Dwight D. Eisenhower said, “In order to be a leader a man must have followers. And to have followers, a man must have their confidence. Hence the supreme quality of a leader is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, on a football field, in an army, or in an office. If a man's associates find him guilty of phoniness, if they find that he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail. His teachings and actions must square with each other. The first great need, therefore, is integrity and high purpose.” (Bits & Pieces, September 15, 1994, p. 4).

This certainly speaks to the character of a leader, even a leader in the church. But what is the relationship between leaders and congregation? Should it be a visionary decision-maker dictating the course of the people? Is he a servant carrying out the will of the people? Is this a partnership where leader and people are one and they govern by consensus? Since the Church is the Body of Christ, how should we be governed, how do we function? What is most important to Jesus?

FOR DISCUSSION

You may have past experience with a certain form of church government—Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism. If you don’t know what these terms mean, do a Google search. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of each?

ENCOUNTER – read God’s word so that He can speak to you.

**Ephesians 4:11-13**

11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,
12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

**1 Timothy 3:1-13**

1 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.
8 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.
9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. 11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. 12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.
EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

In Ephesians 4:11-13

- Circle “to” and “so that” in verse 12 indicating purpose
- Underline “until” in verse 13 indicating goal, and list the descriptions of the goal

In 1 Timothy 3:1-13

- Underline every “must” in the passage
- Circle “likewise” in verse 8

EXPLORE – God’s Word by asking questions of what you saw. The notes which follow may help you to think through these questions.

1) According to Acts 2:41-47, what things characterized the new Church? Should these things be true of us today? Why or why not?

2) What requirements should there be for church membership?

3) Is it possible to be a healthy, growing Christian without regular involvement in a local assembly of believers? Explain your answer.

4) What are the responsibilities of church leaders? How would you measure the effectiveness of their work?

5) What are the important things in selecting leaders of the church? What things do you look for?

6) Why are you part of a local church? What should be happening? And is it? Why or why not.
Ephesians 4:11-13

Each gifted person has a particular function. People with these five gifts have a particular role to play in the Body.

* Apostles – an official delegate of Jesus Christ, commissioned to authoritatively proclaim foundational truth and establish churches. The actual office of Apostle required that you had seen the risen Lord, and were marked by the exceptional ability to do miracles of the Messiah.

* Prophets – understand and communicate mysteries and revelation of God to the church. They are listed with Apostles as part of the foundation of the church; giving God’s revelation. They were no longer prominent after 2nd century.

* Evangelists – not necessarily traveling around, but having a special gift to proclaim the gospel message and bring people to faith in Jesus.

* Pastors – care for the flock, exhorting and comforting—all pastors are to be teachers, but not all teachers are to be pastors.

* Teachers – giving instruction on what was already revealed by the prophet or from Scripture.

These gifted people all have in common the communication of God’s Word.

12 – “to prepare” or “equipping” – like mending a sail, or setting a bone.

Their immediate purpose is to prepare/train EVERY believer for the work of the ministry; not to be paid to do it yourself.

The long-term goal is to build up the Body of Christ.

13 - The gifts will continue until we have reached our destination—then, implied, they will stop. And the goal is not just for some of us, but every one of us—to be like Jesus.

What will we—the Body/family—look like?

a. we will all believe the same essential core truth—more than that, we will know that truth in a genuine daily experience of Christ (at home in our hearts)—the opposite of teachings and ideas that gullible people buy into (v. 14)

b. together we become fully grown—stable, mature; instead of children who are so focused on what they are getting of church

c. together we will look like Jesus Christ Himself

God intended more than that we should be like the body of Christ. He intended us to be one with Christ—that the world would see a true and complete picture of Christ if they look at us together.

1 Timothy 3:1-13

The terms “overseer/ bishop” (episkopos - 1 Pet. 5:2) and "elder" (presbuteros) are used interchangeably (cf. Tit. 1:5, 7; Acts 20:17, 28). The first term emphasizes his work; the second his dignity and maturity.

A. The office of overseer requires men of proper conduct. (3:1-7)

1. Aspiring to the office of overseer is commended. (3:1)

1 – “sets his heart” (NIV) - to stretch out, reach (middle voice); “desires” - long for, desire (lust). Two words for desiring here to show that the office is something to be pursued; it’s worth the preparation! Leadership is often difficult and thankless and these facts may cause men to avoid it.

The qualifications for an elder emphasize the moral and spiritual qualities, not the specific duties.

2-3 - "Above reproach" - seems to be the general heading for all the following. There is to be no just cause for blame; not perfection, but accusations don’t stick.

"the husband of one wife" (literally, a one-woman-man - There are various suggestions as to what this means:

(1) Marriage is a requirement - But (a) why say one wife? (b) Then an elder must also have children (v. 4); (c) This would disqualify Paul from being an elder (but Paul is grouped together with elders, 1 Tim 4:14 and 2 Tim 1:6).

(2) Prohibition of polygamy - Must not be married to more than one woman at a time. But (a) polygamy was already outlawed by the Roman government; (b) there is no evidence of polygamy in the early church; (c) 1 Tim 5:9 describes the opposite: a one-man-woman, but there is no evidence of polyandry in the Roman empire (though there was evidence of polygamy).

(3) Prohibition of remarried widowers - But Scriptures never prohibit remarriage after the death of a spouse (Cf. Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:39; 1 Tim. 5:14).

