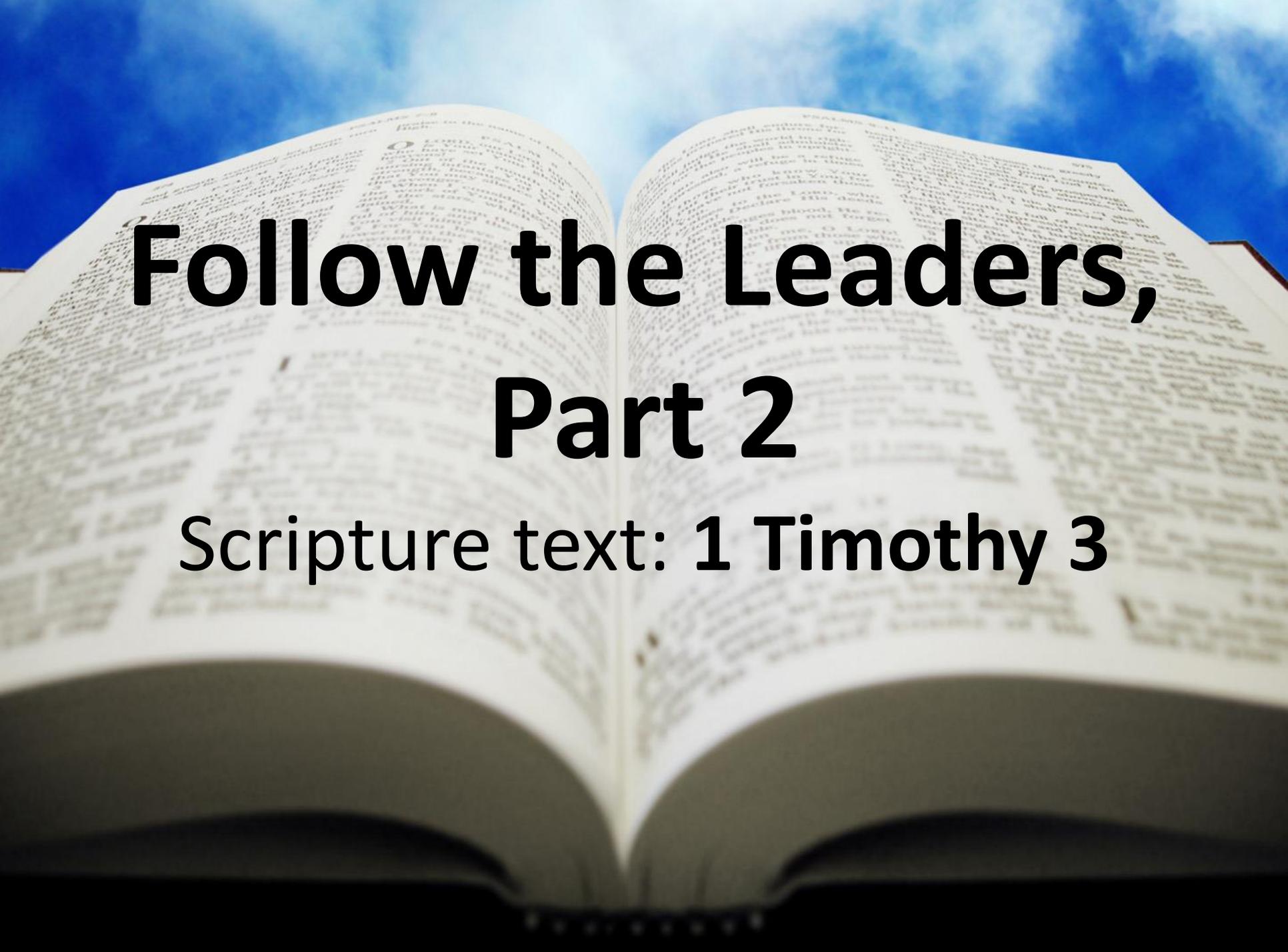


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!





Follow the Leaders, Part 2

Scripture text: 1 Timothy 3

The Pastor (1 Tim. 3:1–7)

- 1). Blameless (v. 2a).**
- 2). The husband of one wife (v. 2b).**
- 3). Vigilant (v. 2c).**
- 4). Sober (v. 2d).**
- 5). Of good behavior (v. 2e).**
- 6). Given to hospitality (v. 2f).**
- 7). Apt to teach (v. 2g).**
- 8). Not given to wine (v. 3a).**

9). No striker (v. 3b).

10). Not greedy of filthy lucre (v. 3c).

11). Patient (v. 3d).

12). Not a brawler (v. 3e).

13). Not covetous (v. 3f).

14). A godly family (vv. 4–5).

15). Not a novice (v. 6).

16). A good testimony outside the church (v. 7).

