

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT IN GOD'S HOUSE

1 Timothy 3:8-16

As a child growing up, I often heard people say:

“This is God’s house be careful how you behave!”

“Sshh! You’re in God’s house!”

“Don’t run! You’re in God’s house!”

“Don’t eat in here (or drink)! You’re in God’s house!”

So what IS appropriate conduct for God’s people in His house?

In letters to Timothy, Paul tells us **how to act in God’s house.**

CONCERNING LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH 3:1-13

Concerning overseers 3:1-7

Paul recognizes the privileged position of elders,
who are responsible for caring for God's people.

He outlines qualifications: **They’re to maintain a spotless testimony before family, church and friends.**

Requirements are important because leaders model
what God desires ALL His people to look like!

CONCERNING DEACONS 3:8-13

People sometimes think of deacons as people who
do things elders don’t want to do (or anybody else!)

“If you can’t preach, teach or lead, be a deacon!”

If that were true, ***qualifications wouldn’t matter much!***

When we check out the qualifications,

we realize this position must be **as important as elders!**

Their qualifications 3:8-12

Deacons too must be blameless; solid testimony

God wants ALL His people to look like this!

Word can apply to **people who serve in general.**

Often used that way.

Here it's a parallel but distinct office, similar to an elder.

Men named in Acts 6 were called to similar service.

Description applies to them!

2 had notable ministries preaching and evangelizing:
Stephen and Phillip.

8-12 *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.*

These requirements would be appropriate for anyone called to serve others or assist with material needs.

A deacon should be blameless. 8

His *integrity* should be recognized, like an elder.

A deacon should be respected.

Frequently translated “grave;” *somber* tone.

He should conduct himself so as to merit respect.

It involves seriousness; not given to acting foolishly, not making a fool of himself.

Basic idea: attracts people's respect.

A deacon should NOT be two-faced.

Lit., “*not double-tongued*;”

Doesn't speak out of both sides of his mouth.

You can take him at his word.

A deacon shouldn't be addicted

to alcohol—or any other substance

Specifically, a *deacon*

should be trustworthy in handling finances.

If people don't trust leaders to handle funds,
we won't entrust our resources to them.

All leaders ought to have integrity in way they handle the
Lord's money—esp. deacons!

Though ministry deals with *material* things ... a deacon
should be known for doctrinal purity 9

He must hold to the truth with a clear conscience.

No room for vacillating on truth!

Not just signing statement.

They must be *committed* to truth.

A deacon should be proven first. 10

They've *demonstrated* commitment to integrity and to
doctrinal purity. That takes time!

Financial and administrative experience isn't enough for
godly leadership serving the body of Christ.

Women associated with the deacons 11

Could refer to deacons' wives or deaconesses.

Can't be definitively proven.

Either way, logical requirements are the same.

Worthy goal for women, whatever service they occupy!

She too should have a blameless reputation.

She shouldn't be known as a gossip.

Not "*malicious talkers*"

Related to "*the devil*" = "*the accuser*"

Nature of ministry requires they keep confidences.
Shouldn't be telling who's facing crises;
receiving assistance.

Legitimate requirement for women involved in similar
ministries—or for church secretaries

A deacon should be blameless in family life.

Standard of blamelessness in home and family life
applies to deacons as well as elders. 12

Their reward 3:13

*[For] Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and
great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.*

When faithful, those who serve receive blessing.

Verb comes from same root as “deacons”

It seems to be a broader thought than just deacons.

True for ALL leaders mentioned—all who “serve.”

2 kinds of positive reenforcement: By our service,

We earn an excellent reputation with God & man

We gain confidence before God and man

As Holy Spirit works through us, we gain boldness.

We draw near to God, without fear or shame

1 John: when we walk with God and please Him, we
have assurance we're His children.

Also faithfulness in serving,

leads to confidence as we approach others.

REASON FOR THESE INSTRUCTIONS 3:14-16

He sends instructions because he hasn't been able to go.

His absence 3:14 *Although I hope to come to you soon,
I am writing you these instructions so that, 15 if I am delayed, . . .”*

His instructions were sent because of his absence from them.
He writes in case he's further delayed in getting there.

so we'll know how to act as members of God's house.

