



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

CHURCH QUESTIONS | • HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH BE STRUCTURED | •
1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13 | • 7/19/2026

MAIN POINT

God has graciously designed the church to be led by qualified elders and served by qualified deacons so that His people are protected, cared for, equipped, and built up for His glory.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When you think of a healthy organization, what qualities usually make it effective?

Why do you think leadership matters so much within the church?

Have you ever been positively impacted by a godly leader? What made that person influential?

Leadership often feels like a topic reserved for pastors or church staff, but Scripture teaches that every believer benefits from understanding how God designed His church to function. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul explains that godly leadership protects the church, promotes spiritual maturity, and helps the church faithfully accomplish its mission.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7.

According to Paul, what qualities are most important for someone serving as an elder?

What stands out to you about the qualifications Paul gives?

Paul places far greater emphasis on an elder's character than on his abilities. Aside from being "able to teach," nearly every qualification concerns integrity, humility, faithfulness, and spiritual maturity. Godly leadership begins with godly character.

Why do you think character is more important than talent in spiritual leadership?

How can the character of church leaders influence the health of an entire congregation?

The sermon described three aspects of an elder's role:

Elder (Presbuteros) – emphasizing spiritual maturity and wisdom.

Overseer (Episkopos) – emphasizing protection and oversight.

Pastor/Shepherd (Poimen) – emphasizing caring for and feeding God's people.

Rather than describing different offices, these three titles describe different aspects of the same ministry.

How have you personally benefited from faithful shepherding within the church?

What responsibilities should church members have toward their elders?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13.

How are the qualifications for deacons similar to those for elders?

What differences do you notice between the two offices?

Paul teaches that while elders lead the church through spiritual oversight, deacons serve the church by assisting the elders in caring for the body. Both offices require exemplary Christian character because both represent Christ before His people.

Why do you think serving is such an essential part of biblical leadership?

How does Jesus redefine greatness through service?

The sermon summarized the relationship this way:

Elders are servant leaders.

Deacons are leading servants who assist the elders in caring for the body.

How does this model differ from the way leadership is often viewed in the world?

What gifts has God given you that could be used to serve His church?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 20:17, 28 AND 1 PETER 5:1-3.

According to these passages, what responsibilities do elders have toward the church?

Why is shepherding a fitting picture for pastoral ministry?

Scripture consistently portrays elders as shepherds who lovingly protect, feed, guide, and care for God's people. Their leadership is not about power or status but about sacrificial service and faithful oversight modeled after Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

What dangers threaten the church when leaders fail to shepherd well?

How can church members encourage and support their spiritual leaders?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 13:17 AND 1 TIMOTHY 3:14-15.

What responsibilities do these passages place upon church members?

Why is submitting to godly leadership sometimes difficult?

Paul reminds Timothy that these instructions exist so believers will know "how one ought to behave in the household of God." The church belongs to Christ, and every believer has a role in preserving its health. Members are called to follow faithful leadership, pray for their leaders, and remember that Jesus alone is the Chief Shepherd over His church.

How does praying for church leaders strengthen the health of a congregation?

What does it look like to support church leadership while remembering that Christ alone is the Head of the Church?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How has this passage shaped your understanding of biblical church leadership?

Are you praying consistently for your pastors, elders, and church leaders? If not, how can you begin this week?

What character quality listed in 1 Timothy 3 do you most want God to develop in your own life?

In what practical ways can you better support the ministry of your church's leaders?

How has God gifted you to serve the church rather than simply attend it?

What is one step you can take this week to strengthen the unity and health of your local church?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for His wisdom in establishing the church with qualified elders and deacons to care for His people. Pray for your pastors, elders, deacons, and ministry leaders, asking God to strengthen their character, grant them wisdom, and help them shepherd His people faithfully. Ask the Lord to cultivate servant-hearted humility throughout the church so that every member joyfully uses their gifts to build up the body of Christ. Finally, thank Jesus for being the Great Shepherd who perfectly leads, protects, and cares for His church.

COMMENTARY

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7

Paul outlines the qualifications for elders, emphasizing that spiritual leadership is rooted in character more than competence. Elders are called to shepherd God's people through mature, faithful, and humble leadership. The New Testament uses the terms elder, overseer, and pastor interchangeably to describe the same office, highlighting different aspects of their ministry.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

Paul next describes the office of deacon. Like elders, deacons must demonstrate proven Christian character. Their primary function is to assist the elders by caring for the practical needs of the church, allowing the elders to focus on spiritual oversight, teaching, and shepherding. Both offices exist to strengthen and serve the body of Christ.

ACTS 20:17, 28; 1 PETER 5:1-3

The biblical picture of shepherding emphasizes protection, guidance, teaching, and sacrificial care. Elders are not called to exercise authority for personal gain but to lovingly lead God's people by following the example of Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

HEBREWS 13:17; 1 TIMOTHY 3:14-15

God designed the church to flourish through mutual responsibility. Leaders are accountable to shepherd faithfully, while members are called to follow godly leadership, pray for their leaders, and contribute to the unity and health of the church. Above every earthly leader stands Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd and Head of His Church.