



sermon 
SNAPSHOTS

The New
Testament
Deacon

fishers
Church of Christ

We often speak and study about “elders.” But rarely do we remind ourselves of the purpose and work of “deacons.” Their role in the local church is just as necessary, and just as important as the role of elders. Therefore, let us study, and remind ourselves of that role, so that we can better appreciate their work...

Definition of deacons

- From the Greek word, “*diakonos*,” meaning a servant, attendant, or minister
- It’s used in a “*general*” and a “*specific*” (or “*technical*”) sense in the Bible
- General sense: Matthew 20:26; John 2:5; 12:26; Romans 13:4; 15:8; 1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Corinthians 11:15
- Specific (or “technical”) sense: 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-3; Philippians 1:1

Need of deacons

- The “local” church is “an organized group of Christians” (Philippians 1:1; 4:15)
- Any organization requires: oversight, treasury, and *servants* acting for the whole
- Some “servants of the church” are *temporarily* assigned to a task (1 Corinthians 16:3)
- But “deacons” are of a more *permanent* status, “qualified & appointed” (Acts 6:3)

Qualifications of deacons

- They are briefly alluded to by all the apostles (Acts 6:3)
- And more clearly defined by Paul (1 Timothy 3:8-13)
- These “qualifications” make them suitable “servants”
- To “*appoint over this business*” authorizes them to act
- *Note: There should also be “business” for them to do before they’re appointed! (Acts 6:1)*

Duties of deacons

- To be a faithful Christian (1 Timothy 3:9-10) -- Note this example (Philippians 2:25-30; 4:18)
- As with all saints, to work under the general supervision of elders (Hebrews 13:17)
- To make decisions regarding their assigned duties (Acts 6:3, “over this business”)
- Ex: maintenance; treasury; visitation; scheduling; benevolence; ushers; teachers; etc.

A deacon is assigned specific duties to perform in behalf of the local church. These assignments should be directed by the elders of the church. But, let not the deacons think that they must be *told* all of their duties. *If they see something which needs done, they should do it* -- if it is in line with their role as deacons, and isn’t sinful.

**May all deacons – as well as all Christians in general – serve with vigilance!
(1 Timothy 3:13)**

Let’s further explain the “qualifications” of deacons with a closer look at 1 Timothy 3:8-13

“Reverent” [NKJ] or “grave” [KJV] (v.8)

- The Greek word suggests BOTH “serious” (sober) and “self-respecting” (dignified)
- This means that they must take their work seriously, and be dignified in their conduct

“Not double-tongued” (v.8)

- The idea here is not a double talker, liar, or two-faced; not indecisive, or “on the fence”
- Illustration from old TV westerns: “*White men speak with forked tongue.*” (Honesty is best policy!)

“Not given to much wine” (v.8)

- To be “given to” is to be “addicted to” -- *and no one is “given to” a “little” wine!!!*
- Hence, this is no different than the same qualification for elders in v.3! (Sobriety required!)

“Not greedy for money” [NKJ] or “filthy lucre” [KJV] (v.8)

- Not eager for base, sordid, or dishonest gain; not covetous (compare the elders in v.3)
- Includes personal, business, and local church dealings! (A reflection of his honest character)

“Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience” (v.9)

- The “mystery of the faith” is the gospel; hence, deacons must hold faithfully to the truth!
- This also shows that deacons must be faithful and stable Christians (Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 10:25)

“First proved; then let them serve...being found blameless” (v.10)

- The bottom line is that they have proven themselves “blameless” (NOT sinless, v.2)
- Contrary to the thinking of some, we do not appoint men, hoping they will “improve”

“Likewise their wives must be...” (v.11)

- This could be wives of deacons, women servants (Romans 16:1), or women who assist deacons
- *In fact, I would argue that these “qualifications” should be held by **all** Christian ladies!*
- Finally, note how the qualifications here are almost identical to verses 8-10 for the deacons:
- Reverent (compare v.8); Not slanderers = not double tongued (v.8); temperate (wine/money, v.8)
- Faithful in all things = proven to be completely trustworthy and reliable (and compare v.9-10)

“Husbands of one wife” (v.12)

- Same as for elders in verse two: a male who is not unmarried; nor polygamist
- Hence, having only one SCRIPTURAL spouse (Matthew 19:9; and Romans 7:1-3)

“Ruling their children and their own houses well” (v.12)

- This is the same as for elders (v.4): must have kid(s); and they must be in subjection
- The only difference is: some “age” is inherent in an “elder” -- but not so in a “deacon”

**These qualifications are not intended to be “unattainable” standards,
but reflect true Christian character!**



-Lanny Smith

Times of Service

Sunday Worship: 10 am
Sunday Bible Study: 5 pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7 pm

Elders

Jan Boser
(H) 773-3178 (C) 509-1828
Al Easter
(H) 585-9846 (C) 698-1846
Randy Shouse 570-4908
Lanny Smith 770-8077

Contact Information

10082 East 126th Street
Fishers, IN 46038
(317) 577-3788

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