



Outward Group Discussion Guide

July 19, 2026

SUMMARY

This sermon explores the biblical role of deacons in the local church, emphasizing that while all Christians are called to a life of servanthood, some are specifically called to serve in the office of deacon. The message distinguishes between elders who serve by leading (through word and prayer) and deacons who lead by serving (through practical ministry and meeting tangible needs). Using 1 Timothy 3 and Acts 6 as foundational texts, the sermon outlines four essential considerations for deacons: calling, character, competency, and chemistry. The ultimate model for servant leadership is Jesus Christ, who came not to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many. The sermon challenges all believers to aspire toward the qualifications of a deacon regardless of their formal role, as these characteristics should mark every follower of Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the distinction between 'elders serve by leading' and 'deacons lead by serving' challenge your understanding of leadership in the church and in your own life?
2. In what ways might the enemy use division over practical matters, like the neglect of widows in Acts 6, to distract the church from its primary mission today?
3. When you examine the qualifications for deacons in 1 Timothy 3, which character traits do you find most challenging to develop in your own walk with Christ?
4. How does the story of Lawrence, who presented the poor as the riches of the church, reshape your understanding of what the church truly values?
5. What does it mean to 'hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience,' and how does sound doctrine protect both the servant and those being served?

6. Why do you think God prioritizes moral character over skill and competency when it comes to leadership qualifications in the church?
7. How can pursuing the role of servant without seeking the title or recognition transform your motivation for ministry and service?
8. In what practical ways can you become like a 'shock absorber' in your church community, helping to diffuse conflict and promote unity?
9. How does Jesus as the ultimate deacon, who came not to be served but to serve and give His life, inspire you to lay down your life in sacrificial service?
10. What specific needs in your local church might God be calling you to notice early, anticipate, and address with creative solutions?