

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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A CHURCH WITHOUT DEACONS

By Andrew Dow

What would happen to a church if it did not have deacons? What if a church did not have *qualified* men serving in that capacity? What if a church has men who are called “deacons” but are not doing the *work* of deacons?

If a church does not have deacons doing their work, the elders will be forced to focus their attention on the physical needs of the church (Acts 6:2).

If its elders are forced to focus their attention on the church’s physical needs, they will not be able to properly feed and guard the flock of God as they should (1 Pet. 5:1-2; Acts 20:28-31).

If these elders are not able to properly feed and guard the flock of God, the church will inevitably be spiritually malnourished and immature.

If the church is spiritually malnourished and immature, it will eventually fall for false teaching (Eph. 4:14-15).

If the church comes to accept false teaching, it will no longer be a local church that follows the teaching of Christ. It will be found unfaithful in the eyes of God (Rev. 2:5). It may appear to be alive, but it will be spiritually dead (Rev. 3:1).

Never underestimate the significance of deacons. God created their role for good reason. We need members who understand their importance; we need men willing to serve.

HOW IS THE CHURCH TO CHOOSE AND APPOINT DEACONS?

By H.E. Phillips

The selection of those to be deacons is not done by majority vote election. This method automatically makes the winners deacons. Others put the responsibility upon the preacher to select and appoint the deacons. This is not what Acts 6:3 teaches.

Some believe that deacons “grow” into the office. They began doing the work and one day they are recognized as deacons. Various views of this method are put forward, but none are scriptural.

There is not a detailed procedure, point for point, given in the New Testament for selecting and appointing deacons. There are three steps necessary in getting men into the office of deacon:

1. Qualifications determined. The first thing to be done is to determine exactly what essentials the men must have because selection depends entirely upon whether or not the men have them. A lot of teaching and studying of the New Testament should be given to this subject by the congregation.

2. The Selection. The Holy Spirit said: “**Look ye out among you**” (Acts 6:3). This places the responsibility upon the disciples (church). Whatever method of selecting out the qualified men that is decently and orderly, and fully respecting the Scriptures, may be used. One method may be to have each member of the congregation make a list of the names of those believed to be qualified and give the lists to two or three respected brethren of the congregation to put together for all to consider. Any orderly method of

doing this will be successful. To stop here would be “*majority vote rule.*” After the names of those who have been suggested are given, each member should have the opportunity to voice any scriptural objection against any name. If any objection is scripturally valid, that person should not be appointed, no matter how many want him; he is not scripturally qualified. The selection depends upon the qualifications. If any man is contentious about being a deacon even though valid scriptural objections are established against him, he is confirming his unfitness for the office.

3. The Appointing. Titus was left in Crete to “**ordain**” elders in every city (Tit. 1:5). Paul and Barnabas “**appointed**” elders in every church where they had preached (Acts 14:23). Deacons are appointed in the same way. The evangelist may appoint those who are qualified and have been selected by the brethren. This appointing is simply the designating them to the work. The method of doing this may vary from place to place, but it must conform to God's word.

Some time should be allowed between the selection and the appointment to allow for consideration by the church. Someone may know of a scriptural reason why one should not be appointed. After a sufficient time has elapsed after the selection, the preacher may appoint them in a very solemn manner to impress the seriousness of the responsibility of both the deacons and the church. No secret balloting should be used because too many evil things can be covered up.

Every responsible and faithful member of the church should know when one is qualified to be a deacon. If one is

taught to act without bias and prejudice, and to try to please God rather than self, there will be little or no difficulty in the matter of selecting and appointing deacons to the work.

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[Note: In this article, brother Philips twice places the duty of appointing deacons upon the evangelist. Although Paul does instruct Timothy and Titus to appoint elders where they have not yet been appointed, it seems to me that if a church has elders in place, that those elders should take the leadership role by overseeing and appointing any future elders or deacons. ~ABDow]

NOTES: _____

AM LESSON:
Desiring the Work
of a Deacon

PM LESSON:
The Book of Titus

“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)