

Gender and Ministry

Scriptures taken from the [NIV 1984 Bible](#)

A. 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The Qualifications of an Overseer (Greek *episkopos*, [1985](#)).

(This is the same person as an elder – Titus 1:5, 9. “Overseer” is more of a job description; “elder” refers to the gravity of the office and the respect due the office-holder.)

1. 1 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.
2. 2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
3. 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.
4. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.
5. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)
6. 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.
7. 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

B. Titus 1:5-9. The Qualifications of an Elder. (Greek *presbuteros*, [4245](#)). (This is the same person as an “Overseer.” The term “Elder” refers to the gravity of the office; “Overseer” refers to the Job Description.)

1. 5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint **elders** in every town, as I directed you.
2. 6 An **elder** must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.
3. 7 Since an **overseer** is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless--not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

4. 8 Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.
5. 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

C. Prayer and Teaching. 1 Timothy 2:1-18

1. Prayer. 1 Timothy 2:1-7

- a. 2 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—
- b. 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.
- c. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior,
- d. 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.
- e. 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
- f. 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time.
- g. 7 And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle--I am telling the truth, I am not lying--and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

2. Men and Prayer. 1 Tim. 2:8

- a. 8 I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

3. Women and Adornment. 1 Tim. 2:9-10

- a. 9 I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes,
- b. 10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

4. Women and the Teaching of God's Word. 1 Tim. 2:11-14

- a. 11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.
- b. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.
- c. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.
- d. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

5. A Woman's Salvation (in the sense of "fulfillment in ministry," I believe) 1 Tim. 2:15

- a. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing--if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

D. The Origin of the Office of Deacon. (The Greek word is *diakonos*, [1249](#). The word means "servant.") Acts 6:1-7

1. 1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.
2. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.
3. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them
4. 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."
5. 5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.
6. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.
7. 7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

E. Qualifications for the Office of Deacon. 1 Timothy 3:8-13

1. 8 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.
2. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.
3. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.
4. 11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.
5. 12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.
6. 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

F. The Case of Phoebe. Romans 16:1-2

1. 1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a **servant** (diakonos) of the church in Cenchrea.
2. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.
3. I believe the NIV 1984 has correctly translated the word *diakonos* in Rom. 16:1 as “servant” – that’s what the word means – rather than Deacon – an officer in the church. I think she was a hard-working server / helper, not an officer of the church in Cenchrea.

G. Conclusion. ¹

1. I think it is clear from the text of the New Testament that both Elders / Overseers and Deacons, the only two officers of the local church, were men.
2. The reasons Paul used for disallowing women to teach men in 1 Tim. 2:11-14 were foundational, not cultural. He did not allow women to teach men because of (a) the order of creation, and because (b) apparently even unfallen woman had a greater susceptibility to theological deception.
3. The one instance where we might have expected to see female officers in the church was in Acts 6. The problem was a female problem. Greek widows were being discriminated against in the serving of food. But the Apostles insisted on the church searching out seven men who were full of the Holy Spirit and full of wisdom to lead the ministry.
4. Since female elders are not Biblical, it goes without saying that female pastors are not Biblical. It is the job of an elder / overseer to pastor (literally, "shepherd") the flock of God (Acts 20:17, 28).

¹ Conclusion: These conclusions are those of [James T. Bartsch](#), Founder and Editor of [WordExplain.com](#)