

Sermon Notes on Churched: We Are Led (1 Timothy 3:1-7 plus other selected Scriptures)

- As we all know so well, leadership is influence and this can be a blessing or a curse depending upon the character and influence of a leader.
 - We see God rebuking sinful and abusive leaders in Israel and warning the church about the ruin false teachers can bring into people's lives.
 - We see God praising and blessing righteous leaders who shepherd their people with humility, integrity, love, truth, patience, skill and example.
- God told His people to "*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you*" (Hebrews 13:17)

We can summarize the New Testament's instruction on church leadership in five descriptive statements.

1. **God wants His church to be led** (Selected references)

- Yes, the church is populated by **co-equals** (we're all forgiven, indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit, placed into the church, gifted, and given the same divine directives for living a life that pleases God)
- But God has **designed some functional leadership roles** within the church family by designation and giftedness (Heb. 13:7)
- The New Testament recognizes **five different leaders**:
 - **Jesus Christ** as the "*head*" of the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22), "*the Chief Shepherd*" (1 Pet. 5:4) and "*the Shepherd and Guardian of our soul*" (1 Pet 2:25)
 - **Apostles** of Jesus Christ were foundational leaders in the church (Eph. 2:20) and they appointed the first key leaders in the church (Acts 14:23)
 - **Women** lead and teach other women and children (Titus 2:3-5) and 1 Tim. 3:11 may indicate they can be deacons though this is not conclusive.
 - **Deacons** are second level servant leaders focused on serving practical needs as directed by the elders, pastors and overseers (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13)
 - **Elders, Pastors, Overseers** are three names given to the first level of leadership in the church .

- The term “**elder**” (presbuteros) describes the maturity of God’s leaders (term mean older without any specific age, but is focused on experience and maturity) Titus 1:5
- The term “**pastor**” (poimainos) describes the ministry of God’s leaders as shepherds who feed and defend the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2; Eph. 4:11)
- The term “**overseer**” or “**bishop**” (episkopos) describes the management task of God’s leaders (1 Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:7)
- All three terms are used interchangeably to describe the same office (Acts 20:17, 28, 1 Pet. 5:1-2)

2. **God wants His church to be led by men** (Selected references and addressed in the November 17th message: We have Functional Gender Roles)

- God has given us seven pieces of evidence for male first level leadership:
 1. The **pattern factor**: The historic pattern since creation limits the office to men (Adam, patriarchs, priests, kings, prophets, judges, apostles, Matthias, Paul) and this pattern is modelled by Jesus Christ to His Father (1 Cor. 11:3: “*But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man and the man is the head of a woman and God is the head of Christ*”)
 2. The **prohibition factor**: 1 Tim 2:11-12; & 1 Cor. 14:34-36 forbid women from leading the church.
 3. The **personal pronoun factor**: God uses the masculine form in all the primary church leadership texts (“*he*” & “*his*” – 1 Tim. 3:1, 5)
 4. The **problem factor**: Women are unable to meet the qualification of being “*a husband of one wife*” (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6) and they are placed in the shadow of Eve who was deceived first (1 Tim. 2:14)
 5. The **practice factor**: God states this is the normal practice “*in all the churches of the saints*” and not a local or cultural issue (1 Cor. 14:33b)
 6. The **precedence factor**: God notes the order of creation as a reason for male leadership (1 Tim. 2:13)
 7. The **pronouncement factor**: Paul notes in 1 Cor. 14:37-38 that what he writes about gender roles is “*the Lord’s command*”

3. **God wants His church to be led by a team of men** (Selected references)

- God desires to have a plurality of leaders directing the church together (Acts 11:30, 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22-23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Tim. 5:17; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1, 5)

4. **God wants His church to be led by a team of qualified men** (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-3)

- There are around **24 specific qualifications** drawn from 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Pet. 5:1-3
 1. God expects a **foundational desire** or aspiration for the office (1 Tim. 3:1)
 2. God expects a **foremost quality** of being “*above reproach*” (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6-7). No one can bring an accusation that will stick.
 3. God expects **family management** that reveals faithfulness to God in the marriage and home (1 Tim. 3:2, 4-5; Titus 1:6)
 4. God expects **faithful character** will be consistently demonstrated (1 Tim. 3:2-3, 6-7; Titus 1:7-8; 1 Pet. 5:3). There are 9 negative qualities to avoid (not self-willed; not quick-tempered; not addicted to wine; not pugnacious; not fond of sordid gain; uncontentious; not a new convert; not under compulsion; not lording it over those allotted to your charge) and 9 positive qualities (hospitable; loving what is good; sensible; just; devout; self-controlled; respectable; gentle; have a good reputation with those outside the church)

5. **God wants His church to be led by a team of qualified men with ministry assignments** (Acts 20:28; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1Tim. 3:2, 5; 5:17; Titus 1:9-11; 2:1; 1 Pet 5:2-3; James 5:14-16; Eph. 4:11-13)

1. They “**teach**” God’s Word (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9, 11)
2. They provide general **oversight** of the church (1 Tim. 5:17; 3:5: “*take care*”; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Pet. 5:2: “*exercising oversight*”)
3. They **shepherd** God’s flock which includes feeding and protecting them from “*savage wolves*” (1 Pet 5:1-2; Acts. 20:28)
4. They **pray for the sick** (James 5:14-16)
5. They **equip** “*the saints for the work of service*” (Eph. 4:11-12; 2 Tim. 2:2)
6. They are “*to be examples to the flock*” (1 Pet. 5:3)