



## SO YOU WANT TO HOST A HOME FELLOWSHIP

This study guide is designed to help you understand the role of a Fellowship Host as well as aid you in determining whether it is right for you.

### UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE

As a Fellowship Host, you are in fact, a Teacher.

The Bible has a lot to say about Teachers and Teaching. Let's begin by looking at **1 Timothy 3:1-12**

#### Qualifications for Overseers and Deacons

- 1 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.
- 2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
- 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.
- 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.
- 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)
- 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.
- 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.
- 8 In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.
- 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.
- 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.
- 11 In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.
- 12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.
- 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Just as Paul states in verse 1, "Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task." There is nothing wrong with desiring to teach by hosting a Fellowship, it is something many people should aspire to.

However there are certain qualifications that should be considered. In verse 2, the teacher is to be 'Above Reproach'.

What does it mean to be above reproach? The ESV translates "above reproach" as a legal word that indicates a kind of innocence in the eyes of the law. It means that no one can legitimately rebuke you or make any charges against you that will stick.



Therefore, we need to know the law before which we must be found blameless and the standard we must uphold. So, being “above reproach” is expressed through all the other qualities found in this passage as well as (Read: Titus 1)

Paul’s criterion “able to teach” in **1 Timothy 3:2** refers to the ability to communicate and apply the Truth of Scripture with clarity, coherence, and fruitfulness.

A teacher must be sound in his convictions. It is important what a man believes. Those who allow themselves to subscribe to false ideas and doctrines must not be permitted to spread their error. Fellowship leaders who reason: “Well, I know he holds some unorthodox ideas in certain areas,” simply are deceiving themselves.

In view of these requirements, it becomes easier to understand why the inspired writer James admonishes: “Be not many of you teachers” (3:1). It is not that he would discourage teaching; it is just that we must take this responsibility very, very seriously.

At this point, anyone considering the role of Fellowship Host should have a firm grasp of scripture. What is Salvation? How is it given? Who is Yeshua? What are the commandments? What and when are YHWH's Holy Days and when do they occur? What are their significance? What is the Sabbath? When and how are we commanded to observe it?

## THE MEANING OF TIMOTHY 3:6

This verse adds one additional qualification to those given for overseers in verses 1 through 7. New believers are not prepared to lead other believers. This involves more than just their spiritual knowledge. It also speaks to their spiritual maturity. As Paul warns, giving too much authority too early can result in arrogance. His phrasing indicates a believer who is too quickly placed into a position of leadership can become proud and fall into sin. Christians are not perfect and often continue to struggle with sinful habits after coming to faith in Christ.

Even the most mature believers wrestle with temptation (**Romans 7:18–20**). Even Yeshua faced Satan’s temptations (**Matthew 4:1–11**), though He never sinned (**Hebrews 4:15**). More mature believers are better equipped to teach and equip members of the fellowship. They are also more experienced in dealing with the temptations and stresses in the life of the believer. And, they are more aware of their own shortcomings, so they are less likely to become arrogant. For these reasons, a person who is new in their faith should not be given spiritual authority over others.

**Ephesians 4:11-14** “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.”



**2 Peter 3:14-18** “So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters.

His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”

### **REMEMBER: YOU ARE ALWAYS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE**

Verses 4 and 5 explains to us that “He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?”

Paul likewise tells Titus that elders should have “children [who] are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination” (**Titus 1:5–6**). So, what does that mean and why is it so important?

Quite simply, it means that a man’s leadership within the home proves his ability to lead within the fellowship. Conversely, an inability to lead within the home proves an inability to lead within the fellowship. In this way the home is the testing and proving ground of a man’s leadership ability.

Why? As Alexander Strauch explains: “Managing the local fellowship is more like managing a family than managing a business or state. A man may be a successful businessman, a capable public official, a brilliant office manager, or a top military leader but be a terrible fellowship leader or father. Thus a man’s ability to oversee his household well is a prerequisite for overseeing God’s household.”

But what, then, does it mean for a man to manage his household well? A more illuminating alternate translation of the Greek states: “leader of a well-ordered household.” He should have submissive children. This does not mean perfect, but it does mean well-disciplined, so that they do not blatantly and regularly disregard the instructions of their parents or cause confusion and distractions during assemblies. The children should revere the father. He should be a loving and responsible spiritual leader in the home.

