4:16 NIV From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.)

Prayer and Participation:

The Hillcrest eldership asks that you join in praying about the future leadership of this congregation. Pray for God to call out leaders whose lives and hearts embody the qualities of Christlike character.

Use the handout as you pray: "God, would you help us identify men who..." Ask for the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pray.

One of the desired outcomes from studying the qualities of elders is to assist and encourage class members to participate in the elder nomination process. If you are not sure about someone, pray about it. Pray knowing that God will be at work in this process.

Q and A:

Please take time to not only encourage but also address any questions class members may have about how to participate.