

I Sermon Notes

Deacons: Ministers of Mercy Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 3:8-13

Introduction

- I. The Word “Deacon”

- II. The Model for Deacons (Acts 6:1-7)
The NT Prototype: Acts 6:1-6

- III. The Responsibilities of Deacons
 - A. Serving tables (Acts 6) = taking care of the physical needs of the poor and needy in the body.

 - B. The word itself, diakonoi "to serve, to care for, to wait on."
 - 1. The distribution of funds to relieve the poor (Acts 11:29; Rom. 15:25, 26, 31; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1)
 - 2. Distribution of food, clothing and the provision of shelter (Matt. 25:44)
 - 3. Later in 1 Tim. 5, we see the needs of widows.
 - The deacon organizes and takes care of these physical needs.

 - C. The implication is that the physical needs of the church are under the care and oversight of the diaconal ministry.

- IV. The Qualifications for Deacons
 - A. Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity
Worthy of respect, honor, dignified, serious

 - B. Not double-tongued,
Double-speak – not insincere, two-faced; not hypocritical

 - C. Nor addicted to much wine

 - D. Nor fond of sordid gain

 - E. *but* holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.



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Thus the qualification stipulates that the candidate's adherence to the faith ("holding to it") is to be unquestioned, and his conduct is to be appropriate to the faith he professes.
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- F. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.
- G. Deacon's wives or Deaconesses?
[Women *must* likewise *be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.]
1. The issue is not as clear as no female elders. There are many complementarians who hold to the deaconess view and maintain male leadership.
 2. The arguments in favor of deaconesses
 - a) The word is ambiguous, simply, *gunaikaj*, which can be wives or women.
 - b) If it is wives, why are there no qualifications for elders' wives?
 - c) Phoebe is called a deaconess in Rom. 16:1-2
 3. The arguments in favor of deacons' wives
 - a) The flow of the passage is extremely peculiar if referring to female deacons because it resumes the qualifications of deacons, and the qualifications for female deacons would be incredibly short.
If "deaconesses" wouldn't we at least expect, "a one-man woman"?
 - b) If deacons' wives then it is within the family-qualifications (11-12).
 - c) There is a qualification for the wife of deacon because a deacon's wife may be involved in her husband ministry of mercy in ways that an elder's wife would not be involved in his oversight or shepherding.
*Because deacons deal with widows, single mothers, etc. having a wife engaged would be considered important.
 - d) Phoebe is non-determinative, since *diakonoj* is used mostly in a non-technical sense. And *gunaikaj* is not determinative, although Paul could have used the female form for deacons, but doesn't.
 4. The qualifications speak to the assumption that the deacon's wife is involved with his ministry.
- H. Deacons must be husbands of *only* one wife (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2)
- I. *and* good managers of *their* children and their own households.
- J. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

The work of the deacon is a vital and significant work. The church's health and well-being has much to do with a qualified, effective diaconate.

