

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DEACON

A. “Deacons” were obviously part of the organization of congregations established by the apostles (Phil 1:1).

1. Deacons, having certain qualities defined by the HS (1 Tim 3:8-13), have a work to perform.

I. AN IMPORTANT WORK!

A. The word “deacon” appears only a few times in our English Bibles (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8, 13); it is from the Greek *diakonos* (“servant, minister”).

B. Luke recorded the appointment of servants in the church at Jerusalem — “the seven” (Acts 6:1-7; 21:8).

1. The word “deacon” is not used in that text, but these men were servants; they rendered a service (to widows) on behalf of the church.

2. And the only thing that made their service any different from the deacons at Philippi was that “the seven” were given an ad hoc assignment to perform (temporary, this job only), while the deacons at Philippi (and elsewhere) served on an ongoing basis.

3. There are a few simple lessons we can gain from Acts 6.

a. The “multitude” of disciples in Jerusalem was involved in the selection of these men (3, 5).

b. The church had a responsibility to care for its widows who were being neglected.

c. As deacons perform that function it freed up the apostles to devote themselves to prayer & the ministry of the Word.

d. {Today, the work of deacons will free up elders & evangelists for that same purpose.}

C. **However, a deacon's work** is not limited to physical service.

1. At least two of “the seven” were preachers — Stephen ([Acts 6:8-7:60](#)) & Philip ([Acts 8:4-40; 21:8](#)) — but their work as deacons was distinct from the apostles “ministry of the word” ([Acts 6:2, 4](#)) & from the congregational oversight of elders.

D. **Deacons are a vital part** of what God has provided to make the church strong & effective in its work.

1. Their service is necessary because it is needed.
 - a. Christians have been known to say, “We don’t need deacons, we have plenty of men around here that can pitch-in & help when they’re needed.”
 - b. One man even arrogantly said, “I just DO the work of a deacon, I don’t NEED the title.”

2. The word “deacon” is not a title; it is a word that describes of a particular type of an individual who meets with God’s approval to take a leadership role in the service of others.
3. Deacons are not elders in training (though they might be), nor are they men who want to serve but can never be elders (though that might be true).

[Since deacons are more than we often perceive them to be, then we need to view their work in a better light — *because their work is important in its own right.*]

II. WHAT A DEACON DOES! (INTRO)

- A. **A deacon** is a living example that “in Christ” the worldly concepts of “greatness” & “honor” are reversed.
 1. A deacon exemplifies the fact that true greatness consists of serving, rather than being served ([Mark 9:33-35; Matt 20:20-28; 23:11](#)) — *God honors servants.*

2. Deacons are models of servanthood for a community of servants.
 - a. They are men we can imitate because they imitate the perfect Servant Who told us that the highest calling in the kingdom is to serve.
3. So those who want to be deacons should first make an honest evaluation of themselves.
 - a. “Do I have a servant’s attitude? Could I serve the church, not just occasionally, but regularly & continuously in my daily life (2 Cor 12:15; 1 Cor 16:15; Heb 6:10)?

[We all need to be encouraged to serve one another better & more often.

But godly deacons will not only help the needy among us, they will also motivate us to be the kind of servants the Lord would have us to be.]

III. WHAT A DEACON DOES!

A. He serves “among” you (Acts 6:3, 8).

1. Some Christians are by nature private people, & it is a real challenge for them to even come out to the public assembly of saints.
2. But a deacon is someone who has no inhibitions to being “among” the saints, & trying to be helpful in some way.
3. Stephen was not a cleric tucked away in his ivory tower, he was out “among” the brethren & “among” the people.
 - a. He was showing his love for the widows by ministering to them daily.
 - b. And he was also showing his love for the Jews by preaching the gospel to them & confirming it with miracles (Acts 6:8 – 7:60).

[So those who will serve as deacons should realize that what will keep them going in their service is a love for the people they serve & a desire to be “among” them.]

B. He serves as a unifier (Acts 6:1).

1. We sometimes overlook the fact that one of the main reasons “the seven” were appointed was to preserve unity in the church – *few attitudes have more potential for division than racial prejudice.*
2. But “the seven” were willing to stand in the middle of this racial strife & demonstrate the unity of God’s family: “Each member is to get equal consideration & love.”

[Those who will serve as deacons must keep in mind that one of the most important aspects of their service will be to respect & enhance the unity of the church.

