

Theme: The Deacons' work is rooted in the Old Testament, portrayed in the ministry and life of Jesus, and established in the New Testament as a fruitful, needful position in Christ's church. The work is spiritual in nature as Deacons lead the church in the ministry of mercy, compassion and caring for the practical needs of the body.

Background and Introduction: Having considered the qualifications for Deacons, we turn aside from our study in 1 Timothy to consider their work and calling.

## I. The Roots of the Deacon

- Are "deacons" a new concept in the New Testament?

- Is the "office" a pragmatic and temporal answer to a problem in Acts?

### A. "Deacons" in the Old Testament

1. *diakonoi* doesn't appear in the translations of the Old Testament

- Only appearance of the word is in *Septuagint* (Esther 2:2; 6:3, 5)

2. Levites were the "servants" assisting Aaron and the priests (Numbers 3 & 4)

NOTE: All priests were Levites (of that line) but not all Levites were priests.

a. Caring for the courts and the chambers of the sanctuary

b. Permitted near the sacred furnishings (Num. 8:19; 16:9-10; 18:22-23)

c. Moving the tabernacle (Numbers 1:48-54; 4:3-15; 18:6)

3. Offering spiritual service

4. Set apart through sacred ceremony (Numbers 8:5-13)

5. Supported by a tithe of the people (Leviticus 27:32-33; Numbers 18:21, 24)

### B. The perfect deacon

1. Our perfect High Priest!

- Work of the temple finds its fulfillment in person and work of Christ. (Hebrews 3:1; 9:11; 10:10)

2. Our perfect Servant/Deacon

- Providing all that the new "temple" of God (the Church) needs (Ephesians 2:20ff)

### C. Deacons in the New Testament

1. A clearly developed "office" (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3)

2. Established in Acts 6

a. A modern challenge to this view

1) A temporal office for a special purpose

2) A much later development

b. A stronger case

1) The remainder of the New Testament describes that ministry of distribution and mercy with the word *diakonia*. (Acts 11:29; Romans 12:7; 9:1, 12, 13)

2) The requirements listed in Acts 6 are very much in agreement with Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy 3.

## II. The Ministry of the Deacon

A. A spiritual service (Acts 6:2)

1. In material stewardship

2. In serving the needs of the Church

3. In following the example of Christ

B. A personal ministry

1. It is time-consuming (*Book of Church Order* 9-2: READ)

2. Tiring if you don't have help

## III. The Office of the Deacon

- A. Set apart
  - 1. Well-qualified (3, 5)
    - a. Full of faith, wisdom and the Holy Spirit!
    - b. Of good repute.
  - 2. Chosen
    - a. By the church – not by the apostles (v.5!)
    - b. With a plurality (Not just one man)
- B. With spiritual authority
  - 1. With authority to carry out their tasks
    - Elders would do their work if they didn't
  - 2. Not "ruling" over the church
    - Authority is tied to the fulfillment of work entrusted to them

#### IV. Blessing the Church

- A. Aiding its growth
  - 1. Acts 6:7-8
  - 2. Equipping and encouraging the growth of the church
- B. Leading in serving
  - 1. Service to which we are all called
  - 2. Following the lead/example/encouragement of the deacon