

WE ARE BAPTIST

TWO OFFICES – DEACON

1 Timothy 3:8-13 *Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Introduction

One of the great blessings to the church has been the Deacon. God even showed us the importance of these men by giving us the story of one of the first deacons, Stephen. In Acts chapters 6 and 7 we get a brief look at the faith of Stephen. He is still one of the most known martyrs in Christendom because of the record in the Bible. As a deacon, he showed us his faith and courage, as well as his Bible knowledge.

Because he proclaimed Jesus Christ as God the Jews stoned him to death. Herein lies the legacy of the deacon. He is to be a man of courage and faith who faithfully serves the church of Jesus Christ.

Let's take a look at this Biblical office and see what the Lord has for us today.

I. Deacon's Responsibilities

Acts 6:1-7 *And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the*

disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

- A. The Deacon is primarily in the church to do the **ministry** that takes place outside of preaching and praying.
1. The Elders were to give themselves to praying and preaching.
 2. The church needed spiritual men to serve in the other areas of the church which included helping with physical/temporal needs.
 3. It seems by the Scriptures that the church would daily feed those who were poor and without help, particularly the widows.
 4. It seems by the Scripture that the Hebrew widows were receiving favor from the church and the Grecian widows were not receiving as much. The deacons were appointed to oversee these operational issues so that the elders would not be distracted from their primary work.
- B. The Deacon was to **serve** under the Pastor.
1. In some Baptist churches, there is a deacon board that has authority over the pastor. We believe this is backwards and takes away the authority of the Pastor and hinders the church from proper spiritual growth.
 - It is clear by the Scriptural accounts of elders and deacons that the elders had the main authority – oversight.
 - Boards, by their very nature, slow things down and hinder more than help. Without a designated leader, progress is hard to accomplish.
 2. A Deacon was designed to serve under the pastors and to help the pastor, not oversee the pastor.
 3. The Deacon was to help remove the physical parts of ministry away from the pastor so that he could better oversee the church and preach. The principle does not change, but the practice has over the years.
 - There is freedom in each church on how a deacon will serve.

- A pastor will usually give the deacon responsibilities that best help the pastor to his job.
 - With the implementation of staff members in our American culture, the role of the deacon has changed over the years. The principle stays the same, but the role changes with the times.
4. At Central Baptist Church, our Deacons are servants in the practical and spiritual areas just as the Scripture shows.
- They meet with the pastor monthly to go over the church business and to give insight and help in the operation of the church.
 - They serve in ministries that help the operation of the church.
 - They are prayer warriors and protectors of the pastor.
 - They help visit the widows when needed.
 - They set a good Christian example in the congregation.
 - They have the ability to teach the Word of God and often do teach.

C. The Deacon is able to **preach** the word.

1. Deacons have the ability to preach the Word the God even though they are not called to be preachers.
2. Because of their faith and spiritual knowledge, they have the ability to share the Bible with others. Whether that be witnessing, teaching, or preaching if needed.
3. They have a good grasp of the Word of God.

II. Deacon's Requirements

Like all positions there are requirements that need to be met before one can do the job. Here are the Biblical requirements for being a deacon.

A. The requirements of a deacon are **similar** to those of the pastor.

1. Deacons should strive to be just as spiritual as the pastor, but without the call to pastor!
2. Although there are different positions in the church, all of us should be growing spiritually.

1 Corinthians 12:4 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

B. The deacon must be a man of **character**.

1. The word blameless is used again to show that the man has a good testimony. He would be known in our community as a good man! Someone who people wanted to work with and hire. Someone people liked to be around.
2. He is not perfect, but he exhibits biblical traits that show that he is a strong Christian.

C. The deacon must be a man of **faith**.

1 Timothy 3:9-13 *Holding the mystery of the **faith** in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, **faithful** in all things. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the **faith** which is in Christ Jesus.*

1. Notice the word faith used three times.
2. The first time it is used is in reference to our doctrines. He must be a man who believes the doctrines of the Bible. He must be a man who holds to our doctrines strongly!

3. The second time it is used deals with his consistency. He is a faithful man. This is one of the first requirements of any true disciple of Jesus Christ.
4. The third time it is used in the general sense of our religion. Those who are deacons have earned a great degree of respect and can boldly share the gospel as Stephen did.

D. The deacon must be **proved**.

1. This goes back to not being a novice. He must have experience in the Christian faith.
2. Because of the influence that a deacon has in the church, it is important that a church makes sure that he has proven his faith through life experiences.
 - He is a doer of the Word and not just a hearer. James 1:19-22

E. The deacon has to be a **man**.

1. The deacon must be a husband of one wife. Again, clearly this is to be a man. Women have different positions in the church, but one they are not eligible for is that of a deacon.
2. Again, referring to our last lesson, he cannot be divorced and remarried. You can see the notes on the Pastor for more information.
3. Some people interpret the information regarding the deacon's wife that there were deaconesses in the church.
 - Although some churches promote this teaching, Baptists have held to the overall teaching that the offices of the church are to be held by men. That does not mean that women cannot hold positions over women and children. It is actually a good thing that there are women who oversee women and help them physically and spiritually. Scripturally, the older women of the church are to take up this ministry of helping the younger woman with life. It is possible that the instructions to the deacon's wife was because she would assist her husband in carrying for the widows and other women. That does not mean she had an official position in the church that was elected or appointed. Her husband would have been appointed, and she would then assist and support him. Because of her visual role in the

church and the importance of the family, it was expected that the deacon's wife be a woman of good Christian character as well.

Titus 2:3-5 *The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*

III. The Deacon Request

- A. As Pastor, I would challenge all of our men to strive to meet the **requirements** of a deacon.
 - 1. The church needs deacons!
 - 2. The church needs men growing to become future deacons!
 - 3. The stability and longevity of the church can be found not only in good pastors, but in good and solid deacons.
- B. Even if you cannot meet all the requirements of the deacon, like the one concerning marriage, you will still **benefit** the church by striving to be a spiritual man.
 - 1. You don't have to have a title to influence and impact the church!
 - 2. Some of the most spiritual men I have come across are not eligible to be a deacon, and yet they have made a great impact on the church by being like Jesus Christ!

IV. Conclusions

- A. The Deacon is to support the pastor, not rule over him.
- B. The Deacon is to serve in the church in whatever capacity is needed from spiritual to physical.
- C. The Deacon is to strive to be a man of faith and character.
- D. The Deacon is a scriptural position that all men in the church should strive to attain, for the benefit of the church.