

# SCRIPTURAL DEACONS: Work and Qualifications

## Introduction

- 1) God has given his people a wonderful blessing in the simple and efficient organization of local congregations working and worshiping together for the spiritual benefit of all
- 2) A fully organized local church has among its members those who are qualified and desirous to be elders and deacons (Phil. 1:1)
- 3) These offices and those who fill them faithfully are to be highly esteemed; young men should see these works as goals in their service to God
- 4) The office of the *deacon* is divinely authorized; this lesson will study the work and qualifications of the **deacon** as revealed by God

## I) Definition of “Deacon”

- A) *Diakonos* – primarily denotes a servant, minister, attendant; commonly used term in the New Testament (67x)
  - 1) General (common) use (62x; Jn. 2:5; 12:26; Matt. 20:26-28)
    - a) Any and all who serve: *Christ, apostles, evangelists, all faithful Christians, civil authorities, Satan’s servants, woman servants, waiters at feasts*
  - 2) Specific (special) use (5x)
    - a) A particular work and office (1 Tim. 3:13 “the office of a deacon” KJV)
    - b) Certain qualifications for those who will serve

## II) Work of Deacons

- A) Acts 6:1-6 – a prototype
  - 1) Although the office of a deacon is not mentioned here, these seven men were appointed to “serve” (v. 2); their appointment and work are prototypical of the characteristics of those who would later serve as deacons in local churches
  - 2) Appointed to “serve tables” that others might perform their particular responsibilities
  - 3) Served in the distribution of physical benevolence for those who were in need among the church at Jerusalem (see background in Acts 2:44-45; 4:32; 6:1)
- B) A work of service (1 Tim. 3:10, 13)
  - 1) Not co-shepherds, or “junior” elders, but serve under the oversight of the elders
  - 2) Carry out the needful physical services that are a part of the work and function of a local church, under the oversight of the elders to a spiritual end (save souls, glorify God)
    - a) Benevolence (shut-ins, widows, distribute needed help)
    - b) Material (building, grounds, preparation for worship)
    - c) Financial (count monies, keep books and records)
  - 3) Though we are all to serve one another (Gal. 5:13), the deacon has a particular and official responsibility in this area under the direction of the elders
  - 4) Relieve others who must see to their particular work of oversight or evangelism
  - 5) Can a church have deacons without elders? No scriptural pattern for such (Phil. 1:1)
- C) Local church’s responsibilities
  - 1) Choose those who would serve as deacons (cf. Acts 6:3)
    - a) Do they meet the qualifications given by God (1 Tim. 3:10 – first be proved)?
    - b) Have they been members here long enough to know the members and work?
    - c) Am I first concerned about the good of the work of this church?
  - 2) Honor and fully cooperate with them in their work

### III) **Qualifications** (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:3)

- A) “Likewise” (v. 8) – must be qualified just as elders are
  - 1) “Must” (vv. 2, 8) – required to have these qualifications
- B) **Reverent** – serious, dignified; not irresponsible or flippant in life or work
- C) **Not Double-Tongued** – not double-minded (Jas. 1:8; 4:8) or two-faced; not deceptive or one who may not speak the truth
- D) **Not Given to Much Wine** – not involve oneself with alcoholic beverages (or anything else) that would control and impair reasoned judgments and actions
  - 1) Not “much” wine? Not “addicted to much wine” (ESV); this does **not** give permission for moderate or social drinking because such is prohibited for all Christians (1 Pet. 4:3)
- E) **Not Greedy for Money** – not covetous or greedy; not love money or lack spiritual priorities
- F) **Holding the Mystery of the Faith with a Pure Conscience** – pure and clear conscience in conviction and application of the truth; life is faithful and stable in the service of God
- G) **Must First Be Proved** – determined to be qualified before serving (responsibility of church)
- H) **Blameless** – no evil report against can be sustained
- I) **Husband of One Wife** – a man who is married; a scriptural marriage relationship
- J) **Ruling Children and Own House Well** – manage and lead home well; faithful to role of father and husband in spiritual and physical matters
- K) **Good Reputation** – not a hypocrite or scoundrel; faithful in all areas of life
- L) **Full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom** – full of faith/faithfulness (Acts 6:5), knowledge, and godliness; knows how to apply and live the truth of God before God and others; spiritually-minded, guided and directed by the revelation of the Spirit (New Testament)

### IV) **Character of Wives** (1 Tim. 3:11)

- A) “Deaconess”?
  - 1) No such office mentioned in text or proven by those who would affirm such
  - 2) Deacon’s office/work is to be filled by the husband of one woman (v. 12)
  - 3) “Women” are mentioned while giving qualification of deacons – the character of the women married to deacons (and elders) is to be considered
  - 4) *Romans 16:1* – Phoebe was a “servant” – a woman can serve others, but no proof or divine authority for an official capacity in a local congregation as a “deaconess”
- B) Characteristics of Wives of Deacons (and Elders)
  - 1) **Reverent** – serious, dignified
  - 2) **Not Slanderers** – control of mind and tongue; not tear down others
  - 3) **Temperate** – sober, self-control
  - 4) **Faithful in All Things** – faithfully fulfills roles of wife, mother, friend, teacher, etc.

### Conclusion

The office/work of a deacon is honorable and profitable (1 Tim. 3:13 – “obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”)

Let us carefully consider what God wants in the organization of the church that belongs to Him  
May men who are qualified desire to serve the church that belongs to Christ, and may young men aspire to the work of service in the office of a **deacon**