Again, if a man cannot tenderly lead and sacrificially love his own family, he must not be given the privilege and responsibility of leadership. If he cannot excel at the one he will not excel at the other. Thus if a man has a family, any process of evaluation must involve a close look within his home.

Thabiti Anyabwile warns of “men who could be too preoccupied with the affairs of the fellowship and too little occupied with what’s going on under their own roof. One thinks of Eli’s hasty and mistaken rebuke of Hannah as she prayed, while simultaneously abdicating responsibility for his wayward boys (**1 Samuel 1–2**). An elder tends to affairs at home.”



And what about the big question of what it means for children to be believers? This is a tricky text that has been the subject of much discussion, but I find myself in agreement with Justin Taylor's skillful handling of the passage. He points out that the word translated as "believers," as in "children [who] are believers," can also be translated as "faithful."

This translation allows the text to nicely complement **1 Timothy 3:4** with its emphasis on control, obedience, and submission. He concludes, "What must not characterize the children of an elder is immorality and undisciplined rebelliousness, if the children are still at home and under his authority."

Paul writes, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (**Ephesians 6:4**; see also **Genesis 18:19**; **Psalms 78:4**; **2 Timothy 3:15**).

In the *Shema*, God through Moses tells the Israelites, both men and women, "these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children" (**Deuteronomy 6:6-7**; see also **Deuteronomy 4:9**; **11:19**).

Similarly, the Proverbs repeatedly portray the importance of disciplining your children. "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" (**Proverbs 13:24**; see also **Proverbs 19:18**; **22:15**; **23:13-14**; **29:15, 17**). A host of narrative passages display the danger of neglecting such care and discipline. The author of Hebrews likewise emphasizes the importance of disciplining your children as an expression of your love for them. He asks, "What son is there whom his father does not discipline?" (**Hebrews 10:7**). Indeed, God "disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness" (verse 10; see **Hebrews 10:3-11** for the context).

Women specifically play a vital role in the family. Paul instructs Titus, "[Older women] are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled" (**Titus 2:3-5**). Again, Paul writes, "I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander" (**1 Timothy 5:14**).

(**1 Peter 3:1-6**) "Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."



## POINTS TO PONDER

- The FELLOWSHIP LEADER should have a firm grasp of Torah and the Scriptures.
- He/She should not be new to the faith.
- The AIM is to ENCOURAGE everybody, to love each other, to participate, to help each other, to nurture each other, to minister to each other, to discern, to teach, to heal, to preach the gospel, to worship, to disciple and to build up the Body.
- YHWH is a God of order and not disorder.
- The person who oversees the meeting is responsible for maintaining order and unity.
- The younger members of the group should be encouraged to contribute or ask questions.
- We all start from different vantage points. Thus, we all have different perspectives. It is only by Experience, Fellowship and reading the word that we can come to know YHWH properly.
- Different groups have different needs.
- It is important to address the needs of the group.
- Sometimes, the needs of an individual may need attention before good fellowship can be established. If something unexpected comes up, be prepared to drop what you planned to do and do what the Holy Spirit tells you.
- Let the Holy Spirit lead and convict people. Don't do the Holy Spirit's job for him.
- It is important to know when to say "I don't know. I will ask somebody else." There is nothing wrong with saying "I don't know."
- It is important to confront false beliefs or we ourselves become corrupted and the life of the group suffers.
- We must stand on the authority of God's word, not our own.
- Sometimes it is necessary to confront an incorrect teaching or a bad spirit. Certain beliefs and attitudes keep us in bondage.
- Ask questions, even if nobody knows the answer.
- Silence can be good. It provokes people to think of what they can say.
- People should be given the opportunity to testify in the meeting as this is also very edifying for the speaker and the group.
- New Believers often bring life to the group and give the group meaning and purpose. Inevitably, the new ones will feel shy and that they don't have much to contribute particularly if it is a big group or if they have various disabilities. They should be encouraged to participate in the fellowship but not forced.



