

## What is Biblical Church Government? Lesson 10 – Deacons

### Introduction:

- The word “Deacon” comes from the Greek word for “\_\_\_\_\_”.
- The original use of the word “Deacon” in the ancient Greek culture referred to serving \_\_\_\_\_ during a meal.
- As time went on, the word “Deacon” came to be used for \_\_\_\_\_ of service.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the office of Deacon.

A. The need to care for widows in the early church reveals why the \_\_\_\_\_ of Deacon was created.

***Acts 6.1–7*** 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. 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. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”*** 5 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. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 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.

B. Though they’re not called “Deacons” in this passage, these seven men were \_\_\_\_\_ by the church as an official group of servants.

- This was not just \_\_\_\_\_ work that was open to everyone in the church.
- These men were \_\_\_\_\_ and appointed to accomplish the specific task of using church money to provide relief to needy widows.
- These men had to be \_\_\_\_\_ for the task by being recognized by the church as being trustworthy, Spirit-filled, and wise with the use of money.

C. The office of Deacon was created in order to serve the \_\_\_\_\_ needs of the members so that the Elders could serve the \_\_\_\_\_ needs of the members.

- Deacons are appointed to \_\_\_\_\_ some of the burdens of ministry from off of the shoulders of the Elders.

D. Though the ministry of Deacons is to meet physical needs, it brings about \_\_\_\_\_ results.

- The ministry of Deacons greatly increases the \_\_\_\_\_ of the ministry of the Word and prayer by the Elders.

***Acts 6.2*** 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.***

***Acts 6.4*** But we will devote ourselves to ***prayer and to the ministry of the word.***”

***Acts 6.7*** 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.

- The ministry of Deacons expresses the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ in ways that increase greater church \_\_\_\_\_.

***Acts 6.1*** 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.

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ for the office of Deacon.

A. The Biblical list of qualifications for deacons focuses on a person’s moral \_\_\_\_\_ rather than their skills or abilities.

***1 Tim 3.8–13*** 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. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 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.

**B. It is easy to see the \_\_\_\_\_ between the qualifications for Deacons and the qualifications for Elders.**

- **Paul identifies nine qualifications that are \_\_\_\_\_ of Deacons:**
  - **Dignified – They must demonstrate that they are decent and appropriate in their \_\_\_\_\_ toward others and in their personal habits.**
  - **Not double-tongued – They cannot have a pattern of saying one thing to some people, but \_\_\_\_\_ to others, or a pattern of saying one thing but meaning another.**
  - **Not addicted to much wine – They must demonstrate that they are not \_\_\_\_\_ to alcohol or drugs.**
  - **Not greedy for dishonest gain – They must demonstrate that they are not someone who has an unhealthy \_\_\_\_\_ for more money.**
  - **Hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience – They must hold firm to the true \_\_\_\_\_ and avoid sinful practices that defile the conscience.**
  - **Blameless – They must demonstrate a clear pattern of godly \_\_\_\_\_ in all things, and cannot be accused of having bad character.**
  - **Tested first – They should demonstrate over time a clear pattern of godly living, \_\_\_\_\_ and doctrinal understanding.**
  - **Husband of one wife – They must demonstrate a commitment to being completely \_\_\_\_\_ and loyal to their spouse.**
  - **Manage his own household well – They must demonstrate that they \_\_\_\_\_ their own family well, and keeps it under control with dignity.**

**C. The main difference between Elders and Deacons is their different \_\_\_\_\_ in ministry, not their character.**

**3. Can \_\_\_\_\_ Be Deacons?**

**A. Since the word “Deacon” means “servant”, the office of Deacon is not to be a leading role, but a \_\_\_\_\_ role.**

- In 1 Timothy 3, Paul teaches us that the office of Elder is to be held only by men, because it is a \_\_\_\_\_ role.
- There are two clear limitations placed on women in the church:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ men in congregational worship
  - Exercising \_\_\_\_\_ over men in the church

*1 Tim 2.12 I do not permit a woman to **teach** or to exercise **authority** over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.*

- The word translated as “wife” in the New Testament is from a Greek word that simply means “\_\_\_\_\_”, so it’s possible that Paul was actually referring to women who were deacons in 1 Timothy 3.11.

*1 Tim 3.11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.*

- In his letters, Paul uses the word for “Deacon” or “servant” to refer to women, so it appears that women served as \_\_\_\_\_ in the early church.

*Rom 16.1 I commend to you **our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae,***

- In churches that clearly understand that the office of Deacon is a serving role and not a leadership role, then women can \_\_\_\_\_ in the office of Deacon without violating the Biblical teaching on male leadership.
- In churches where this distinction is clear, then it will allow some women to be recognized as Deacons for the serving they are \_\_\_\_\_ doing.

#### 4. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Deacons

A. Since the New Testament does not assign specific duties to Deacons, their duties depend on what the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church are.

- The Elders are to \_\_\_\_\_ the Deacons their various duties, just as the Apostles did to the seven men in Acts 6.

B. What are some duties that Deacons might be responsible for today?

- \_\_\_\_\_ – Deacons could help with church fellowship meals or meals for needy members.

- \_\_\_\_\_ – Deacons could be responsible for managing the church meeting place or church possessions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Deacons could oversee the administration or distribution of funds or other assistance to the needy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Deacons could help oversee the overall financial business of the church, or be assigned to handle the day-to-day matters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Deacons could be responsible for overseeing the distribution of church bulletins, or seating the congregation, or preparing the bread and cup for the Lord's Supper, or helping to serve it to the church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Deacons should be available to help in a variety of ways, so that the Elders are able to concentrate on teaching and shepherding the church.

#### **Conclusion:**

- The Bible charges Elders to care for the spiritual needs of the church, and it charges Deacons to serve the \_\_\_\_\_ needs of the church.
- Elders are called to direct the affairs of the church and Deacons are called to \_\_\_\_\_ that direction.
- Like shock-absorbers on a car, Deacons are to take care of many needs of the church in order to enable the Elders to lead the church without being \_\_\_\_\_ from their priorities of prayer and the Word.