

Deacons: Lead by Serving | Acts 6:1-7 & 1 Timothy 3:8-13

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. 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. 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. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The story of the diaconate

- a. Service has always begun with godly character
 1. "A church whose ministers are chained to the tyranny of the urgent – which so often shows up in 'tangible problems' – is a church removing its heart to strengthen its arm. It's a kind of slow-motion suicide. A church without deacons may lack health, but a church without biblical preaching cannot exist." (Matt Smethurst)
 - i. Reputation
 - ii. Holy Spirit Filled
 - iii. Wise

The character of a deacon

- a. Dignified (this is where character begins)
 - i. Not double-tongued
 - ii. Not addicted to wine
 - iii. Not greedy
 - iv. Sober-minded
 - v. Faithful

The competency of a deacon

- a. The mystery of the faith: The truth of God not something hidden, but revealed:
 1. "Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen." (Romans 16:25-27)
 - ii. Know the truth
 - iii. Hold the truth
 - iv. Live the truth

The consistency of a deacon

- a. Managing their household faithfully:
 - i. Faithful spouse
 - ii. Godly parents
 - iii. Women deacons
 1. "Deaconesses were appointed, not to soothe God by chantings or unintelligible murmurs, and spend the rest of theory time in idleness, but to perform a public ministry of the church towards the poor, and to labor with all zeal, close attention and diligence, in offices of charity." (John Calvin)
 2. "Deaconesses, an office that most certainly was recognized in the apostolic churches. It would be a great mercy if God gave us the privilege of having many sons who all preached the gospel, and many daughters who were all eminent in the church as teachers, deaconesses, missionaries, and the like." (Charles Spurgeon)

The rewards of a deacon

- a. The office of deacons is one of glory not glamor:
 - i. Good standing
 - ii. Great assurance
 - iii. The office of Jesus
 1. "But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:43-45)