

Sermon Notes 6/19/22

# “The Ministry of Deacons”

What is the ministry of Deacons?

1. It is serving as good \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Timothy 3:8

Acts 6:1-6

2. It is serving the \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Timothy 3:9-10

1 Timothy 3:14-15

3. It is serving \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Timothy 3:11-12

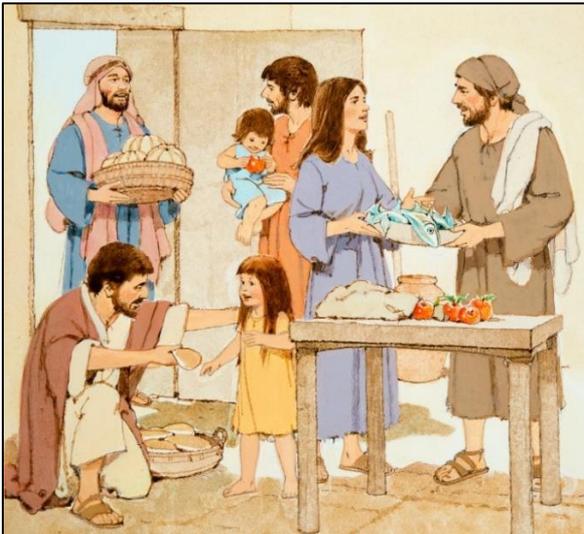
James 1:27

4. It is serving \_\_\_\_\_.

1 Timothy 3:13

Matthew 25:31-40

1 Timothy 3:16



Deacons are called to serve those in need of assistance (Acts 6:1-6).

# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 8: June 19-26

1 Timothy 3:8-16

The Bible commands all Christians to serve one another in love (Gal. 5:13; 1 Peter 4:10). Jesus set an example of serving that He expects all His disciples to follow (Mark 10:45; John 13:15). However, the Bible describes the ministry of deacons as a designated position of serving entrusted to qualified men in the local church. Deacons are men set apart to serve the church in a way that not only accomplishes a task but also provides a godly example for others to follow. The qualifications Paul gives Timothy for selecting and delegating deacons places a strong emphasis on spiritual maturity and godly character. In this passage we see not only the qualifications for deacons but also the high calling of this important ministry.

## Read 1 Timothy 3:8-16

1. What qualities must deacons possess according to verse 8?

The Greek word for “deacon” (*diakonos*) is the same word translated as “minister” and “servant.” It is often used in a general way to refer to someone who serves. There are a few times when it is used to refer to the office of deacon in a local church (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). The men selected to serve the Greek-speaking widows in Acts 6:1-6 were not called “deacons” in the text. However, the word for service (*diakonia*) is in verse 1 and the verbal form of the same word (*diakoneo*) is in verse 2. The Apostles told the Hellenistic Jewish Christians to select from among them “men with a good reputation, full of the Spirit, and wisdom” to be appointed to this ministry. James Smith observes,

Deacons were often charged with the distribution of church resources for the assistance of the needy. For this reason, it was just as important for deacons to be men of integrity as for overseers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James Smith, *Pastoral Epistles Revisited* (Coppell, TX: lulu.com, 2017), 84.

2. What must deacons keep hold of in verse 9? What does that mean?

C. Michael Moss comments,

Paul here uses “the faith” in an objective manner, the substance of what is believed, a synonym for “the gospel.” The “deep truths of the faith” are neither deep truths hard to understand nor secrets preserved only for the enlightened. They are rather truths of the gospel hidden until revealed by God in Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

Deacons may have had roles of teaching that was a part of their serving ministry. We know that in Acts 7 and 8, Luke describes two of the early church servants (Stephen and Philip) preaching the gospel.

3. What is required before someone can serve as a deacon? (3:10)

The New Testament describes the elders as the leaders and policymakers in the local congregation and deacons as servants conducting their ministries under the oversight of the elders. Jack Cottrell warns us about a common problem in many churches where there is little or no distinction between the responsibilities of elders and deacons. He writes,

A long-standing tradition in many Christian churches and churches of Christ is for elders and deacons to form one governing body for the congregation, with deacons having authority equal to that of the elders. In this kind of situation, in practice, the deacons actually “run the church,” since they usually outnumber the elders. This seems to be in direct violation of NT teaching, however, which portrays the elders alone as the ones in authority. A better arrangement, then, is to have a board of elders (always more than one) appointed by the congregation to be the church’s spiritual overseers and policymakers, and a board of deacons appointed to assist the elders in carrying out their work.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> C. Michael Moss, *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1, 2 Timothy and Titus* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 76.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All: Bible Doctrine for Today* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2002), 430.

4. What sort of person must the wife of a deacon be? (3:11)

The Greek word for “wives” (*gunaikas*) is the same word for “women.” The NIV translates this word as “wives,” but the NASB translates this word as “women.” This verse may be talking about the wives of deacons and elders, or it may be referring to a ministry of women appointed to assist the deacons (See also 1 Tim. 5:9-10).

5. What requirements for deacons did Paul include in verse 12?

6. What do those who serve well gain according to verse 13?

7. Why did Paul write these instructions? (3:14-15)

8. How did Paul describe the church in verse 15?

9. What is said about Jesus in the hymn Paul quoted? (3:16)

10. What is your favorite hymn or praise chorus that centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ? Why is it your favorite?

11. Which qualifications in this passage do you think are important for all Christians today? Why?

12. Why do you think the Bible places such a strong emphasis on the character qualifications for deacons while saying very little about their skills and abilities?

13. If you applied the lists of qualifications in this passage to yourself, how would you measure up?

14. What quality from this passage do you want to improve in your life?

15. How have Christians in your congregation served you in the past?

16. In what way can you serve your church?

17. How can you use a hymn or a song of praise in your personal devotions or worship times this week?