The Deacon (1 Tim. 3:8–13)

The English word *deacon* is a transliteration of the Greek word *diakonos*, which simply means “servant.”

It is likely that the origin of the deacons is recorded in Acts 6. The first deacons were appointed to be assistants to the Apostles. **In a local church today deacons relieve the pastors/elders of other tasks so that they may concentrate on the ministry of the Word, prayer, and spiritual oversight.**

Even though deacons are not given the authority of elders, **they still must meet certain qualifications.** Many faithful deacons have been made elders after they proved themselves.

Grave (v. 8a). A deacon should be worthy of respect, a **man of Christian character worth imitating.** A deacon should take his responsibilities seriously and use the office, not just fill it.

Not double-tongued (v. 8b). He does not tell tales from house to house; **he is not a gossip.** He does not say one thing to one member and something entirely opposite to another member. **You can depend on what he says.**

Not given to much wine (v. 8c). We have discussed this in our comments on 1 Timothy 3:3.

1 Timothy 3:3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, **not a lover of money**.

Not greedy of filthy lucre (v. 8d). Deacons handle offerings and distribute money to needy people in the church. **It may be tempting** to steal or to use funds in selfish ways. **Finance committees in churches need to have a spiritual attitude toward money**.

Doctrinally sound (v. 9).

The word mystery means **“truth once hidden but now revealed by God.”** The great doctrines of the faith **are hidden to those outside the faith**, but they can be understood by those who trust the Lord. **Deacons must understand Christian doctrine and obey it with a good conscience.** It is not enough to sit in meetings and decide how to “run the church.” **They must base their decisions on the Word of God, and they must back up their decisions with godly lives.**

I have noticed that some church officers know their church constitutions better than they know the Word of God. While it is good to have bylaws and regulations that help maintain order, **it is important to manage the affairs of a church on the basis of the Word of God.** The Scriptures were the “constitution” of the early church! A deacon who does not know the **Bible is an obstacle to progress in a local assembly.** A pastor friend of mine, now home with the Lord, took a church that was a split from another church and constantly at war with itself. From what he told me, **their business meetings were something to behold!**

The church constitution was revered almost as much as the Bible. The people called it “the green book.” My friend began to teach the people the Word of God, and the Spirit began to make changes in lives. But the enemy went to work and stirred up some officers to defy their pastor in a meeting. **“You aren’t following the green book!”** they said. My friend lifted his Bible high and asked, **“Are we going to obey the Word of God, or a green book written by men?”** This was a turning point in the church, and **then God blessed with wonderful growth and power.**

A deacon who does not know the Word of God cannot manage the affairs of the church of God.

A deacon who does not live the Word of God, but has a “defiled conscience,” **cannot manage the church of God.** Simply because a church member is popular, successful in business, or generous in his giving **does not mean he is qualified to serve as a deacon.**

Tested and proved (v. 10). This implies watching their lives and seeing how they conduct themselves. In most churches, a new member or a new Christian may begin serving God in visitation, ushering, helping in Sunday School, and numerous other ways. This is the principle in Matthew 25:21: “Thou hast been **faithful over a few things**; I will make thee ruler over many things.”

Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. **You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.** Enter into the joy of your master.'

It is worth noting that quite a few leaders mentioned in the Bible were first tested as servants. Joseph was a servant in Egypt for thirteen years before he became a second ruler in the land. Moses cared for sheep for forty years before God called him. Joshua was Moses' servant before he became Moses' successor. David was tending his father's sheep when Samuel anointed him king of Israel. Even our Lord Jesus came as a servant and labored as a carpenter; and the Apostle Paul was a tentmaker. First a servant, then a ruler.

It always weakens the testimony of a local church when a member who has not been proved is made an officer of the church.

“Maybe Jim will attend church more if we make him a deacon,” is a statement that shows ignorance both of Jim and of the Word of God.

An untested Christian is an unprepared Christian. He will probably do more harm than good if you give him an office in the church.

Godly homes (vv. 11–12).

The deacon's wife is a part of his ministry, for godliness must begin at home.

Their wives must be Christians, women who are serious about the ministry, not given to slanderous talk (literally “not devils,” for the word devil means “slanderer, false accuser”), and faithful in all that they do. It is sad to see the damage that is done to a local church when the wives of elders or deacons gossip and slander others.

Some students think that 1 Timothy 3:11 refers, not to the wives of deacons, but to another order of ministers—the deaconesses. Many churches do have deaconesses who assist with the women's work, in baptisms, in fellowship times, etc. Phebe was a deaconess from the church at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1, where the word is diakonon). **Perhaps in some of the churches, the wives of the deacons did serve as deaconesses.** We thank God for the ministry of godly women in the local church, whether they hold offices or not! It is not necessary to hold an office to have a ministry or exercise a gift.

