

Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-13

1

Deacons

- ▶ Fully and scripturally organized – Local church is to have bishops and deacons.
- ▶ Philippians 1:1, “*Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the **bishops and deacons***”
- ▶ “Deacon” (Greek – *diakonos*) primarily means one who is a servant, helper, or minister.

2

Deacons

- ▶ “One who executes the commands of another, especially of a master, a servant, an attendant, a minister ... one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use” (Thayer)

3

Deacons

- ▶ *Diakonos* “means servant, and is a general term covering both slaves and hired servants. It is thus distinct from *doulos* ‘bond-servant.’ It represents a servant, not in his relation, but in his activity.” (Vincent’s Word Studies)

4

Deacons

- ▶ “*Diakonos* is, generally speaking, to be distinguished from *doulos*, ‘a bondservant, slave’”
 - *diakonos* views a servant in relationship to his work
 - *doulos* views him in relationship to his master. (W.E. Vine)

5

GENERAL USES

- ▶ Evangelists
- ▶ *Ephesians 6:21*, “*But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful **minister** in the Lord, shall make known to you all things*”

6

GENERAL USES

▶ Evangelists

▶ *Colossians 1:7-8, "even as ye learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow-**servant**, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit."*

7

GENERAL USES

▶ Evangelists

▶ *1 Timothy 4:6, "If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good **minister** of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed (until now)"*

8

GENERAL USES

▶ Any and every faithful servant of Christ.

▶ *John 12:26, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my **servant** be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor."*

9

SPECIAL USE

▶ *Diakonos* is used in a special sense when the word refers to a particular class of servants associated with bishops/elders, called "*deacons*" (*Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 12*).

▶ These were to be appointed as special servants of the church.

▶ *Philippians 1:1, "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the **bishops and deacons**"*

10

Deacons

- ▶ The New Testament does not specify the work of deacons.
 - Yet, by looking at the definitions given to *diakonos* and the special qualifications required (1 Timothy 3:8-13), it becomes evident that the church needs men on whom they can depend to look after many of the affairs of the church.
- ▶ These might include such things as care of the building, securing supplies for the building and for classes, serving as treasurer, etc.
- ▶ Acts 6:1-6 demonstrates the kind of work these special servants may perform. These men served tables, providing the needs of the widows.

11

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

Character Qualifications

"Grave" – August, venerable, honorable, serious demeanor, dignified, versus frivolous, flighty, trivial, silly. 1 Timothy 3:8.

"Not double tongued" – A straight forward man; not saying one thing to one and something else to another; no talebearer, not deceitful in speech.

12

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

- "Not given to much wine"** – Not addicted to or under the influence of; cf. "not given to wine." 1 Timothy 3:3
- ▶ This qualification for deacons is much like one found for elders – "not given to wine." 1 Timothy 3:3
 - The main difference is that one merely says "wine" while the other says "much wine."
 - ▶ Upon this difference many have tried to argue with elders wine is totally forbidden, but with deacons they are permitted to use a little.

13

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

Does the word "much" condone such use?

- ▶ IF it does then ...
 - We may commit a "little" adultery and be alright since Peter speaks of those whose eyes are "full of adultery" 2 Peter 2:14.
 - We may err a little or moderately since Mark 12:27 shows Jesus saying, "ye do therefore greatly err" (Note: the same Greek word is used here.)
- ▶ NO!! The word "much" does NOT condone a little or moderate use of wine.

14

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

Every Christian must be free from the influence of alcohol!

- ▶ The concept of being "sober" demands it. cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:4–8; 2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Peter 1:13; 4:3; 5:8.
- ▶ Exception for medicinal purposes: Paul told Timothy, "Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."

15

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

"Not greedy of filthy lucre"

- "Eager for base gain, no lover of money, not avaricious." It means greedy for dishonest gain.
- ▶ Three prominent examples:
 - *Balaam* (Numbers 22; 2 Peter 2:15),
 - *Gehazi* (2 Kings 5),
 - *Judas Iscariot* (Matthew 26:15)
- ▶ "When lucre is the price of wrong, it is filthy. When lucre is sought on occasions where not is due, it is filthy; and when the desire of even just gains is excessive, it ceases to be clean." (Pulpit Commentary, 1 Timothy 3:8).

