

## **Preliminary Considerations for Having An Eldership**

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“Preliminary considerations for having an eldership” will include thoughts of what they will do once the congregation has them. By taking a look at their scriptural qualifications in advance the congregation can identify who among them is prepared to serve in this capacity.

He can't be a novice or his pride may very well get the best of him (1 Tim. 3:6). The meaning of “novice” is one lacking in experience due to his relatively recent involvement. Clearly, one who has been a Christian for a much longer period must long ago have subdued any drive for the acquisition for power and dominance among brethren to be considered for the position within the eldership. Remember that to have elders at least two men must be qualified, so he is going to have to work well with others (Acts 14:23).

See how he “rules” his own household is one biblical “test” for the elder (1 Tim. 3:4-5). Is his wife “grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things?” If not, he doesn't pass the test and must withdraw his name from consideration. His work needs to begin at home with her, not place his family challenges on a pedestal for the whole congregation to endure. Are his children submissive and obedient with “all gravity”? The word “grave” and “gravity” in the NKJV is “reverence” meaning showing all respect for their father in connection with the children as well as the wife. Why this inspection of his home? In a parenthetical statement Paul answers, “(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” (1 Tim. 3:5).

Is he a teacher of the Bible? “Apt to teach” is translated “able to teach” in the NKJV. “Able” means qualified by experience. If he's not a good teacher, he will never meet the high demand of Paul's instructions to Titus where he said an elder must be “holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” He's not there yet if he knows what the false teachers teach; he must have demonstrated ability to “exhort and to convince the gainsayers” himself, not just turn it over to the preacher. He must be able to “stop their mouths” (Titus 1:9-11). If this sounds like a challenge for anyone, it is! Paul said, “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (v. 13). A man who cannot or will not do this cannot be an elder.

Christian men have a high expectation placed before them in order that a local congregation may be fully organized with elders and deacons. By observation we see that far too many congregations have accepted lesser men as elders, and without exception the church suffers for it. By giving ourselves to the qualifications for elders, even if never appointed, we will be much better Christians and much happier men.