Sometimes it is argued that the celibacy of the widow shows moral strength and remarriage indicates weakness. But the same could be said of a first marriage, and this is not affirmed by Scripture.

(4) Faithfulness to present wife – Certainly this must be involved; but would this mean a man married 5 times could still be qualified, just a long as he’s faithful to his current wife?

(5) Prohibition of divorce and remarriage – If the restrictions of 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 only allow for remaining single or reconciliation to the spouse, an elder must be obedient to this Scripture too.
The next three qualifications are personal (his character): “temperate” = “not drunk” - therefore comes to mean sober and calm in judgment. An overall perspective on the Christian life that shows clear thinking and a developed biblical philosophy of life.

“prudent” = in contrast to being insane. Looks at sound judgment and at being sensible, discreet, prudent. A correct view of self in relationship to other Christians and to God.

“respectable” = orderly life. A well-adjusted life that accurately displays obedience to God.

"hospitalable" = literally, "friend of strangers" (cf. Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 5:10; tit. 1:8; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9; 3 Jn. 5:8). This demonstration of love is very important in the NT. Do you use your home as a means to minister to other members of the body of Christ as well as to non-Christians?

"able to teach" = skilled in teaching. Minimum ability seen in Titus 1:9. Not primarily a reference to preaching skills, but the ability to communicate sound doctrine and refute false doctrine. Apparently not all elders were in full-time teaching ministry (1 Tim 5:17).

“not addicted to wine” = "not alongside of wine" - Not given to wild parties, getting under the influence of wine or other controlling substances. Furthermore, are you doing anything that is causing a weaker Christian to stumble and sin against God?

“not pugnacious” = one who strikes out at people physically or verbally; one who is violent, quick-tempered.

“gentle” = conciliatory; equitable, fair, moderate

“uncontentious” = not a fighter; not quarrelsome. This quality is mentioned twice (cf. not pugnacious)

"free from the love of money" = not a lover of silver. (a) does not have wrong priorities (Matt 6:25; Luke 16:13); (b) love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6:10); (c) such a person will not be above reproach.

4-5 - Note the space given to his family life. This deals with all areas of household management - spiritual oversight, finances, schedules, oversight of children, etc. The way a man treats his wife and children is an indication of the way he will treat his congregation.

6 - Literally, "not a new plant" - because the danger is to be puffed up. A conceited person is so engulfed in smoke he cannot see things as they really are. He is engulfed in self-importance.

Judgment of the devil = possibly the judgment given out to Satan for his pride.

7 – He must have a good reputation with the unsaved. This is necessary for the sake of the gospel.

Verses 2-6 are one sentence. Paul returns in the conclusion to the first qualification (above reproach), but now in light of the unsaved community. Satan’s aim is always to destroy the leaders of the church. Be prepared and stand firm in truth, holiness and love for people.

8 - "likewise" - as for elders, the character of deacons is a must.

"deacon" = "humble servant" - service rendered to another.

Acts 6 – 7 men functioned as deacons, though not the actual office yet. They were extensions of the Apostles (assistants), to allow the Apostles to focus on essentials of ministry. Therefore they needed to be men of high quality. The first technical use of the office is found in Philippians 1:1. There they are part of the leadership of the church, but with a specific task (as indicated by the title) of serving to meet needs (physical and spiritual), under the oversight of the elders.

The qualifications are nearly the same as for elders, so deacons are not those who are unfit to be elders!

"men of dignity" = command respect; not clowns, but serious. Self-respect in conduct.

"not double tongued" = honest, not hypocritical. Consistent in what he says.

"not addicted to much wine" = stronger expression than in verse 3

"not fond of sordid gain" (Cf. Tit. 1:7 for this term applied to elders) - Or else you may find improper motivations in those controlling church finances.

"holding to the mystery of the faith" - the primary positive after the negatives. Spiritual depth (cf. Acts 6:3). They must understand and hold fast the truths (mystery = truth revealed) of the faith with a life that matches beliefs (clear conscience - cf. 1:5, 19; 2 Tim 1:3).

Like an elder, who is not a new convert, deacons must be tested; they must demonstrate character in service over time. Such service should then continue after becoming a deacon.

"beyond reproach" - free from any charge at all (1 Cor 1:8; Col 1:22; Tit 1:6-7). He is to be proven by testing and approved as a result of testing. Give responsibilities and observe his character and service.

11 – The Greek word may mean (a) wives of deacons, or (b) deaconess (as Phoebe, Rom 16:1).

Note the importance of the wife’s character: can be an aid or detriment to ministry.

13 - Similar to the encouragement for elders in 3:1. Service may seem menial and unattractive, but it is the mark of a disciple of Christ (Jn 13:11-17; Mark 10:42-45).

There are two rewards: (a) high standing before the body of Christ (Acts 6:2, 5; 8:5 - greater responsibility of Philip?); and (b) assurance in their faith following a test of their motives which reveals sincerity of faith and service in Christ.

GOING FURTHER

One thing we can do to train ourselves to remember, is to memorize a part of what our Father has said to us.

The Holy Spirit can use this to change our thinking so that our “heads” are more like Jesus.

This week, memorize Hebrews 13:17.

“Take Me To Your Leader”        Taking Strides — Foundations        October 3-9, 2011