

**I. Introduction: God has established a structure for the Church. Phil. 1:1**

**II. What do Deacons do? Acts 6:1-7**

**A. We have a need. v. 1-2**

1. Growth brings challenges. v. 1a
2. Logistical matters are important for the health of the church.

**B. God, through the Apostles, provides the solution. v. 3-6 Eph. 2:20**

1. Logistical specialists are appointed to free the undershepherds to focus on their calling to the Word and prayer. II Tim. 2:15
2. Deacons must be spiritually qualified men. v. 3 I Tim. 3:8-13
3. The Deacons are given freedom and authority to pursue their calling. v. 3b
4. The Deacons help the elders by providing logistical support.
5. In what areas do our Deacons work?
  - a. Benevolence. I Tim. 5:3
  - b. Financial management. Prov. 21:5
  - c. Audio visual ministry.
  - d. Logistics and Facilities.

**C. In the church, every believer is called and gifted to serve. I Pet. 4:10-11**

1. Some minister the Word under the oversight of the Elders.
2. Others serve in helping ministries co-ordinated by the Deacons. Rom. 12:7

**III. The selection of Deacons. I Tim. 3:8-13**

**A. The standard of qualification for this office is very high.**

1. Men of outstanding moral and spiritual character.
  - a. Men of good reputation. Acts 6:3
  - b. Men of dignity. I Ti. 3:8,4
  - c. Honest and sincere. Mt. 5:33-37 II Cor. 1:17-20
  - d. Not controlled by intoxicating substances. 3:8 Pr. 20:1 23:30-35 Eph. 5:18
  - e. Not greedy. 3:8,3 6:5,10 Jn. 12:4-6 Heb. 13:5 I Sam. 12:3
2. Men well suited to their duties.
  - a. Full of the Holy Spirit. Acts 6:3 Gal. 5:22-23 Ex. 28:3 31:3
  - b. Full of wisdom. Acts 6:3
3. Men who are sound in doctrine. 3:9,16
4. Men who are tested and proven. 3:10 II Tim. 2:15
5. Men whose families are in order. 3:12
  - a. Husband of one wife. 3:2
  - b. Children under control. 3:4-5
  - c. Well managed household
6. The Deacon's wife also must meet a high standard. 3:11 Titus 2:3 II Tim. 3:3
7. How do these qualifications differ from those of the Elders? v. 2 Acts 6:8ff 8:5ff

**B. Is there an office of Deaconess? v. 11**

1. Arguments in favor of the office of Deaconess.
  - a. V. 11 begins with "*likewise*" as does v. 8 when Paul introduces another office.
  - b. There are no special requirements listed for Elders' wives.
  - c. There is no possessive "their" wives.

- d. A serving ministry would not necessarily require them to exercise authority over men.
  - e. Phoebe is called a *deacon* in Romans 16:1-2 where she is commended to the church for what appears to be an official task.
  - f. Historical precedents.
2. Arguments against the office of Deaconess.
    - a. It would be strange for Paul to talk about Deacons in verse 8-10, interrupt himself in verse 11, and then to go back to the Deacons in verses 12-13.
    - b. If Paul had meant to speak of an office of Deaconess, why didn't he use the word *deaconesses* rather than using the word which is translated *wives*. v. 3,12
    - c. In the context, the possessive article is not required to make the passage understandable as referring to "their" wives.
    - d. Perhaps the Deacons' wives participated in their husbands' ministry of helping.
    - e. The term *diaconos* used of Phoebe in Romans 16:1 usually refers not to an office, but is used generically of a servant. 4:6 Ro. 15:8 Co. 1:23 I Co. 3:5
    - f. The original Deacons were all men and had authority. Acts 6:3 I Tim. 3:12
    - g. If Paul had intended to establish an additional office, it is more likely that he would have done so explicitly, rather than incidentally.
    - h. Historically this issue has been the door that ushers women into other offices.
  3. The bottom Line. I Tim. 2:12 Rom. 16:2 Titus 2:3ff

C. How are we to select our Deacons and Elders? Acts 6:3,6 I Tim. 3:10 5:22

1. Ultimately God appoints Elders and Deacons. Our role is to recognize them. Acts 20:28 Eph. 4:8,11
2. How strictly should these qualifications be maintained? II Cor. 3:5
3. What is the process of recognition?
  - a. In the early church, officers were appointed by existing leaders (the apostles and their representatives). Acts 14:23 Titus 1:5
  - b. The church members participated in the selection of the first deacons. Acts 6:3
  - c. Our process combines both elements.
4. How many Elders and Deacons should we recognize? Acts 20:28
5. Should officers be ordained? I Ti. 4:14 5:22 Ti. 1:5 He. 6:2 Acts 6:6 14:23 10:41
6. What is the term of service for church officers? 3:1

IV. Concluding Applications.

- A. Elders and Deacons are accountable to God. Js. 3:1 Heb. 13:17 Jer. 10:21 23:1-2 Ezek. 34:1-10 I Pet. 5:4 I Th. 2:19-20
  1. The office of Deacon is a high calling. I Tim. 3:13
  2. The whole church is blessed when qualified officers are doing their jobs. Acts 6:7
- B. We should all be servants of the Lord! I Cor. 12:5,7
- C. Jesus is the model for all servants. Mark 10:45 Phil. 2:5ff Isa. 52:13ff 42:1ff

Discussion questions

1. What is the origin of the office of Deacon?
2. What is the purpose of the office of Deacon?
3. How might the function of our Deacons differ from that of those in the early church?
4. What is your role in the ministries of the church?
5. What are the qualifications for Deacon?
 

Go through these qualifications and evaluate yourself.
6. Do you believe there is an office of Deaconess? Why or why not?
7. How are we to select our Deacons?
8. How does the subject of Deacons point us to Christ?