- Maintain the interest of the group by keeping things relevant and nourishing, provoking discussion by asking good questions.
- Encourage others and support what they are saying.
- If somebody is getting upset, wisdom is required to know when to persevere and when to back off.
- Somebody should oversee the meeting, but not necessarily the most senior person. In fact it is good for the more senior members of the group to disciple the younger members by allowing them to lead the study in the group.
- It is good if the leader can synthesize and summarize what has been said at the end of the meeting if things still need to be clarified.
- The Bible says that we come to know the depth and breadth and height of God's love by fellowshiping with the saints. We enlarge our own understanding of God when we fellowship with others. We may not appreciate the significance of what others say until God gives us an experience that proves it true.



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## Self-Evaluation

The most thorough evaluation of your life will come as you are able to examine the more precise character qualifications that are summarized in this lesson. But in the meantime, these questions may be worth thinking through as you consider whether or not you are above reproach.

- Are there evidences in your life that you are growing both “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (**2 Peter 3:18**)?
- Are you more spiritually mature now than you were one year ago? Two years ago? How would you know?
- Do you seek the credit and the glory of man, or are you happy to be unknown and unappreciated?
- Many Believers want to be thought of as servants, but are you willing to be treated as a servant?
- In what ways would your parents, children, spouse, boss, and fellow believers say you need to grow?
- Are there any ongoing sins in your life that would bring shame to you, your family, and your local fellowship if they were made public?
- Are there any parts of your life you deliberately hide from others?
- Do you know what sins you are particularly prone to and do you have measures in your life to guard against the temptation to these sins?
- Are you taking advantage of God’s means of grace? Are you regularly attending fellowship and participating in the lives of the members in the fellowship? Do you have times of private and family worship?
- Do you think your life right now is pleasing to God? When it is not, are you quick to seek the forgiveness of both man and God and to display repentance by making significant changes?
- If your close friends or people in your fellowship heard charges against you, would their reaction be, “That’s not possible!” or “I knew it!”? What does this response say about you?
- Do you look for ways to improve in the ways you teach and discipline your family?
- When your family is in public, are your children out of control, or do they generally follow your lead and respond to your correction?
- Can you speak to your children’s spiritual state? Do you know the condition of their souls? Do you pray for them in specific ways?
- Fathers, do you lead your family spiritually? Are family devotions part of your routine? Mothers, do you teach and train your children, do you pray with them, do you lovingly discipline them?



## Prayer Points

As we begin to consider character qualifications, we need to acknowledge that they are gifts of God's grace that we receive and display in obedience to him. As God's children, He works in us what is pleasing in his sight (**Hebrews 13:20-21**). So as we aim to be above reproach, we acknowledge that we can be this and have this only through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit who works in us to do and even to have the will to do (**Philippians 2:12-13**). And this is why we must pray to gain these qualities, to maintain them, and to increase in them. To that end, here are some ways you may wish to pray:

- I pray, Father, that you would make me more like your Son in every area of my life.
- I pray that you would not let there be blind spots in my life and, if there have been, that you would give me the grace to see them and turn from my sin.
- I pray that I would take full advantage of your means of grace so through them I can become more like Yeshua (Jesus).
- I pray that you would help me be the servant of all and thus pursue true greatness.
- I pray that I would joyfully and obediently "do all things without grumbling or disputing, that I may be blameless and innocent, a child of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom I shine as a light in the world" (Philippians 2:14-15).
- I pray that your Holy Spirit would help me identify sin in my life wherever it exists and to quickly put that sin to death.
- I pray that I would diligently pursue personal holiness by and through the gospel.
- I pray that I would be and remain blameless in your eyes and in the eyes of man. Make my conduct match my profession so my life does not display even a trace of hypocrisy.
- I pray that when I sin I would be quick to seek the forgiveness of both man and God.
- I pray that if I am ever accused of sin or evil, I would be able to be found innocent, blameless in your eyes.
- I pray that you would make me a faithful and patient leader in my home.
- I pray that you would help me show my children that I love them in both tough and tender ways.
- I pray that I would display the gospel in the way I love, lead, and care for my children.
- I pray that I would have a deeper understanding of what it means that God is my Father so I can imitate him in the way I care for my children.