Deacons are unifiers, peacemakers, filled with love & goodwill for every member of the spiritual family; they seek out ways to bond us together in the faith (Eph 4:3).

C. He aspires to serve well (1 Tim 3:13a).

1. Serving “well” means serving “excellently, commendably, honorably, rightly, so that there is no room for blame” (Thayer).
2. As a consequence of serving “well”, deacons will “obtain...a good standing”, which means a “step” or “a grade of dignity & wholesome influence in the church” (Thayer).
3. When a deacon performs his service in the right way, it will create a great sense of appreciation in the congregation (What do appreciative people do?).

[But those who would serve as deacons shouldn’t place too much importance on obtaining “a good standing”.

A better motivation to serve is found in what Paul stated next, “*Those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves...great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus*” (13b).]

D. He aspires to grow in faith (1 Tim 3:13b).

1. A deacon who serves the Lord with all his heart will develop a greater & bolder faith in the Lord.
 - a. Primarily because he will have a tremendous sense that the Lord is working through him & depending on him to do His work of service to the congregation & the members in need.

[Those who will serve as deacons will find themselves growing bolder & stronger in faith as the direct result of being more involved with God's people in His work.]

CLOSING

- A. **It takes** a special kind of person to allow himself to be designated a servant to his brothers & sisters.
- B. **It takes** a mature & godly person to carry out his assigned tasks in diligent & responsible way.

1 Cor 4:2 – Moreover *it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*

Col 4:17 – And say to Archippus, "**Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.**"

1 Pet 4:10-11 – As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. ***If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies***, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory & the dominion forever & ever. Amen.

- C. **So as we begin** the process of selecting deacons, let us consider first the qualities God is looking for in these servants.

1. And then let us choose the men who have those qualities, having already seen them demonstrated "among" us.

God's Plan of Salvation:

Hear the gospel of Christ: Acts 2; 13; Rom 10:17

Believe Jesus to be the Son of God, Savior, Lord, Christ: John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31

Repent of sin: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

Confess faith in Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

Be Baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of sins: Gal 3:27; Rom 6:3-4; Acts 2:38

Be Obedient to Christ: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48

WHAT A DEACON DOES

“Deacons” were part of the organization of local churches established by the apostles. Last week we defined the qualities the Lord requires of deacons (1 Tim 3:8-13). In this lesson we will see how those qualities prepare deacons to perform a vital work that will make the church strong & effective.

I. DEACONS HAVE AN IMPORTANT WORK!

- A. “Deacon” (*diakonos*) means servant or minister (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8, 13).
- B. “The seven” were servants in the church (Acts 6:1-7; 21:8).
 - 1. They rendered a service (to widows) on behalf of the church.
 - 2. Their service was an ad hoc (temporary) assignment.
 - a. The apostles instructed the “multitude” to select these men (3, 5).
 - b. The church had a responsibility to its widows.
 - c. The seven’s work enabled the apostles to pray & distribute God’s word.
 - d. Two of the seven were also preachers (Acts 6:8-7:60; 8:4-40; 21:8).

[Deacons are “great” in the sight of God, because they are servants (Mark 9:33-35; Matt 23:11). They are models of servanthood in a community of servants (2 Cor 12:15; 1 Cor 16:15; Heb 6:10).]

II. WHAT A DEACON DOES!

- A. **He serves “among” you** (Acts 6:3, 8). Stephen was “among” the widows daily. He was also “among” the Jews to lead them to Christ (Acts 6:8-7:60).
- B. **He serves as a unifier** (Acts 6:1). He respects & enhances the unity of the church (Eph 4:3). He is a peacemaker, filled with love & goodwill for every member of the church.
- C. **He aspires to serve well** (1 Tim 3:13a). He does his work “excellently, commendably, honorably, rightly, so that there is no room for blame” (Thayer), & thereby obtains a good standing or reputation in the church, which has great appreciation for his service.

- D. **He aspires to grow in faith** (1 Tim 3:13b). He will develop, through his service, a greater & bolder faith in the Lord. The Lord is working through him & depending on him.

As a steward, a deacon must be “faithful” to his charge (1 Cor 4:2), & willing to “fulfill” the tasks he is given (Col 4:17). To his advantage he can “minister with the ability God supplies” (1 Pet 4:10-11). It takes a special kind of person to be a servant. It takes a mature & godly person to carry out his assigned tasks in diligent & responsible way.