

DEACONS: DEFINITION AND DUTIES

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Introduction:

- 1. A person's life is marked by important events:**
 - a. Birth, baptism, graduation, job and career decisions, wedding, birth of children, grandchildren, retirement, and death.**
 - b. These decisions determine the happiness and success of one's life.**
- 2. A congregation's life is also marked by important events.**
 - a. Choosing a preacher, building a meeting place, choosing to support good works, and appointing elders and deacons.**
 - b. These events also determine the soundness and success of a congregation.**
 - c. No event is more important than the appointment of leaders.**
- 3. We often discuss the work and qualifications of elders, but seldom that of deacons.**
- 4. We shall note the Biblical definition of a deacon, the qualifications he must have, and the duties he must perform.**

Discussion:

- I. WHO IS A DEACON?**
 - A. The English word "deacon" is found only three times in the King James, New King James, and American Standard Versions.**
 - 1. The Greek word is "diakonos," which means "servant," or "minister."**
 - 2. Diakonos is found thirty times in the Greek New Testament.**
 - 3. Twenty times it is translated "minister."**
 - 4. Seven times it is translated "servant."**
 - 5. Three times it is transliterated" (the Greek word is made into an English word) as "deacon" (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8,12).**
 - 6. It is transliterated in these three cases because the context clearly shows a special class of servants is being considered.**
 - B. A servant is one under the authority of others (Matt. 8:5-10).**
 - C. One who humbly serves is great in God's eyes (Matt. 20:20-28).**

II. WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS?

A. There are nine specific qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

- 1. A deacon must be “reverent” (grave in KJV); he fears God and respects His Word.**
- 2. A deacon must not be “double-tongued.”**
 - a. He is consistent in his speech.**
 - b. He is not a gossiper or liar (Col. 3:9; Rev. 21:8).**
- 3. A deacon must not be “given to much wine.”**
 - a. “Wine” is generic in the Bible and can refer to that which is fermented or that which is unfermented.**
 - b. The adverb “much” indicates it is forbidding over-indulgence; therefore gluttony.**
- 4. A deacon must not be “greedy for money.”**
 - a. He must not be covetous (Luke 12:15).**
 - b. He is not one who lives for the purpose of making money.**
- 5. A deacon must “hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.”**
 - a. The “mystery of the faith” is the Gospel (Eph. 3:8-12).**
 - b. He is a student of God’s Word and lives by it.**
- 6. Deacons “must first be tested and found blameless.”**
 - a. A new convert should not be chosen as a deacon.**
 - b. Deacons must be mature, faithful Christians.**
- 7. A deacon must be the “husband of one wife.”**
 - a. He must be a man; therefore women cannot be deacons.**
 - b. He must be a married man.**
 - c. He must not be a polygamist.**
 - d. He must not be unscripturally divorced and remarried.**
- 8. Deacons must “rule their children and their own houses well.”**
 - a. He must have a good family life.**

b. His wife and children will be a credit to his leadership.

9. A deacon's wife must also meet certain qualifications.

“Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things” (11).

III. WHAT IS THE WORK OF DEACONS?

A. There are common misconceptions of the work of deacons.

1. “The church is overseen by elders and deacons.”

- a. Elders are the overseers; deacons are servants.
- b. A deacon is not a “junior” elder, nor is he necessarily going to be “promoted” to the eldership.
- c. Any authority that a deacon has is given by the elders.

2. “A church can have deacons without elders.”

- a. There is no NT example of this; if the men in Acts 6 were deacons, the apostles were the overseers until elders were appointed (Acts 11:30).
- b. If deacons are appointed without elders, they will soon become de facto elders without being qualified.

3. “Elders are only over the spiritual work of the church and deacons are over the physical work.”

- a. Only the elders are overseers and they oversee the entire work of the church.
- b. Antioch sent a contribution for famine relief to Jerusalem; it was delivered to the elders (Acts 11:29,30).
- c. It is difficult to separate the spiritual and physical in the work of the church for the physical is tied to the spiritual.

B. A deacon's work is that which is assigned to him by the elders.

Conclusion:

1. Deacons are special servants of the church who must meet God-given qualifications, but all Christians are servants.

2. One “enters the ministry (service)” of Christ when he obeys the Gospel.

