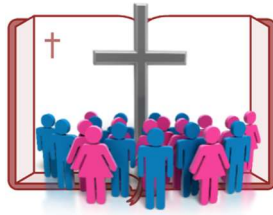


# Being Baptist

*"You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name."*  
Psalm 61:5



## Lesson 9

### "THREE'S A CROWD" – PART ONE Two Church Offices: Pastors & Deacons Part One: Deacons

**LESSON AIM:** To explain the biblical teaching that there are two, and only two, offices designated for the local church according to the New Testament.

- **WELCOME & PRAYER / LESSON INTRODUCTION / THEME VERSE / LESSON AIM**
- **QUICK REVIEW: LESSONS 1-8**
- **PART 1: THE BAPTIST DOCTRINAL HALLMARKS (Continued)**
  - The Baptist Distinctives
    - B – Biblical Authority & The Lordship of Christ
    - A – Autonomy of the Local Church
    - P – Priesthood of Believers
    - T – Two Ordinances: Baptism & Communion
    - I – Individual Soul Liberty
    - S – Saved Church Membership
    - T – Two Offices: Pastors & Deacons
    - S – Separation of Church & State
- **SEVENTH DISTINCTIVE: "T" = TWO CHURCH OFFICES**
  - Meaning of Two Church Offices
    - Key Reference: Philippians 1:1
    - Description: Pastors (also called bishops and elders) and deacons are the two offices the Bible recognizes in a local church. Other church leaders are necessary but must not be equated with these two offices.
    - "Three's a Crowd": By this phrase, we mean that biblically, there is the office of pastor-elder-bishop (one office) and the office of deacon (one office), but there is no "third church office" sanctioned in the New Testament.
- **WHO CHOOSES THE OFFICERS OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH?**

Baptists believe that the scriptural authority to appoint pastors and deacons (or other decisions) rests with the local congregation alone, under the guidance of God's Word and God's Spirit. This does not preclude a church from seeking training, advice, or recommendations from other churches or individuals, but the final decision rests with the local church.

- **TWO CHURCH OFFICES - PART ONE: THE OFFICE OF DEACON**

- ✓ New Testament deacons help alleviate the drain of time, energy, & resources of the pastor(s). Deacons take care of matters such as caring for widows, benevolence issues, and reviewing and meeting congregational needs.
- ✓ The deacons' handling of these responsibilities gives the pastor(s) more time to focus on spiritual concerns, leadership issues, and the preaching and teaching ministry.
- Description of a Deacon (Acts 6:1-7)
  - "Deacon" is from the Greek term *diakonos*, meaning servant
  - Most Bible scholars point to Acts 6:1-7 as the beginning of the deacon ministry
  - Original deacon office may have correlated to the Jewish synagogue assistant
- Qualifications of a Deacon (1 Tim. 3:8-13)
  - ✓ The Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:8-13) show that the qualifications for a deacon are virtually identical to those of a pastor (minus the ability to teach). Therefore, they reflect the great significance of the office, and the weighty responsibility for those entrusted with it.
  - Role: Minister in the temporal & material affairs of the church (Acts 2)
  - Reputation: Testimony of righteous living, both inside & outside the church (1 Tim 3:8-10)
  - Relationships: Strong relationship with wife & leads his children at home (1 Tim. 3:11-12) (*NOTE: By listing definite qualifications for a deacon's wife, there is the indication that the wives of deacons have a distinct role in the deacon ministry, working alongside their deacon husbands as needed.*)
  - Requirements: Clean lives & steadfastly rooted in the faith (1 Tim. 3:9)
  - Responsibilities: Deacons are not primary decision-makers in the church, but their leadership is demonstrated by their service to the church in temporal and practical ministries
- Acknowledgement of a Deacon (Acts 6:3, 7; 1 Tim. 3:13)
  - Acts 6 – *"The word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly"*
    - ✓ The ministry of the church flourishes when deacons serve in their biblical role
  - 1 Timothy 3 – *"Good standing" & "great boldness in the faith"*
    - ✓ Deacons put themselves on the line for God and the church when others cannot or will not, and so deserve the respect of the congregation they serve
    - ✓ Faithful deacons develop great confidence for the cause of Christ

- **SUMMATION / PREVIEW OF LESSON 10 / QUESTION & ANSWER TIME / BENEDICTION**