

# Letters to Lead By

## 1 TIMOTHY 3

### **FIRST DAY:** Introduction

Too often we underestimate the great value of the church to God. We compare, criticize, neglect, and even disrespect it at times. In doing so, we fail to realize that the church is God's creation, *purchased with His blood* (Acts 20:28), and *is the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth*. God instituted the church to be a witness to the world and a sanctuary where believers could be built up, edified, and equipped for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11–12). As such, it is imperative for us as His children to love, appreciate, and be participants in His church.

In writing his first letter to Timothy, Paul reminded him of the great value of the church. Timothy, as a pastor (overseer), needed to look for and choose men and women of integrity to be elders and deacons. Paul listed the qualities and priorities essential in those who would represent the house of God to the world, and who would exemplify the life of Jesus to believers.

When we consider the church, we need to recognize the great value God places on it. It would behoove us to pray for the pastor, leadership, and congregation, that the church might be all that God intends it to be—a light to the world and a blessing to believers!

*Ask God to give you a deeper appreciation for His church  
and guide you to be an active participant.*

**SECOND DAY:** Read 1 Timothy 3:1–7

1. Paul sought to further repair the shipwreck caused by Hymenaeus and Alexander by instructing Timothy to choose qualified leaders to help guide and safeguard believers in the church. He began with the office of bishop. The word *bishop* means *overseer* and refers to an elder or pastor. From 1 Timothy 3:1, write the *faithful saying* Paul quoted.
  - a. What does this *saying* convey to you about church leadership?
  
2. In 1 Timothy 3:2–4 Paul listed some of the qualifications of a *bishop*. List and comment on the importance of these fourteen qualities:
  - a.
  
  - b.
  
  - c.
  
  - d.
  
  - e.

f.

g.

h.

i.

j.

k.

l.

m.

n.

(1) Why do you think these qualities are essential for church leaders?

(2) How do these qualities showcase God's high regard for His church?

- (a) Observe that none of these qualifications pertain to talent or education. What does this suggest?
3. In light of these qualifications, identify Paul's concern *if a man does not know how to rule* (preside over) *his own house*.  
1 Timothy 3:5
- a. What does this convey to you about a pastor's priorities?
4. Paul also mentioned a few more cautionary stipulations. First Timothy 3:6–7 (NLT) says, *An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap*. Use these verses to respond to the following:
- a. Remark on the danger of putting a *new believer* into a leadership position.
- (1) What do these cautions imply to you about the tactics of the *devil*? See also Isaiah 14:12–15.

- b. Why do you think the testimony of a *bishop* (elder) is so important? See also 1 Thessalonians 4:12 and 1 Peter 3:15–16.
5. Using the qualifications Paul listed, take a moment to pray for the elders and pastors in your church.

**THIRD DAY:** Read 1 Timothy 3:8–13

1. Having addressed the office of bishop in 1 Timothy 3:8–9, 12, Paul then listed qualifications for *deacons* (those who primarily serve the church in administration, taking care of the poor, and other practical matters). Use Paul’s list to briefly share why you think these qualities are important for *deacons*:
- a. *Reverent*
  - b. *Not double-tongued* (deceptive)
  - c. *Not given to much wine*
  - d. *Not greedy for money*



**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The word *double-tongued* is only used once in the entire Bible and literally means *to say one thing and mean another*.

e. *Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience*

f. *Husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well*

(1) Why do you think these qualifications are essential for leadership?

(2) Take a moment to pray that these qualities would be resident in the leadership at your church.

2. Before these men could serve as *deacons*, what was Timothy required to do? 1 Timothy 3:10

a. Why do you think this is important?

3. The word *wives* in 1 Timothy 3:11 can also be translated *women*, referring to the women leaders in the church. What qualities must they have?

- a. Take a moment to highlight the qualities of these New Testament deaconesses:
  - (1) Phoebe (Romans 16:1–2)
  - (2) Tryphena and Tryphosa (Romans 16:12a)
  - (3) Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2–3)
  - (4) Older women (Titus 2:3)
    - (a) Why is it important to have women in leadership exemplify these godly qualities?
4. In 1 Timothy 3:13, Paul named two important benefits for *deacons* who *have served well*. Observe these benefits and note why you think they are worthwhile:
  - a. *A good standing* (respect)
    - (1) Link this with Matthew 25:21 and share your thoughts.

b. *Great boldness*

(1) Recall that deacons are to be found *blameless* (1 Timothy 3:10). From Proverbs 28:1b, what connection do you see between a *blameless* life and *boldness*?

5. From your study today, why do you think the qualities Paul highlighted are essential for *deacons* and deaconesses?

a. Take a moment to pray for the men and women who serve in your church.

**FOURTH DAY:** Read 1 Timothy 3:14–15

1. Although Paul was writing *these things* to Timothy, what was his *hope*? 1 Timothy 3:14

2. Yet, in case Paul was *delayed*, why did he *write* this letter? 1 Timothy 3:15a

a. Connect this with 1 Corinthians 14:33; 40. What do you see?

3. From 1 Timothy 3:15b, use Paul's phrases to remark on God's perspective of the *church*:

- a. *The house of God*
- b. *The church of the living God*
- c. *The pillar and ground of the truth*

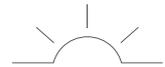
(1) A *pillar* provides critical support for a building, while the *ground* refers to the *foundation* or *mainstay*. Link this with Ephesians 4:11–16 to comprehend the function and importance of the church.

4. Why do you think the *church* is so precious to God?

- a. Take a moment to pray for your church.

**FIFTH DAY:** Read 1 Timothy 3:16

1. The church is built on the unveiling or revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:17–18). The word *mystery* means *a truth that has been brought to light*. What did Paul state about this *mystery* in 1 Timothy 3:16a?



#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Greek word for church is *ekklesia* and means *called out*. It is used over a hundred times in the New Testament.

2. In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul reminded Timothy of the rock and foundation the church is built upon. Read 1 Timothy 3:16 (NLT), *Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory.* Compare this Scripture to the NKJV as you fill in the chart:

1 TIMOTHY 3:16 (NKJV)	CROSS REFERENCES	WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU
<i>God was manifested in the flesh</i>	John 1:14; 1 John 1:1–2	
<i>Justified in the Spirit</i>	Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18	
<i>Seen by angels</i>	Matthew 28:2; John 20:12	
<i>Preached among the Gentiles</i>	Luke 2:32; Acts 13:46–48	
<i>Believed on in the world</i>	Colossians 1:5–6; Revelation 7:9	
<i>Received up in glory</i>	Mark 16:19; 1 Peter 3:22	



2. Although not all are called to the office of bishop or deacon, we are all called to minister with the gifts God has given to us (1 Peter 4:10). With this in mind, share something you gleaned from your study this week that you can apply to your own life and ministry.

3. Take a moment, once more, to pray for:

a. The church

b. Church elders and pastors

c. Church leaders

(1) Men

(2) Women

d. The congregants