

A Biblical Church – Part 2: The Office of a Deacon

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Introduction: The Forgotten Office of Faithful Servants

In churches today, the role of a deacon is either misunderstood, abused, or neglected. Some churches treat deacons like something they aren't supposed to be according to the Bible. Others install unqualified men based on popularity or business experience. But the Bible gives us a clear picture of what a deacon is—and what a deacon is not.

Here, at this church, we will go by what the Bible says. And we have a great example for us to follow with our sending church: Vision Valley Baptist Church.

The deacon is the **second and only other ordained office** in the New Testament church. There are no other OFFICES within the church – pastors and deacons. A deacon is not a ruler or leader over the church like the pastor, but a **servant-leader**, whose role is vital to the church's health and order.

A deacon is a leader by setting an example of what a servant should be like. Deacons lead by serving. The greatest servant is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven – the greatest in the eyes of God. Jesus wants us to be servants – He set that example for us.

The example, in this church, is set by the pastors and deacons who should be following the example of Jesus Christ. What did Jesus do? We look at what he did. We do the same. If the pastors and deacons aren't good servants, the church won't be good at serving.

The role of the deacon is highly important to a successful church, and we need great deacons here at this church. We need great pastors, bishops, or elders, and we need great deacons. If we want to have a thriving church, we will need men to step up into those roles. And yes, you have to want to do this. And yes, your life will change if you do this. Your priorities will change.

This sermon will walk through the biblical teaching on the office of a deacon.

I. The Meaning of the Word “Deacon”

""Philippians 1:1-2

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.""

Notice there are bishops, plural, and deacons, plural in the church at Philippi. There is more than one pastor and more than one deacon.

The Greek word for deacon is **diakonos**, which means:

- **A minister or a servant.** The first deacons were to serve tables.
- It conveys **humble, active service**, not authority or oversight.
- The word diakonos **doesn't mean the office of deacon is for women**. Some people try that because that say it means deaconess and it is for women. It's not.

Deacons are ordained servants who assist the pastor in the physical and logistical needs of the church. And that job is very, very important. God chose this office to be in his churches. So God knew this is highly, highly needed. And we need good deacons as soon as we can. And I am looking for qualified men that have experience in life to take these roles here at this church.

Imagine that God himself installed the office of a deacon into this church. We will need more pastors and more deacons just as the churches in the Bible had. This church is going to grow. I know for a fact that we could have hundreds of people in here right now. We will do God's work, and we will need the laborers. We will need deacons.

II. The Origin of the Office

We can see the first deacons within the Bible. This helps us to understand the role of the deacon. God put all of this in the Bible for us to see.

""Acts 6:1–4

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 ministration. 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.""

The “**daily ministration**” refers to the **daily distribution of physical necessities**—specifically:

- **Food**
- Possibly **money or supplies**

- Other **acts of service** to meet basic needs

This practice came from earlier church customs where the believers **pooled their resources** and made sure no one went without:

""**Acts 4:34-35**

Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.""

So by Acts 6, the apostles were managing:

- The teaching and preaching of the Word
- **AND** the daily physical logistics of feeding and caring for the widows

But it became **too much**, and the **Grecian (Hellenistic) Jews**—those of Greek culture—felt their widows were being **overlooked** compared to the **Hebrew** ones.

So Why Is This Important?

- The “**daily ministration**” shows us that **practical, physical service** was a real and constant need in the early church.
- The apostles said in Acts 6:2:

“**It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.**” → Meaning they couldn’t abandon **preaching** to handle **logistics**.

This is the exact moment the church realized it needed an **ordained office—deacons**—to serve faithfully and consistently in these matters.

From the beginning, deacons were chosen to **relieve the pastors** of logistical burdens, so they could stay focused on preaching, teaching, and prayer. These men were:

- Appointed by the church
- Chosen for their character
- Ordained to a **physical ministry**, not a spiritual overseer role

Is this an important office in the church? Yeah! There's only two ordained offices in the church that God set himself. Pastor and deacon. And this is greatly needed. And the role should be what the Bible says and not what other people say. It's not someone who does nothing in the church.

III. The Biblical Qualifications for Deacons

Now, this is serious here. A deacon must meet the Biblical qualifications set forth by the Holy Spirit who is God Almighty himself. Let's take a close look.

""1 Timothy 3:8–13

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, 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.""

This is directly after Timothy gives the requirements for pastors. Deacons must be like pastors in these qualifications. All men should be like this. I should be able to look out here in the community and find men who meet all these qualifications.

1. Grave – A deacon must be serious, respectable, and honorable. This doesn't mean humorless, but it does mean he takes the things of God seriously and isn't known for foolishness or immaturity.

2. Not doubletongued – He must not speak one way to one person and another way to someone else. A deacon must be sincere, consistent, and trustworthy in his words—no flattery, gossip, or hidden motives.

3. Not given to much wine – He must not be a drinker. Though the phrase “much wine” is used, this does not give permission to drink a little—it is a statement of self-control and clear-mindedness. He is not to be influenced or associated with alcohol.

4. Not greedy of filthy lucre – A deacon cannot be in it for the money. He must be above reproach when it comes to finances—honest, content, and unmotivated by personal gain.

5. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience – He must believe right and live right. A deacon is not just a doer—he's a believer who understands sound doctrine and lives it out with a clear conscience before God.

6. First be proved – He must be tested over time before being appointed. This is not a role for a new believer or someone who just “wants to help.” He must already demonstrate faithfulness in service and character.

7. Found blameless – This is the overarching standard. There must be no moral or spiritual blemish in his life that brings shame or disrepute. He must be above reproach.

