

The Ministry of Deacons 1 Timothy 3:8-13

I. Every Christian is a deacon.

- The word “deacon” originally meant someone who serves tables.

John 2:5 “His (Jesus’) mother said to the servants (deacons), ‘Do whatever he tells you.’”

- Jesus is the ultimate “Deacon”:

Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (deacon), and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

Romans 15:8,9 “For I tell you that Christ became a servant (deacon) to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.”

- In the gospels, every disciple of Christ is called to live like a deacon, that is... a servant of Christ.

Mark 9:35 “And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, ‘If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant (deacon) of all.’”

Mark 10:43-45 “But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant (deacon), and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served (deaconed) but to serve (deacon) and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- It is modeled on Jesus washing his disciples’ feet.

John 13:12-17

“When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You have called me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you as an example that you also should do just as I have done for you.’”

II. The official office of deacon begins in Acts 6.

“The devil’s next attack was the cleverest of the three. Having failed to overcome the church by either persecution or corruption, he now tried distraction. If he could preoccupy the apostles with social administration, which though essential was not their calling, they would neglect their God-given responsibilities to pray and to preach, and so leave the church without any defense against false doctrine.” John Stott

- The purpose of appointing deacons was to maintain and protect the priority of preaching the Word and teaching sound doctrine

Acts 6:12 “And the twelve summoned the full number of disciples and said, ‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.’”

- Those who were deacons were people who were recognized by the people as reputable, Spirit-filled, wise men.

Acts 6:3-4 “Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.”

Acts 6: 5-6 “And what they said please the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte from Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid hands on them.”

- Deacons subsequently became a regular official ministry role in churches.

Philippians 1:1 “Paul, and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons.”

III. The Qualifications of Deacons. (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

Dignified - Deacons display the beauty of Christ and model the grace and mercy of the gospel in their lives. They represent Christ well and they represent you and I as a church as they seek to coordinate and give care

Not Double-tongued – “speaking the truth, honest.”

Ephesians 4:25, “Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each of you speak the truth with his

neighbor, for we are members of one another.”

Not addicted to much wine

Proverbs 20:1 “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.”

Not greedy for dishonest gain.

Orthodox (and not racist) - They must hold to the “mystery of faith” with a clear conscience.

Ephesians 3:6 – “The mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel

Female deacons or deaconesses:

1 Timothy 3:11 “Their wives (literally, women, there is no “their” there), likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.”

Romans 16:1-2 “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant (deacon) of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome here in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she made need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.”

There are several views:

Deacon’s wives

Women in general

Women deacons

A special order of deaconesses

Women helpers to deacons.

Special Emphasis for Women Deacons:

Dignified

Not slanderers

Sober-minded

Faithful in all things

“One woman man”

They clearly demonstrate a love and devotion to their spouse if they are married

Managing children/family well.

IV. The Blessings of Having Deacons.

Freedom for elders to focus on the mission and ministry of prayer and preaching.

Acts 6:4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.”

Advancement of the mission of the church “to make disciples to the glory of God.”

Acts 6:7 “And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many priests became obedient to the faith.”

Deacons gain a good standing for themselves and a strengthened faith in Christ.

1 Timothy 3:13 “For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

“In the process of serving well as assistants to the elders and ministering to the church family, deacons will gain a deeper and enlarged faith in Christ. They will see their personal relationship with Christ – which is by faith – strengthened, encouraged, and sustained. Deacons who have gained a deeper confidence in their faith in Christ are stronger, more mature, stable Christians. They have a great love for Christ, greater understanding of God’s Word, greater love for his people, greater commitment to Christ and the church and make greater personal sacrifices of their time and money. Could deacons gain anything better than a great confidence in their personal faith relationship with Christ, growing deeper and closer to their Savior and Lord?”

Alexander Strauch

The goal of the deacons is to glorify God and to serve the church by assisting the prayer and proclamation of the elders through a ministry of mercy to the family of God.