

THE ROLE OF DEACONS IN THE CHURCH

Lessons 1 & 2

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY: *To examine the Biblical office of the deacon in order to guide the selection and implementation of those qualified to be so ordained.*

I. IT ALL STARTED WITH A PROBLEM - Acts 6:1 / Acts 4:32-37

A) A problem that grew out of something GOOD

1) The church's GROWTH

2) The church's GIVING

B) A problem that grew into something GRIEVOUS

1) There was a growing danger of DIVIDING the membership

a) There was the perception that the ministry was PREFERENTIAL

b) This was probably more incidental than INTENTIONAL

2) There was a growing danger of DISTRACTING the leadership

a) This had begun as one of their DUTIES

b) They early on had decided to DELEGATE it

c) They were now consumed with other DEMANDS

II. THE APOSTLES SET FORTH A PROPOSAL - Acts 6:2-5a

A) For the PURPOSE - vs.2, 4

1) Not to PUSH off the responsibilities of their ministry

2) But to PROTECT the priorities of their ministry - 1 Pet. 5:1-3

B) For the PROCEDURE - vs. 3a, 3c

1) They should LOOK

2) Among the LAYMEN

3) For those who would LEAD (by appointment)

a) By SERVING - they were not being given authority...

*Over the Apostles

*Over the Pastor

*Over the Church

b) In SPECIFIC areas - over this business

II. THE APOSTLES SET FORTH A PROPOSAL...(continued...)

C) For the PREREQUISITES - vs. 3b

1) They must be GOOD men - of honest report

a) Known for their HONESTY

b) Known for their MORALITY

c) Known for their INTEGRITY

The keys here are trust and respect.

2) They must be GODLY men - full of the Holy Ghost

a) They walk under the GUIDANCE of the Spirit - Rom. 8:5-8

b) They walk in the GRACE of the Spirit - Gal. 5:22-23

c) They walk in the GIFTING of the Spirit - Rom. 12:3-8

The keys here are growth, yielding, and obedience.

3) They must be GRAVE men - full of wisdom

a) They make DECISIONS based on the Word of God

b) They have DISCERNMENT to know the will of God

c) They practice DISCRETION to protect the work of God

The keys here are judgment and maturity.

III. WE CAN ALL SEE WHAT IT PRODUCED - Acts 6:5-7

A) It produced a great PEACE

B) It produced a great PARTICIPATION

C) It produced a great PROVING ground

1) Stephen would become the first MARTYR - Acts 7

2) Philip would become the first MISSIONARY - Acts 8

D) It produced a great PROGRESS - vs. 7

1) MINISTRY increased

2) DISCIPLES increased

3) CONVERTS increased