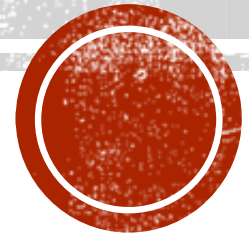


THE QUALIFICATIONS AND WORK OF DEACONS



INTRODUCTION

- It has been said, “Preachers do the elders work, elders do the deacons work and the deacons sit around and wonder what they are supposed to do.” Many times a congregation will appoint men as deacons without laying out what their tasks will be.
- There are two extremes as well in regard to appointing deacons. Some have ignored the office of deacon, while others have placed deacons in as equal to elders. While a congregation may exist without deacons (scripturally unorganized); a congregation is in error to use these men as leaders of the church.

INTRODUCTION

- Again, it should be observed that a deacon is not a “junior” elder. Just because an individual is a deacon does not mean that he will one day become an elder. He may never become an elder.
- Also, a man may become an elder without having served as a deacon. Some view the “deaconsip” as a means to move on up the ladder. But, this is not necessarily the case with all. One may be a great *servant* while not being able to be a qualified *leader*.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS (1 TIMOTHY 3:8–13)

- ⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.
- ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.
- ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS (1 TIMOTHY 3:8–13)

- **11** Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.
- **12** Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.
- **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.

BE GRAVE (DIGNIFIED)

- He must be sober minded.
- He must be serious in his behavior as it relates to the service of God.
- He must be well respected by others; he must be a man of great character.

NOT DOUBLE-TONGUED (DEVIOUS IN SPEECH)

- Literally, saying the same thing twice. That is, saying one thing with one person, yet another thing with another about the same subject matter with the intent to deceive.
- He does not speak “out of both sides of his mouth.”

NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE (NOT ADDICTED TO MUCH WINE)

- To turn the mind to wine. To be addicted to it.
- No one would contend that a deacon who drinks alcoholic beverages would be a man respected by those whom he serves.
- Neither elders nor deacons can be men who imbibe intoxicating beverages.

NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE (NOT GREEDY FOR DISHONEST GAIN)

- He must not be a lover of money, that is, covetous.

HOLD THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

- He must have an understanding of God's plan to save man which was once concealed, but has now been revealed through the gospel.
- He must believe such with all of his heart and be certain of it.

LET THESE ALSO FIRST BE PROVED (BE TESTED FIRST)

- A man who becomes a deacon will have already displayed characteristics which would make him a great deacon.
- The congregation which he attends would have already observed qualities outlined by Paul in him.

BEING FOUND BLAMELESS (PROVE THEMSELVES BLAMELESS)

- This is not a word which means sinless.
- But it represents one who no evil charge can be brought up against.

EVEN SO MUST THEIR WIVES BE GRAVE (MUST BE DIGNIFIED)

- A man's wife can just as well disqualify a man from this office as the man himself.
- She must be a woman of excellent character.
- She must carry herself in a respectable manner.

NOT SLANDERERS

- They must not be gossipers, that is, tale-bearers.
- This type of behavior not only disqualifies their husband, but it also damages the reputation of others.

SOBER (SOBER-MINDED)

- The wife must exhibit an attitude of seriousness and exercise self-control in relation to service to God and in her interactions with others.

FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS

- She must be trustworthy in all things which relate to the cause of Christ.
- She must be her husband's helper (Gen. 2:18).

THE HUSBANDS OF ONE WIFE

- Does this mean that a man that has been married before, in all circumstances, does not qualify to be a deacon? Even, those whose spouses have died and they have now married again or those who have divorced their unfaithful spouses and married again. Such is not the case. There are two cases in which one would be the husband of more than one wife? **1)** If a man married two or more women thus becoming a bigamist or polygamist. **2)** If a man has divorced his wife for a reason other than for fornication and marries another. In both examples, those men must repent of their sins.

RULING THEIR CHILDREN (MANAGING THEIR CHILDREN)

- How many children must a deacon have? Must he have at least two? Some believe that one cannot have only one child. But, is that what the Scriptures are requiring (more than one)? I submit that it is not. The emphasis is not on how many (one or ten), but as the complete verse indicates – **how well does he rule.** At the other end of the spectrum are those who advocate that one does not have to have any children. But, a man with one child is a father, while a man with no child is not. (cf. Gen. 21:7; 1 Tim 5:4; Eph. 6:1)

AND THEIR OWN HOUSEHOLDS WELL

- He must be a family man which has his family in loving subjection – children and wife.

THOSE WHO SERVE WELL

- God expects those who serve as deacons to do serve well and do their best.

GAIN A GOOD STANDING FOR THEMSELVES

- They are respected by the members they serve and shown appreciation.

ALSO GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE FAITH THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS

- They can gain confidence in serving the Lord by seeing the Lord work through them.

WELL WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF DEACONS?

- The duties are not outlined in Scripture. Most use Acts 6 as a starting model– they are to care for the needs of the church that is, care for the poor, widows and orphans of the church. Justin Martyr (c.100 - c.165) indicated that the deacons were the individuals who gave to each person the Lord's Supper and they also took some to those not present (Apology 1.65) Ultimately, the duties of deacons include undertaking various tasks as assigned to them by the elders.

COMMON DUTIES OF DEACONS

- Works of Benevolence
- Finances
- Worship
- Logistics
- New Converts
- Edification
- Sick Visitation
- Delinquent Members
- Bible School Education
- Building and Grounds
- **To Serve**

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- The office of deacon is a very important *work*. It should not be entered in lightly.
- These men should be held in great respect by the congregation which they serve and should be encouraged and supported.