

Before we get into our new study, I want to take a moment to talk about Deacons. Everybody has a different church background and has seen church governments work a lot of different ways. At Sager Creek we have both Elders and Deacons. Both biblically defined roles have an important function in the local church. We see the clear distinction between the two roles in Acts 6.

Acts 6:1 ESV

(1) Now 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.**

This is describing life in the early church. Acts 4 tells us they were sharing all that they had and caring for the needs of each other but a dispute arises. The Hellenists, (Jews that had grown up outside of Israel), had a complaint against the Hebrews, (Jews native to Israel). As food and other things were being passed out, they felt their widows were being overlooked. God has a solution for this. He is a God of order. Have you ever thought about that. Within the trinity there is order. Within creation there is order. **Within the church there should be order.** God led the Church to set up roles to be able to handle this issue.

Acts 6:2-3 ESV

(2) 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.**

(3) 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.**

The apostles see the issue that is happening, and know that things have grown to a point that they would not be able to take care of all the details. Notice they do not dismiss the issue. It needs to be addressed. So, they create the role of Deacon. They are called to serve the physical needs of the body. Their primary role is service. Also notice early on their service is connected to caring for the widows in the church. The apostles who as the church will spread out become Elders in each city are very clear as to what their role needs to be.

Acts 6:4 ESV

(4) But we will devote ourselves **to prayer and to the ministry of the word."**

So, this is where we see the uniqueness of Elder and Deacon. The Elders are called to be focused on prayer and ministering the word and to give the spiritual direction and oversight to the body. The Deacons are called to serve the body and help care for its physical needs. One role is not elevated over the other but their calling and function are unique. Both are needed. A list of qualifications for Deacons can be found in 1 Timothy 3:8-10.

1 Timothy 3:8-10 ESV

(8) Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

(9) They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

(10) And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.