

1 Timothy 3:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

Analysis

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife (διάκονοι ἕστωσαν μιᾷς γυναικὸς ἄνδρες, diakonoi estōsan mias gynaikos andres)—literally 'one-woman men,' the same requirement as elders (3:2). Marital fidelity demonstrates broader character integrity.

Ruling their children and their own houses well (τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων, teknōn kalōs proistamenoι kai tōn idiōn oikōn)—managing children and households well. Again paralleling elder qualifications, the deacon's home life must demonstrate gospel transformation.

Though deacons don't require teaching ability, they need the same domestic integrity as elders. Why? Because practical service and family management are both forms of diakonia—ministry. A man who cannot lovingly lead his own household cannot be trusted to serve God's household. Ministry at home qualifies for ministry in the church.

Historical Context

Deacons in the early church often visited homes for benevolence distribution, cared for widows and orphans, and managed hospitality for traveling teachers. Their access to vulnerable people and church resources required proven family integrity. A deacon with an ill-managed home would undermine confidence and effectiveness in public ministry.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Why do even non-teaching ministry roles require strong family leadership?
2. How does faithful household management prepare someone for serving the church?
3. What does it reveal about biblical ministry that character always precedes competence?

Interlinear Text

διάκονοι	ἔστωσαν	μιάς	γυναικὸς	ἄνδρες	τέκνων
the deacons	Let	G1520	wife	the husbands	their children
G1249	G2077		G1135	G435	G5043
καλῶς	προϊστάμενοι	καὶ	τῶν	ἰδίων	οἴκων
well	ruling	and	G3588	their own	houses
G2573	G4291	G2532		G2398	G3624

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 3:2 (Parallel theme): A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Philippians 1:1 (Parallel theme): Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

