

Deacons: What Do They Do and Why Do We Need Them?

Who is a deacon?

Like many other words in the Bible, it has a secular meaning that has evolved to be used almost entirely in a religious sense. Examples: Synagogue, church, and baptism.

In one sense, we are all deacons!

Mark 9:35 *And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." NKJV*

Jesus said that if we desire to be first, we should be _____ of all.

John 12:25-26 *He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves (deacons) Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant (deacon) will be also. If anyone serves (deacons) Me, him My Father will honor. NKJV*

Jesus said that His deacons (servants) will be _____ by His Father.

Matt 20:24-28 *And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant (deacon). 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served (deaconed), but to serve (deacon), and to give His life a ransom for many." NKJV*

If Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve, then _____ ought to serve others.

1 Cor 3:5-7 *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. NKJV*

Those who plant and water the word in people's hearts are _____ or deacons.

Paul referred to Timothy as a deacon. The devil has deacons.

In a generic sense, a deacon is simply a servant or someone who serves another.

Why this is important:

1. We pick deacons from a pool of deacons. This motivates _____ of us to be servants.
2. It clearly teaches us _____ we need deacons. We need deacons because the church has needs that need to be met.

If we are all deacons, why do we need to appoint men as deacons?

Phil 1:1-2 *Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. NKJV*

Paul distinguishes three groups that make up the church at Philippi: saints, bishops, and deacons.

In 1 Timothy 3 Paul details the character requirements of both elders and deacons.

One reason we recognize certain men as deacons is that New Testament churches had recognized servants to serve the body in unique ways.

Another reason we need deacons is that we need people to know they have responsibilities for which they will be held _____.

Deacons Serve

Acts 6:1-7 *Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. 7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. NKJV*

1. Growth produces _____. Our goal is for every member to grow spiritually and for us to grow numerically. Growing numerically means we are hoping to get people out of darkness into light.
2. Rapid growth can produce _____. People can fall through the cracks. The current structure can't support the current growth.
3. Complaints produce conflict or _____, fighting or fixing, struggles or solutions.

Turning Complaints into Cohesion

1. _____ **reality**. The widows were being neglected. The apostles needed help.
2. **Offer a solution**. Pick men who have a good reputation, are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom to take care of this situation.
3. **Tell the _____ of the solution**. The widows won't be neglected. The apostles could focus on prayer and the ministry of the word.
4. **Get buy-in from everyone**. The saying pleased the whole multitude. The multitude chose these seven men. (Acts 1 – the 120 proposed two men and God chose by lot).
5. _____ **the solution**. The people chose and the apostles prayed and laid hands on them.
6. **Reap the benefits**. The word spread. The number of disciples multiplied greatly. Many priests were obedient to the faith.

The PSD Situation

Our reality

- We have lost two deacons in the last year. Terry, although he continues to serve this congregation in many ways, decided to step away from being a deacon. In addition, Jack Thomas has claimed his eternal reward.
- In the last elders, deacons, and preachers meeting the elders asked the deacons if they felt we needed to appoint additional deacons. Not everyone agreed at first, but after discussing the matter with the deacons, the elders concluded that we do need additional deacons.

Our Solution

- Bryan and I are going to preach 3-4 sermons on deacons.
- The congregation is to look out from among themselves and suggest men to fill that role.
 - Fill out a deacon selection form for each man you believe is qualified and has agreed to serve as a deacon. A copy of that form is in the bulletin for reference. I will email the forms out as well. You can get additional forms in the foyer. If you go to a man and he says yes, please fill out the form. The elders want to know strength of support each man has. **These forms are due March 9th**.
- On **March 10th** the shepherds will look over the men who have been suggested and determine who has enough support to be considered by the congregation.
- On **March 13th** those names will be announced to the congregation. If you have an objection to one of these men serving as a deacon, you can voice your concern directly to that man. If agreement isn't reached, contact one of our shepherds.

- Wednesday, **March 23rd** is the last voice objections to the elders.
- On **March 27th** we will appoint the men the congregation has chosen.

Our Benefits

- None of our deacons will be overworked.
- More men will have opportunities to use their abilities to help this church grow.
- We will be prepared for additional work that will be needed in the future. Remember that growth produces more work, and we trust that the Lord will bless us with growth.
- It helps the shepherds focus on shepherding.

Our Buy-in

- Everyone needs to be engaged in this process.
- If you know the men of this congregation and believe someone is qualified go talk to them and fill out a form.
- Take the opportunity to get to know our current deacons.
- Take this opportunity to get to know the men whose names are announced as candidates.

Our Implementation

- Be here for the sermons and the appointment of these men.

Reaping Our Benefits

- We will grow spiritually
- We will grow numerically
- We will be edified

Personal Practical Application

- Prepare the pool by preparing yourself! Perform one act of service for a person you've never served before.
- Encourage a current deacon.