



February 1, 2015 – Discussion Questions  
1 Timothy 3:8-13 – The Gospel and Church Leadership: Pt 2  
Rev. Keith Edwards

Introduction

**“What is a church?”**

Reread **Matthew 16:18** where Jesus Christ promises to build “His church, a ‘called-out gathering’ that the gates of hell could not prevail against.”

Foundation – Reread **Ephesians 2:20**

How did God use the Old Testament PROPHETS and New Testament APOSTLES to establish a foundation for the church? How important is it that Forward Baptist Church builds lives upon Scripture? How may we encourage more study, obedience and application of Scripture in our daily lives?

**Philippians 1:1** gives the simplest outline of what a church is.

SAINTS, OVERSEERS & DEACONS

Saints = believers in Jesus Christ

Overseers = Elders (The word ‘elder’ refers to the OFFICE)

The word ‘overseer’ and ‘pastor/shepherd’ refers to the function or ministry of the elders. Don’t take too much time here, but look at **Acts 20:17,28** and **I Peter 5:1-2** where the terms (elders, pastors, overseers) are clearly used as synonyms.

An example of how Baptists have understood church leadership is seen in a document known as the **1644 London Baptist Confession of Faith** –

Article XXVI “...*EVERY CHURCH has power given them from CHRIST for their better well-being, to choose for themselves meet (suitable) persons into the office of Pastor, Teachers, Elders, Deacons, being qualified according to the Word, as those which CHRIST has appointed in His Testament, for the feeding, governing, serving and building up of HIS CHURCH...*”

A few questions

a) To whom does the church belong?

b) What determines the qualifications of Pastors /Elders and Deacons?

c) Note that pastors/teachers/elders are involved in feeding & governing and deacons are involved in serving. Together as a group they build up the church.

What gifts has God given you to build up the church?

## DEACONS

The root word for 'deacons' comes from the Greek word for 'servant.'

### **I. Their CHARACTER**

i) worthy of respect; ii) sincere; iii) not indulging in much wine; iv) not pursuing dishonest gain.

Why is CHARACTER the most important aspect of the lives of leaders? Should every Christ-follower be worthy of respect? Sincere? Etc? If so, then is Paul not arguing that Deacons should be Christian examples?

### **II. Their COMMITMENT to the GOSPEL**

What are some of the 'deep truths of the faith?'

What happens to those who do not hold on to 'faith' and a 'good conscience?' Reread I Timothy 1:18-20 and pray that God would keep you from shipwrecking your faith. Pray for the leaders at Forward Baptist Church that God would bless and protect them.

What we BELIEVE shows up in how we LIVE! If you believe WRONG, you cannot live RIGHT.

### **III. Their CONDUCT with their FAMILY**

As we examined v.11, Pastor Keith introduced the possible role of deaconesses – women who are servants of the church. Time did not permit a full study of this topic but notice a) that verse 11 is a separate paragraph; b) that Paul uses the same word "in the same way" as the NIV translates "likewise" in v.8. Other passages in the New Testament show women serving other women – e.g. Titus 2:3-5

Part of our confusion over this topic lies in the fact that in some churches the role of deacons and elders overlap. In the New Testament, deacons/deaconesses were SERVANTS of the church and were not the PASTORS/ELDERS.

Look up Romans 16:1-2; Romans 16:6, 12.

What women do you know have been a 'great help' to you? Have you ever thanked them for how God has used them in your life? Take time and pray for 3 or 4 women at Forward who are serving others in various ministries.

### **IV. Their COMMENDATION**

v.13 speaks of the blessing that comes to the DEACONS who have served well. What two benefits do they gain with God and with others?

Pastor Keith used a 'towel' as an illustration of 'service.' Share two examples of how you may serve others this week! Pray that you will be a faithful SERVANT!