

## 11—Appointment of the First Deacons

Acts 6:1-5; 1 Timothy 3:8-13

1. The early church faced its share of issues among its own. What problem arises in Acts 6:1?
2. What do the following passages have to say about the treatment of widows within the church?
  - 1 Timothy 5:3, 9-10, 16—
  - James 1:27--
3. What is the difference between a “Hellenist” and a “Hebrew” widow? Do the apostles turn a blind eye to any complaint of prejudice?
4. Why did the apostles not just undertake the role of attending to the widows’ needs themselves (Acts 6:2, 4)?
5. Who is informed of the need for more deacons and who is involved in the selection of those deacons (Acts 6:2-3)? Is this a template for the church today in how it goes about choosing deacons? What could be the danger of the apostles just doing the choosing themselves?

## “Hellenist” Widows

“Grecians” might easily be understood of Greeks in general. The word Hellenists denotes Jews, not Greeks, but Jews who spoke Greek. The contact of Jews with Greeks was first effected by the conquests of Alexander. He settled eight thousand Jews in the Thebais, and the Jews formed a third of the population of his new city of Alexandria. From Egypt they gradually spread along the whole Mediterranean coast of Africa. They were removed by Seleucus Nicator from Babylonia, by thousands, to Antioch and Seleucia, and under the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes scattered themselves through Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, and the Aegean islands. The vast majority of them adopted the Greek language, and forgot the Aramaic dialect which had been their language since the Captivity. The word is used but twice in the New Testament - here and Acts 9:29 - and, in both cases, of Jews who had embraced Christianity, but who spoke Greek and used the Septuagint version of the Bible instead of the original Hebrew or the Chaldaic targum or paraphrase. The word Greek, which is very common in the New Testament, is used in antithesis, either to “Barbarians” or to “Jews.” In the former case it means all nations which spoke the Greek language (see Act\_18:17; Rom\_1:14; 1Co\_1:22, 1Co\_1:23). In the latter it is equivalent to Gentiles (see Rom\_1:16; Rom\_2:9; 1Co\_10:32; Gal\_2:3). Hence, in either case, it is wholly different from Hellenist” (Vincent’s Word Studies).

## Sunday AM Bible Study (03.14.2021)

6. Did the church select just anyone for this office? What were the list of pre-qualifying attributes the apostles offered before the “multitude of the disciples” selected these seven men (Acts 6:3)? Who is chosen (6:5)? Were these Greek names or Hebrew names? Why might this have mattered in this case?

7. The qualifications noted in the appointment of deacons are further expanded as we read Paul’s letter to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In this passage, what does it mean to be “double-tongued?” What is the difference in what is said about an elder’s children and a deacon’s children (cp. 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6)?

8. Is the term “deacon” an honorary title or a description of the special work deacons do? Must the work of deacons be limited to material things (cp. Acts 6:5, 8-10; 1 Timothy 3:9)? Explain based on the previous context.

9. Some churches have begun to appoint women as “deaconesses” in the church. Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13. What would you say about this text to someone who believes both men and women may be appointed “deacons” or “deaconesses” in the church?

10. The Greek word DIAKONOS is often translated as “minister,” “servant,” or “deacon” in the English translations. In the following passages, who is being referred to as a DIAKONOS? While the word is used in a general, common sense. Is it also used in a special sense?

- o Romans 15:8; Galatians 2:17—
- o 2 Corinthians 3:6—
- o 1 Timothy 4:6—
- o Romans 13:4—
- o 2 Corinthians 11:15—
- o John 2:5, 9—
- o Romans 16:1—
- o John 12:26—
- o Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13--