



What Is a Deacon?

Serving the elders and the congregation

I. The biblical texts that speak of the office of deacon:

- A. Acts 6:1-7
- B. 1 Timothy 3:8-13

II. The biblical qualifications for the office of deacon:

Acts

- good reputation
- full of the Spirit
- full of wisdom

1 Timothy

- men of dignity
- not double-tongued
- not addicted to much wine
- not fond of sordid gain
- holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
- tested beyond reproach
- Women: dignified
- Women: not malicious gossips
- Women: temperate
- Women: faithful in all things
- husbands of only one wife
- good managers of their children and their own households.

III. Examples of ways Mark used noun and verb forms of the word translated “deacon”:

A. The angels came and served Jesus after He was tempted:

And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him. Mark 1:13

B. Peter’s mother-in-law served Jesus and the others after she was healed:

And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them. Mark 1:31

C. Jesus said the greatest among the disciples would be the servant:

But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant. Mark 10:43

D. Jesus said that He had come to serve:

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

E. There were women who followed Jesus and the disciples just to meet their physical needs:

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When He was in Galilee, they used to follow Him and minister to Him; and there were many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. Mark 15:41

IV. The practical implications:

- A. Deacons serve so that the elders may do their jobs. This means that deacons find ways to free up the elders for their primary function.
- B. Deacons serve to put down dissension in the church. They serve between the elders and the congregation. They are peacemakers.
- C. Deacons serve the temporal needs of the church. The fiscal affairs of the congregation should be in the hands of trustworthy servants.
- D. Deacons are not necessarily men. Phoebe was called a deacon (Romans 16:1). Because this is not a position of authority in the church there is no contradiction in having women carry such an honorable title.

V. Examples of the way this looks in churches:

A. Grace Bible Church, Escondido, California:

The duty of Deacons is to assist the Elders by:

- a. **Benevolence** Dispensing benevolence funds according to the physical and spiritual needs of the body and remaining aware of the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the body (Acts 6:1-7; I Timothy 3:8-13).
- b. **Property** Exercising caretaker and stewardship responsibilities over all church properties and the acquiring or disposing of all church property of any kind
- c. **Finances** Exercising oversight of financial matters of the church, including all expenses throughout the year, the annual review of the church budget, staff salaries, and financial needs of those whose ministries the church supports.
- d. **Logistics** Providing oversight of all items relating to logistical aspects of church services.

B. Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.:

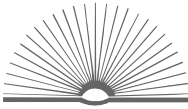
The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–7. The 20 church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men 21 and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess 22 particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His 23 church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. They shall be elected to one term 24 lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one 25 year.
26 Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to 27 the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help 28 others and those with gifts of administration.
29 The deacons and deaconesses shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for 30 benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church 31 its total receipts and total disbursements only.
32 The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish 33 unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling 34 their responsibilities in the church.

C. John Piper:

It would seem, then, that the deacon office exists to assist the leadership of the church by relieving the elders of distractions and pressures that would divert them from the ministry of the Word and prayer and the general, visionary oversight of the church.

Thus it would seem that deacons would care for the building and grounds; supply the communion and baptismal needs, as well as all other food and fellowship materials; administer a fund for the manifold material needs of the people and be ready to step in during crises of all kinds; handle the greeting and welcoming

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The unfolding of your words gives light.

ministries; provide practical assistance in job-hunting, housing matters, legal-aid, child-care, etc. In general they would be ready to assist the elders of the church in any "service" that would support and promote the ministry of the Word. –John Piper

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