

Ordination

Calling, Character, Commitment

CES would ordain those who:

1. Are called to an identifiable ministry
2. Are qualified from a character standpoint, i.e., meet the requirements in Timothy
3. Have demonstrated a consistent commitment to CES

A. Identifiable Ministry

Every Christian is called to a ministry (way of serving, function): Ephesians 4:7-13, Romans 12:4-8. Therefore ordination does not “give,” “grant,” or “confer” a ministry but rather recognizes it, and ordination prophecies may further identify it. Not every ministry (2 Pet. 1:10 the context is character issues). Also, being publicly ordained does not guarantee that a person will continue to walk with God. Furthermore, since every Christian is called to a ministry (service) in some area, the fact that a person can identify the ministry that he or she has does not qualify them to be ordained by any organization. Not every ministry carries the need for public recognition so not every Christian would need to be publicly ordained.

In Acts 13:2, Paul and Barnabas were set apart and publicly acknowledged. There is no indication they were “given” a ministry. Almost without exception, a person will already be walking in his or her ministry when he or she is set apart by the elders and confirmed by the people. There may, however, be some kind of energizing or “activation” that occurs when elders lay hands on someone to set him or her apart for the ministry (2 Tim. 1:6).

B. Qualified from a character standpoint

That is, one meets the requirements of Timothy and Titus. What follows are 25 characteristics specifically mentioned in Timothy and Titus concerning an elder. In many cases these elders were officially “ordained”: (sometimes translated “appointed”) by leaders in the Church (Titus 1:5). Note that the requirements, with rare exception, are *character issues*. A person with a powerful ministry can do a lot of harm to God’s people and the reputation of Christianity in general if his or her character is not godly. Having godly character, not a powerful ministry, is what qualifies a person for ordination biblically.