Our responsibility for proper conduct in God's

house 3:15a *"If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."*

If delayed, he wants us to understand our responsibility, for proper conduct (15a) and to uphold truth (15b-16).

Instruction about proper conduct in God's house, . . .

NOT about how to act in *building* we call "God's house".

Refers to spiritual building, composed of God's people, in whom His Spirit dwells.

Refers to how we should act in God's household—appropriate **conduct among the family of God**.

In qualifications for leaders, Paul twice mentions the leader's household—how to lead at home.

[Now he reminds us:]

The church is GOD's household.

We're HIS representatives, caring for HIS house.

He's concerned that we act appropriately because the church is **the household of the Living God**.

God identifies with His people by *the church*

It's important to God how we relate to HIS church.

Leaders represent the Head of the house.

We should represent Him faithfully!

The church is the pillar and foundation of His truth in a shaky world.

The pillars or columns of a great structure

–hold roof firmly in place

–hold roof high where it's visible for all to see.

The foundation holds building firmly and securely

Keeps it stable when earth shakes; storms blow.

These two parts hold structure in place.

Ephesians had continual reminder of importance of columns and foundation.

Temple of Diana (Artemis) was there.

It stood firm with 127 magnificent columns,

–one of 7 wonders of the ancient world.

The temple of the Living God is *NOT* found
in a great stone structure.

It's the Church of the Living God!

God's church is God's house!

The church is God's instrument to hold truth firmly, in
midst of storms of heresy and unbelief.

When foundations of truth are shaking & crumbling,
the church is charged to hold firmly to the truth.

The world has turned its back on God; rejected truth.

God has left us—His church—as a testimony to truth to
keep the foundation from being destroyed.

The church is the pillar and foundation of the truth,
It's called to hold fast the truth, to make it known.

Therefore, . . .

**Integrity and commitment to truth is
imperative for leaders!**

And what does that truth look like? . . .

What is the foundation we build on? . . .

Our responsibility for upholding truth 3:15b-16

Summary statement of truth we hold on to:

What wasn't previously revealed about (way to) godliness

<= "right religion" Right religion leads to **Jesus**

Creedal statement about Jesus:

Many propose v. 16 is one of earliest church creeds.

Fundamental truth God's people agree about.

His people speak with 1 voice, 1 message, about Jesus.

The verse obviously describes Jesus.

He is the incarnation of "right religion"

= Right religion personified; made visible for all to see.

He reveals what was previously unknown.

He shows us what true godliness looks like.

"If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. 16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

The invisible God revealed Himself in Christ.

God was previously unseen.

He came to dwell among us in bodily form

= incarnation—"God became man".

He was affirmed by the Spirit of God.

Lit., He was "declared righteous" = demonstrated right

He was declared acceptable to God—by the Spirit.

Affirmed by testimony of the Spirit at His baptism.

–by supernatural evidence –by resurrection

He was seen by His messengers

He was seen by angels; they announce what they saw.

Flow of Paul's thought seems to point to eye-witnesses who announce evidence they saw.

“Angels” = “messengers”?

Compare “angels” to the churches in Rev. 1-3

“We announce the message—what we have seen”

1 John 1:2, 3, 5 = We are messengers.

Witnesses announce what they saw!

He was proclaimed among pagan gentiles

=> to ALL *“the nations”*

He was trusted by people in the world.

People believed in Him.

Finally, He was taken up in glory

–ultimate affirmation of God's work through Him.

HOW SHOULD WE ACT APPROPRIATELY IN GOD'S HOUSE?

1. Call to faithfulness in service

However God calls us to serve.

By serving faithfully, we gain a good reputation and confidence, before God and other people.

2. Call to unite our voice to the affirmation of truth.

WE stand on a firm foundation!

God has spoken. He has revealed the truth.

It's been confirmed by Holy Spirit, by God's messengers, proclaimed to the world—and WE have trusted Him.

Based on reality of His ascension into glory,

we can speak boldly too.

The church was established to confirm and model truth
–truth God has revealed–*NOT* our ideas!

WE HAVE GOOD NEWS TO PROCLAIM TO WORLD!

3. Jesus is focal point of truth; the essence of godliness.

Attention must be focused on Him; what He's done.