

Sermon Title: Church Leadership: Deacons

Sermon Series: Church Leadership

Scripture: Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Speaker: Pastor Mike Barnhart



Book: “Deacons: How They Serve and Strengthen the Church” – Matt Smethurst

Deacons lead by serving

Acts 4:32–34 ESV

32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.

Acts 6:1–7 ESV

1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up

preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

1. _____ is Prioritized.

Acts 6:2–4 ESV

2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

Our great spiritual foe—the devil—would like nothing else than for Jesus’ church to get distracted from the Word.

2. _____ is Essential.

Acts 6:3 ESV

3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

1 Timothy 3:8–13 ESV

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. 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.

Character Qualities of Deacons:

- a. Not Double-Tongued
- b. Not Addicted to Much Wine
- c. Not Greedy
- d. Holds the Mystery of the Faith with a Clear Conscience
- e. Tested
- f. Faithful to Family

What about women?

3. _____ is Primary.

Acts 6:2–3 ESV

2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

A. Deacons serve as shock-absorbers.

Acts 6:5 ESV

5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.

“The very minorities feeling the sting of unfair food distribution are the ones given a voice, tasked and empowered to make decisions on behalf of the whole church.”

—Matt Smethurst

“They are persons with fine-tuned ‘conflict radars.’ They love solutions more than drama and rise to respond in creatively constructive ways, to promote the harmony of the whole.”

—Matt Smethurst

B. Deacons serve as problem-solvers.

Acts 6:3 ESV

3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

“Deacons were God’s idea. He loves deacons, and he wants us to also. But in order to rightly love the office we must understand the Bible’s glorious vision for it. No, we shouldn’t elevate deacons to an executive board of pseudo-elders. It is an office of service, not oversight. But let us not reduce the role to savvy businessmen or skilled handymen either. Deacons are so much more. They are an influential cavalry of servants, called by the King and deputized by his church to target and meet tangible needs. To protect and promote church unity. To enhance the ministry of the elders. And, in doing so, to accelerate the mission of the church.”

—Matt Smethurst

Jesus is our Head Deacon.

Open in Prayer

Group Discussion Questions:

1. If you have a church background, how have you seen deacons function?

2. Read [Acts 6:1-7](#) and [1 Timothy 3:1-13](#). In what ways are elders and deacons similar? In what ways are they different?

3. In the sermon, Pastor Mike said, deacons are problem-solvers, mobilizers, and unifiers of the church. What do you think that means?

4. In what ways do deacons support a church's prioritization of the teaching of God's Word?

5. Why is the character of deacons an essential matter?
6. Pastor Mike referred to deacons as “shock-absorbers.” What do you think he meant?
7. According to [Acts 6:2-3](#), what does it mean for deacons to be servants?
8. As Christ-followers, all of us are called to live holy lives (see [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#)). How are you doing with this? Is there a particular area in which you’d like to grow?

Close in Prayer