Romans 16:1-2 I commend to you **our sister Phoebe**, a **servant of the church** at Cenchreae, that you may **welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints**, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

1 Timothy 3:10-12 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. **Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife**, managing their children and their own households well.

A willingness to work (v. 13).

He is to use the office, not just fill it. The Greek word translated “degree” means “rank (as in the army), a base, a step, or rung on a ladder.” **What an encouragement to a faithful deacon!** God will “promote” him spiritually and give him more and more respect among the saints, which means greater opportunity for ministry. A faithful deacon has a good standing before God and men, and can be used of God to build the church. **He has a spiritual boldness that makes for effective ministry.**

Certainly a part of this blessing could include the possibility of a “**spiritual promotion.**” What a joy it is to a pastor to see deacons become elders, and then to see some of the elders called into pastoral ministry on a full-time basis. (It should be remembered that, in the New Testament churches, **the elders were called from out of their own local congregations.** They were not usually imported from other places.)

It is a serious matter to serve the local church. Each of us must search his own heart to be certain that he is qualified by the grace of God.

The Believers (1 Tim. 3:14–16)

Elders, deacons, and church members need to be reminded of what a local church is. In this brief paragraph, Paul gave three pictures of the church.

1 Timothy 3:14-16 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the **household of God**, which is the **church of the living God**, a **pillar and buttress of the truth**. **Great indeed**, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

The house of God (v. 15a).

God's **church is a family**, so "household" might be a better translation.

One of Paul's favorite words is "**brethren**".

1 Timothy 4:6 If you **put these things before the brothers**, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

When a sinner believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he immediately is born again **into God's family.**

John 1:11-13 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But **to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, **but of God.**

1 Peter 1:22-25 Having purified your souls by **your obedience to the truth** for a sincere brotherly love, love one another **earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again,** not of perishable seed but of imperishable, **through the living and abiding word of God;** for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, **but the word of the Lord remains forever."** And **this word is the good news that was preached to you.**

Paul advised young Timothy to treat the members of the local church as he would treat the members of his own family.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Because the local church is a family, it must be fed; and the only diet that will nourish the people is the Word of God.

It is our bread:

Matthew. 4:4 But he answered, "It is written, "**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.**"",

milk and meat:

1 Corinthians 3:1-2 But I, brothers, *could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it.* And even now you are not yet ready,

Hebrews 5:12-14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. **You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature,** for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

and **honey:**

Psalms 119:103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

A pastor must take time to nourish himself so that he might nourish others.

1 Timothy 4:6 If you put these things before the brothers, **you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.**

A church does not grow by addition, but **by nutrition** (Eph. 4:11–16). It is tragic to see the way some **pastors waste their time (and their church's time)** all week long and then have nothing nourishing to give the people on the Lord's Day.

Ephesians 4:11-16 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Like a family, a church needs discipline in love.

Children who are not disciplined become rebels and tyrants.

The spiritual leaders of the assembly should exercise discipline (1 Cor. 4:18–5:13; 2 Cor. 2:6–11).

Sometimes the children need rebuke; other times the discipline must be more severe.

Children **also need encouragement** and example (1 Thes. 2:7–12).

Spiritual leaders must have the gentleness of a nursing mother and the strength of a loving father.

1 Corinthians 4:18-5:2 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and **I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.** For the **kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.** What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness? **It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you,** and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. **And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?** Let him who has done this **be removed from among you.**

1 Corinthians 5:3-7 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, **I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.** When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with **the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?** Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. **For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.**

2 Corinthians 2:6-11 For such a one, **this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.** So I beg you to **reaffirm your love for him.** For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. **Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive.** Indeed, **what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.**

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, **that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.** You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how, **like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God,** who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

The assembly (v. 15b).

The word church is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia* (ek-klay-SEE-a), which means “**assembly.**” It referred to the political assemblies in the Greek cities (Acts 19:29, 32) where **business was transacted by qualified citizens.** But it is used about 100 times in the New Testament **to refer to local churches, assemblies of believers.** The Greek word means “**those called out.**” (It is used in Acts 7:38 to describe the nation of Israel, **called out of Egypt;** but Israel was not a “church” in the New Testament sense.)

Act 19:28-32 When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater. Now some cried out one thing, some another, **for the assembly was in confusion**, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

Paul wanted young Timothy to know how to “conduct himself” **as a leader of a local assembly**. The Pastoral Epistles are **guidebooks for conduct** of a local church.

Scores of books have been published in recent years, purporting to tell us how to start, build, and increase a local church; and some of them contain good counsel. **However, the best counsel for managing a local church is found in these three inspired letters.**

The young pastor in his first church, as well as the seasoned veteran in the ministry, **should saturate himself with the teachings Paul shared with Timothy and Titus.**