

1 Timothy 3:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

Analysis

And let these also first be proved (καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον, kai houtoi de dokimazesthōsan prōton)—'let them first be tested.' Dokimazō means to examine, scrutinize, approve after testing—the same word used for testing metals for purity. **Then let them use the office of a deacon** (είτα διακονείτωσαν)—'then let them serve as deacons.'

Being found blameless (ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες, anegklētoi ontes)—'being without reproach,' the same term used for elders (3:2). The testing period proves character under observation—how does the candidate handle responsibilities? Respond to criticism? Manage finances? Serve when no one's watching?

No one should be thrust immediately into diaconal ministry. Character must be proven through faithful service in small things before being entrusted with greater responsibility (Luke 16:10). The church observes, evaluates, and only then officially recognizes those who have demonstrated fitness.

Historical Context

In the Greco-Roman world, public offices were often purchased or granted through patronage. The church operates differently—leaders must be tested and proven over time. The Ephesian church likely had a period of observation where potential deacons served informally before formal recognition. This protected both the church from unqualified leaders and candidates from premature responsibility.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does a proper 'testing period' for ministry candidates look like in practice?
2. Why does faithful service in small, unseen things qualify someone for larger responsibility?
3. How can churches balance the need for workers with the requirement to thoroughly test candidates?

Interlinear Text

καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον εἶτα
also these And be proved first then
G2532 G3778 G1161 G1381 G4412 G1534

διακονείτωσαν ἀνέγκλητοι ὅντες
let them use the office of a deacon found blameless being
G1247 G410 G5607

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 5:22 (Parallel theme): Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

1 Timothy 3:13 (Parallel theme): For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.