

TITUS

Like 1 Timothy, the letter to Titus belongs to the period after Paul's release from prison. He had recently visited the Mediterranean island of Crete with Titus, and left him behind while he went back to the mainland. Paul had not preached in this island during his three missionary journeys, yet he writes here of congregations in every town (see Titus 1:5). Someone had been busy making disciples, in the three decades since the Day of Pentecost. However, it seems Paul was disappointed with the standards observed by these rather isolated Christians, and gave Titus the difficult task of making improvements.

First, he was to choose suitable brothers in each church to act as elders (see chapter 1:5-8). The necessary life-qualities Paul listed for this role are a repeat of those we met in 1 Timothy. Notice that there were to be a number of elders in each congregation. This was the rule in the First Century church. Leadership was never left in the hands of one individual. One man for one church did not come along until long after the time of the apostles, and gradually evolved over the centuries into a full-blown hierarchy (pyramid of control). The simplicity of the New Testament structure, where all were equals, is the ideal we should follow.

These newly appointed elders would be able to teach good doctrine, and rebuke evil men who were pretending to be important and making money from the believers. Old men were to be sober, old women ready to teach the younger ones to be good wives and mothers, and young men to be self-controlled. As Paul's representative, Titus had the authority to put the churches on a sound footing, but like Timothy, Titus was himself to set an example. Those who broke the rules were to be warned once, then twice, and the third time excluded from the assembly.

Paul had a busy schedule, catching up after those years in jail, and he ends by asking Titus to come across to help him in Nicopolis (on the west coast of Greece) as soon as he was relieved by Artemis or Tychicus, who were already on their way to Crete (Titus 3:12).

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