

## The Qualifications and Responsibilities of Deacons

(1 Tim. 3:8-13)

### Introduction

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- **Do we really need deacons?**

- Deacons are mentioned in the NT and are required in our bylaws, but are there any practical reasons to have deacons in our day & age?
  - **To free the pastor up for more pressing tasks**
    - This isn't a complaint, it's just a fact of life: there's always more ministry to be done than one person can do.
    - There are hospital and shut-in visits to make, evangelistic opportunities, ministry and support staff to coordinate, counseling appointments, & denominational responsibilities, not to mention preaching and teaching multiple times a week every week and praying to discern God's will for our shared ministry.
    - With all that needs to be done, it's easy to lose track of things like prayer and sermon preparation.
  - **To care for the welfare of the church**
    - There are spiritual needs in the church, but there are practical needs as well.
    - [James 2:15-16 warns us against wishing people peace and goodwill while ignoring their need for food or clothing.](#)
    - Sometimes older members need a listening ear or a helping hand. Sometimes younger believers need a word of encouragement or an example to follow.
  - **To promote harmony in the church**
    - As long as there are people in the church there will be offenses, misunderstanding, and division.
    - Deacons serve on the front lines of ministry by answering a question, calming a concern, or addressing a disruptive member.
  - **To multiply the church's witness in the world**
    - Deacons can use their influence in the community to build the reputation of the church.
    - As a man of God, a deacon can share his faith and lead other men to faith in Jesus Christ.
- These were the reasons the church in Jerusalem, a church of thousands, called out 7 men in Acts 6 to serve the widows who have been overlooked.
- Some churches have done away with the office of deacon in favor of a generalized ministry of service for all their members.
- But these 4 reasons are just as important today as they were in the early church. **In addition to the Biblical and traditional reasons, they teach us that we really do need deacons today.**

- Our bylaws call for deacons to be members in "good standing" which means they should abide by our *Membership Agreement*
- Our bylaws call for deacons to be elected according to the qualifications listed in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- Acts 6:3 lists 2 basic qualifications for men who would serve as deacons. They must have a reputation for being:
  - "Full of the Spirit" – Spiritually motivated, sensitive, and mature.
  - "Full of wisdom – Able to carry out ministry in a knowledgeable way.
- 1 Tim. contains a more comprehensive list of qualifications for the office of deacon.
  - This morning, I want to share those with you along with some responsibilities that are derived from the name "deacon."
  - I want to help you as you participate in our deacon nomination process.
    - **At the end of the service, you will receive a list of all of the adult males, over the age of 21 who are active members of our church.**
    - Please look over this list prayerfully & choose up to 5 men who you would like to nominate to serve as a deacon (& return it next Sun.)
    - I will work with the deacons to vet your nominations & interview the potential candidates for deacon in anticipation of a deacon ordination service on March 29.

### Body

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#### I. Qualifications

##### A. Spiritually mature and respected (v. 8 and 10)

1. "known to be full of the HS and wisdom" (Acts 6: 3, NIV)
2. "Dignity (worthy of respect, NIV)" & "tested, beyond reproach"

##### B. Free from the vices of: (v. 8)

1. Dishonesty and insincerity – saying one thing to one person and something else to someone else.
2. Drunkenness or greed – using alcohol or abusing their position
3. **These sins can be particularly destructive for someone working in a practical and people-centered ministry in the church.**

##### C. Spiritually grounded (v. 9)

1. "holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience" (v. 9)
2. Deacons don't have to be preachers or teachers like a pastor, but they must have a deep conviction about the JC and the Gospel.
3. [Like an anchor, the convictions of a deacon holds their churches, families, & lives secure during the inevitable storms of life.](#)

##### D. Having a supportive and godly wife (v. 11)

1. The term "women" refers to the wife of a deacon.
2. The ministry of a deacon is helped or hurt by his wife, who must:
  - a. Be equally "dignified" (i.e. worthy of respect)
  - b. Not prone to gossip - Gossip tears the church apart, especially when it comes from the lips of a deacon's wife.
  - c. Temperate and trustworthy in all things.

## E. One who leads his family well (v 12)

1. A deacon is to be a “one-woman kind of man” which means he is not to be divorced AND he is faithful to his wife publicly & privately.
2. A deacon is the same kind of man at home as he is everywhere else.

*Verse 13 encourages men to “serve well” as deacons. What does that look like?*

## II. Responsibilities

- A. The term *diakonos* implies humble service.
  1. Humility is a must for serving in God’s kingdom (Matt 20:25)
  2. Deacons fill a unique role in the church in serving JC by serving the membership of the church and her leadership.
- B. Deacons have 3 broad categories of responsibilities in Scripture.
  1. “The ministry of the table” which includes caring for the physical needs of the church and community
    - a. All churches don’t have the same needs as FBC Jerusalem, but all churches have needs.
    - b. Some of our biggest needs are:
      - i. Caring for the ongoing needs of our members (including those who are sick and shut-in)
      - ii. Serving the Lord’s Supper once a quarter
      - iii. Protecting the unity of our church
  2. Working with the pastor for the overall health of the church body.
  3. Serving as an example to the church and community (**What if everyone in the church followed Jesus like Deacon X and his wife?**)

## Conclusion

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- Deacon nominations are not a beauty pageant or a popularity contest.
  - You shouldn’t nomination someone just because you like him, or you think he’ll increase the prestige of our church.
  - You should nominate someone who matches the qualifications given to us in Scripture.
- **In addition to filling out the deacon nomination form, I want to give you 2 other ways to apply today’s message.**
  - **Pray for your leaders.**
    - The ministry of deacons came into existence through a division in the church.
    - Pastor, deacons, and other church officers play a crucial role in building up the unity of the church – but it’s not always an easy role.
  - **Raise your expectations of yourself.**
    - Every one of these qualifications (except for being able to teach) is applied to all believers somewhere else in Scripture.
    - Don’t expect less from yourself because you aren’t a deacon, expect more from yourself so that you can follow their example.
- **We need deacons for a lot of reasons, and we need your help to recognize the men who God has called to that ministry.**