

Diakonia in the Life of the Church

I. The General Meaning of Diakonia in the Church

διακονία – service or ministry. 2 Tim. 4:11: “Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for **ministry**.”

διακονέω – to serve. 1 Pet. 4:10: “As each has received a gift, use it **to serve** one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.”

διάκονός – servant. Rom. 13:4: “For he is God's **servant** for your good.”

ὑπηρέτης, *an under rower, subordinate rower*¹.

1 Cor. 4:1 This is how one should regard us, as **servants** of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

δοῦλος – *a slave*²;

Luke 7:2 Now a centurion had **a servant** who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him.

λατρεία, - religious service³

John 16:2 Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering **service** to God.

παῖς, παιδίσκη as a servant in a ruler's household *attendant*,

John 18:17 The **servant girl** at the door said to Peter, 'You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?'

διακονέω –

1) *to function as an intermediary, act as go-between/agent, be at one's service*

2) *to perform obligations, perform duties, render assistance, serve, of attention at meals wait on someone at table, help, to carry out official duties, minister, care for, take care of*⁴

Mat. 20:28 The Son of Man did not come **to be served** (διακονηθῆναι), but to serve (διακονῆσαι), and to give His life as a ransom for many.

John 12:26 Whoever **serves** (διακονῇ) Me must follow Me; and where I am, My **servant** (διάκονος) also will be. My Father will honor the one who **serves** (διακονῇ) Me.

¹ Thayer's Greek Lexicon in BibleWorks 10

² Friberg Lexicon in BibleWorks 10

³ Friberg Lexicon in BibleWorks 10

⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [*A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*](#) (3rd ed., p. 229). University of Chicago Press.

NAS Acts 19:22 And having sent at once into Macedonia two of those who ministered (διακονούντων) him, Timothy and Erastus, Paul himself stayed in Asia for a while.

Eph. 6:21 Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister (διάκονος) in the Lord, will tell you everything.

1 Cor. 3:5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants (δῖάκονοι) through whom you believed.

Rom. 15:7-9 Therefore welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For Christ became a servant (δῖάκονον) ... to the circumcised to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and to the Gentiles to glorify God.

2 Cor. 3:6 He has made us competent as ministers (διακόνους) of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

1 Cor. 12:4-6 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service (διακονιῶν), but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

1 Pet. 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve (διακονοῦντες) one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

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II. Diakonia as a Specific Ministry

Phil. 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

1 Tim. 3:1-2 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,...

1 Tim. 3:8-10 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.

Acts 6:1-4 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. 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. 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. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.'

Phil. 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

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Therefore, it seems most likely that the officials called diakonoi are in fact aides or assistants of the overseer. They are designated diakonoi precisely because of their relationship with the episkopoi. ...Thus, the deacons are not a separate, autonomous body of officials disconnected from the body of overseers. As the context and the terms themselves indicate, the diakonoi operate under the leadership of the episkopoi. The diakonoi assist the episkopoi by officially representing the overseers and standing ready to carry out tasks delegated by the overseers.⁶

Deacons are assistants to the elders in their ministry.

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⁵ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 229). University of Chicago Press.

⁶ Alexandr Strauch, “Paul’s Vision for the Deacons” p. 57