16

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

"Hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience"

- ▶ Hold with a clear conscience, stability in that which was once for all delivered to the saints – Jude 3.
- ▶ Involves:
 - (1) pure conscience,
 - (2) The faith (the word of God Acts 13),
 - (3) and no vacillating
- ▶ He must accept the teaching of Christ as the truth and hold to it.
- ▶ He must have a conscience which is trained by God's word.

17

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

"Blameless"

- ▶ One against whom no evil charge can be sustained, without reproach; "Rather, unaccused: if no charge be preferred against them." (Vincent's Word Studies)
- ▶ *Anenkletos* signifies "that which cannot be called to account" ..., i. e., with nothing laid to one's charge (as the result of public investigation), in 1 Cor 1:8, RV, "unreproveable," KJV, "blameless"; in Col 1:22, KJV and RV, "unreproveable"; in 1 Tim 3:10 and Titus 1:6–7, KJV and RV, "blameless." It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person. This is to be the case with elders. (W.E. Vine)

18

Consider: Acts 6

"Of honest report" – Acts 6:3

- ▶ Good reputation, be well reported of, testify, give [have] testimony, [be, bear, give, obtain] witness.
 - The congregation must have full confidence in the deacons in order to entrust its work and resources to them.
 - A man's reputation must be established before his appointment as a deacon. cf. Philippians 2:15

19

Consider: Acts 6

"Full of the Holy Spirit" – Acts 6:3

- ▶ *Bears the fruits of the Spirit* – Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22–23.
- ▶ This is the equivalent of being "*led by the Spirit*" (Romans 8:14).
 - McGarvey says on this, "He means men who were full of the Spirit as respects the fruits of a holy life. That some of these wrought miracles afterward [e.g., Philip, Acts 8:6], is no proof that they could do so now" (New Commentary on Acts of the Apostles, page 105).

20

Consider: Acts 6

"Filled with wisdom" – Acts 6:3

- ▶ Work in harmony with New Testament principles. Wisdom is a necessary qualification for any successful work in the church.
- ▶ What is wisdom?
 - One should possess that practical good sense which enables men to manage complicated business affairs with satisfaction.
 - James said "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him*" (James 1:5).
 - This wisdom is not God filling our minds miraculously, for we know the source of wisdom, God's word contains "*all things that pertain unto life and godliness*" (2 Peter 1:3).

21

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

Family Qualifications

"Husband of one wife" (Scripturally married).

- The nature of the work requires that he be a married man. This qualification rules out a single man as well as a polygamist or an adulterer.

"Ruling their children and their own house well." (Greek *proisten*, which means to stand before – to attend to).

- He must exercise the headship in his own home.
- Nothing is said about the children being "*believers*" (cf. elders, Titus 1:6).

22

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

Family Qualifications

- ▶ Finally, the deacon's wife must have certain characteristics, or she would disqualify her husband. She is to be "*grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things*" (1 Timothy 3:11).

23

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

Family Qualifications (deacon's wife)

- ▶ **Grave** (*Honorable*)
- ▶ **Not slanderous** (cf. Proverbs 10:18)
- ▶ **Sober** (*Circumspect, Watchful*)
- ▶ **Faithful in all things** (*Faithful in duty to oneself and to others, of true fidelity*) (1 Timothy 3:11).

24

Consider the qualifications of deacons.

1 Timothy 3:13, *"For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing ..."* "to make to remain over; to reserve, to leave or keep safe, lay by; the middle voice, to make to remain for oneself" (Thayer's Greek Lexicon)

- ▶ *"and great boldness* (confidence in speaking) *in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."*
- ▶ Wise elders will assign certain tasks to well qualified men.
- ▶ This leaves the elders free to tend, feed, and watch the flock.
- ▶ This is God's plan for church organization.
- ▶ Let us follow it.

25