

Elders and Deacons

The Government of the Church · Ecclesiology

Christ has given the church officers for its government and care. Elders (also called bishops, pastors, overseers) are to shepherd the flock of God, exercising oversight not by constraint but willingly. They must be blameless, able to teach, not given to wine, not greedy, ruling their own houses well. Deacons are servants who care for practical needs, freeing elders for prayer and the ministry of the Word. They too must be grave, not doubletongued, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. These offices are qualifications-based, not merely appointed positions.

Key Verses

1 Peter 5:1-3

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

1 Timothy 3:1-2

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.

Acts 6:3-4

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

1 Timothy 3:8-9

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

Titus 1:5-6

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

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