1. 1 Timothy 3:2 **“above reproach.”** *Anepileptos* = literally “That which cannot be taken hold of.” Used of a wrestler that is so prepared he cannot be grabbed and thrown by his opponent. A leader is to exhibit positive qualities that set an example, and carefully avoid behaviors that can be used against him or the ministry.
2. 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8 **“husband of but one wife.”** Not a polygamist. This does not forbid singles, divorcees or women. From the scope of Scripture it is clear that the Christian leader must be a “one woman man” in his marriage contract and with his heart and eyes as well. Ogling women and making comments about their figure is not acceptable behavior for a Christian leader.
3. 1 Timothy 3:2 **“temperate.”** *Nephalios* = the basic meaning is temperate concerning wine. Hence it is clear-minded, temperate, watchful, vigilant. The temperate person has a clear perspective and lives a balanced life.
4. 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8 **“self-controlled.”** *Sophron* = a sound, rational mind. Used of one who follows sound reason. Thus there is no arrogant elevation or pride about him, and no unreasonable self-hate or self-degradation. It also involves the restraint of passions.
5. 1 Timothy 3:2 **“respectable.”** *Kosmios* = orderly, decent. Modest, well behaved, respectable, orderly in life. A person who quietly fulfills his duties and is not disorderly on an ego trip.
6. 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8 **“hospitable.”** *Philoxenos* = literally, “love to strangers.” Leaders must constantly be looking out for the welfare of all people and be “especially good to the household of faith.” A leader is outreach oriented, not desirous of maintaining a “fellowship of old friends” that has no new growth. A leader will open his home to others.
7. 1 Timothy 3:2 **“able to teach.”** *Didaktikos* = apt or skilled in teaching. The overseer must be grounded enough in Scripture that he can teach the truth and refute error.
8. 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7 **“not given to drunkenness.”** *Me paroinos* = not lingering over wine. Not an excessive drinker. Since Ephesians says not to get drunk, any drunkenness is out of the question. However, there are times when drinking in any amount causes behavior to become less godly, more sarcastic and quick tempered, etc., or it may just be a bad example at the time. All alcoholic consumption should be watched closely. One reason for this is that Christian leaders can be called upon in a moments notice to pray, prophesy, heal, witness, etc. Also, since the Christian minister is to be available to serve at any time, this directive can be seen to apply to other “mind effecting” substances also. For example, a Christian leader would not get “high” on drugs just because God did not specifically mention it in Timothy or Titus.
9. 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7 **“not violent.”** *Me plektes* = “not ready with a blow,” not contentious or quarrelsome. Not one who puts others down with words or fists. Not having a belligerent attitude because of one’s position. Not a bully or hard leader.
10. 1 Timothy 3:3 **“gentle.”** *Epiekes* = clemency or gentleness. A consideration that comes from recognizing the danger that legal rights can be pressed to immoral limits. A leader must be able to show mercy and sympathy for people.
11. 1 Timothy 3:3 **“not quarrelsome.”** *Amachos* = not always wanting to pick a fight, or having to be “right.” Leaders must be positive and constructive in their thoughts and actions, and be willing to dialogue with them.
12. 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7 **“not a lover of money.”** *Me aischrokerdes* = not eager for dishonorable gain. This refers to all kinds of gain, not just money. “It may also refer to gaining popularity by adulterating the Gospel to attract more people to the congregation” (*Word Study Dictionary—Zodhiates*). Greed for money, power, recognition, etc., can cloud the mind and ruin the ministries of Christian leaders. Be watchful!
13. 1 Timothy 3:4 **“manages family well.”** Is attentive to his own family such that things are not out of control in his household. A leader will generally lead people the way he leads the people in his house. If he is a dictator in his house, he will usually eventually be one in his ministry, and if he provides no effective leadership in his house then that will probably show up in his ministry also.
14. 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:6 **“children obey him with proper respect.”** Children that are out of control reflect on any person’s ministry. Care must be taken in the United States not to go overboard with this with older children. In Bible times, a girl was usually married and on her own by her mid-teens and a boy by late teens. It is common to see children who were well behaved until 14 or 15 become rebellious at 17 or 18. Because an older child is rebelling against parental authority does not necessarily mean the parents are disqualified for the ministry.
15. 1 Timothy 3:6 **“not a recent convert.”** *Me neophutos* = not newly planted, not a neophyte. There are many temptations and hardships in Christianity, and even more so in Christian leadership. A leader should be tested in hard times and with responsibility so that his or her commitment to God, Christ, and the people is openly demonstrated and clearly established.
16. 1 Timothy 3:7 **“good reputation with outsiders.”** Well thought of by people outside his immediate “group.” This discourages “cult” mentality and encourages evangelism. In most cases, the people clearly recognized the ministries working in people before any public presentation. This is clearly the pattern in Scripture: Numbers 11:16 (The men chosen were known among the people as “leaders”), Acts 6:3 (Leaders were chosen by the people and known to have the spirit and wisdom), Acts 1:23 (Two men were set forth as acceptable before the people), Acts 16:1,2 (Timothy was known and spoken well of in two towns).
17. Titus 1:6,7 **“blameless.”** *Anekletos* = without legal charge. The person is lawful in the way he lives, and avoids even the appearance of evil (Thessalonians 5).
18. Titus 1:7 **“not overbearing.”** *Me authades* = from *autos*, “self” and *hedomai*, “to satisfy or please.” Not self-pleasing, self-absorbed, arrogant. Not pleased with his own way, but coachable and willing to defer to the judgment of others. Not determined to get his own way.
19. Titus 1:7 **“not quick tempered.”** *Me orgilos* = not prone to quick anger. There are many pressures in Christian leadership and the leader needs to not be prone to quick, violent outbursts.
20. Titus 1:8 **“loves that which is good.”** *Philagathos* = loving that which is good. The Christian leader loves the good with his heart, and his entire life reflects that fact. Thus there are no evil or immoral activities in the personal life or “recreational life.”
21. Titus 1:8 **“upright.”** *Dikaios* = upright, honest, just, law abiding. The leader must be honest, just and law abiding in his own life. But because he is often called on to judge in other people’s lives, he must also be free from impartiality so he can be truly just in his judgments.
22. Titus 1:8 **“holy.”** *Hosios* = holy, pure. Used of someone who fulfills his obligations to God. Christian leadership is a serious thing, and involves much and the person who wishes to be a leader gets more than a title or respect. He must be willing to get the work of the Lord done.
23. Titus 1:8 **“disciplined.”** *Egkarates* = from the root work *kratos*, “power.” It is used of the person who has power over himself. In the Greek literature it was often used of the person who was self-controlled regarding sex, although it includes self-control in general.
24. Titus 1:9; 1 Timothy 3:9 **“must hold firmly to the trustworthy message,” “must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith.”** It is the responsibility of a leader to know and contend for the faith. This is not always popular, but it is a sacred trust that leaders have been given. The verse in Timothy is actually even more specific. The words “deep truths” from the NIV are actually “the Secret.” Thus the leader is charged to “Keep hold of the Secret.” The “administration of the Secret” that is explained in Ephesians 3 is very important to the Lord, and leaders are charged to keep hold of it.
25. Titus 1:9 **“refute those who oppose it.”** The minister is not only charged with keeping the deep truths of the faith, he or she is charged with “refuting” those who oppose it. The word “refute” is *elegcho* and it has a broad meaning that includes, “refute, reprove, admonish, call to account, expose, correct, demand an explanation.” This is not very comfortable in our society that has rejected the notions of truth and error in favor of sincerity and relationship with others, yet this is very clearly a responsibility of those who say they represent God as His overseers. Many people resist the idea of ministers performing this part of their God-given duty. The minister must graciously bear up under such pressure and press on with the work that has been given him by the Lord to strive to preserve and promote sound doctrine in the Church.

C. Commitment to Christian Educational Services. There are many people who are qualified to be publicly ordained, and many who are ordained by other ministries. The fact that CES does not ordain a person does not mean that he or she is not worthy of being ordained from a ministry or character standpoint. CES would ordain only those people who are committed to stand with us and see their association with us as a vital and primary way through which they choose to express their commitment to God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the people of God.