8. Husband of one wife – He must be married to only one woman and faithful to her. This excludes men who are divorced and remarried while their first wife is alive. A deacon must be morally pure and committed to his wife alone. Obviously, according to God, a deacon must be a man. There are no women deacons in the Bible.

9. Ruling their children and houses well – His home must be in biblical order. His children must be respectful and obedient. His leadership in the home proves his ability to serve in the church.

10. Wife requirements – The deacon's wife is also held to a standard:

- **Grave** – She must be serious and respectable.
- **Not a slanderer** – She must not gossip or speak evil of others.
- **Sober** – She must be self-controlled and sound in judgment.
- **Faithful in all things** – She must be loyal, dependable, and devoted to her responsibilities and walk with God.

These are not optional. Deacons must meet every requirement—just like pastors. The character of a deacon and his wife directly affects the testimony and strength of the local church.

IV. Biblical Examples of Deacons and Their Work

The Bible lists the first seven deacons by name. I want you to see that two of these seven give us some great examples.

""Acts 6:5-7

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: 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. 7 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.""

Two of those seven are seen in the Bible again after they are mentioned in Acts 6: Stephen and Philip. The others aren't seen again.

I want you to see how this worked. The apostles or leaders gathered the church together and gave the instruction. The church looked out, together, and chose qualified men. Then the apostles ordained those men to be deacons. After the deacons were ordained, the word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied.

We have two powerful examples in Acts 6–8: **Stephen** and **Philip**. These men were among the seven chosen in Acts 6 to serve tables—but their service didn't stop there. They were men **full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom**. They were two of the first seven deacons ever.

Philip is called an evangelist later on but he was an ordained deacon in the office of deacon. All deacons better be evangelists. Again, there are two offices in the church. Pastor and deacon. An evangelist is not an ordained office in the church. All of us should be evangelists.

1. Stephen – A Deacon Full of Power and Boldness

""Acts 6:8

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.""

Stephen was:

- Full of **faith, power, and the Holy Ghost** (Acts 6:5, 6:10)
- A bold preacher and defender of the Gospel
- The first Christian **martyr** after the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 7)

""Acts 7:59-60

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.""

Though he was ordained to serve tables, God used him to **publicly preach, rebuke the religious elite**, and lay down his life for Christ. I want to make this very clear. As we serve, God uses us more and more. And make sure you hear that. As we become greater servants, God uses us for his glory more and more.

Your goal should be to become a greater servant. A deacon is an example of this.

2. Philip – A Deacon Doing the Work of an Evangelist

""Acts 8:5

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.""

Every one of us should be evangelizing or bringing the word of God to others. We do that every week here at this church. For example, I am an evangelist. Nathan is an evangelist. Pam is an evangelist. Gary is an evangelist. Beverly is an evangelist. Milana is an evangelist. Men and women both are evangelists. You want to be an evangelist that consistently goes out there.

Philip preached Christ! He's an evangelist. But the office he held in the church was the office of deacon – not evangelist. Evangelist is not an office in the church.

""**Acts 8:6**

And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.""

Philip did miracles. Why? Because he was a great servant of God. He was filled with the Holy Ghost because he served God.

Philip was one of the original deacons (Acts 6:5). Though later referred to as "Philip the evangelist" in Acts 21:8, he was **never ordained into a separate office of evangelist**. He was a deacon who **did the work of an evangelist**—preaching Christ, winning souls, and baptizing converts.

And notice, as a deacon, Philip did baptize people. We will have pastors in this church, multiple, and we will have deacons in this church, multiple. And the pastors and the deacons will preach the Gospel, will baptize, and will teach all things.

Philip's power and effectiveness came not from holding a new office, but from being **filled with the Holy Ghost** and obedient to the Spirit's leading. He is a model of how a deacon can be used greatly by God while remaining within his ordained office. Remember, the greatest in God's eyes are the greatest servants. And deacons are ordained to be servants. That is the office of deacon.

V. Rewards and Honor for Faithful Deacons

""**1 Timothy 3:13**

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.""

Faithful deacons:

- Gain spiritual boldness
- Gain respect and honor
- Set an example of service-driven faith

Their reward is not status—it is **spiritual standing** and the privilege of helping build God's church. Hey, listen please. Because I think we sometimes forget these things and the opportunities we have right now with this church.

Listen, this is a God ordained church. He put us here. I know he did. Nathan knows he did. Our families know that he did. And he proves that to us every week when we go out soul winning and when we have church here. God shows us constantly.

Hey, if we can get faithful men and women in place in this church, more laborers, we will take off like a shooting star. If we can get more people out there soul winning and evangelizing, this church will take off. And God will be so pleased with us here.

The name of this church is known in heaven. We're bringing people to Jesus Christ. We are being faithful. We are known in heaven. And we can do better and better.

VI. What Disqualifies a Man from Being a Deacon?

- Being unfaithful to his wife (divorce/remarriage)
- Having unruly or rebellious children
- Lacking a good testimony
- Greedy, dishonest, insincere
- His wife being a slanderer or unfaithful

A man's household and speech reflect his spiritual condition. If any part of his life violates the above, he is not qualified.

VII. Conclusion: A Sacred Office of Service

Deacons are not the leaders of the church. Nowhere in the Bible do we see a deacon leading a congregation on his own or replacing the pastor. Deacons, on their own, should not lead a church—they are not overseers, elders, or shepherds. Their ordained role is one of service and support, not of spiritual oversight or doctrinal authority.

""**Matthew 23:11**

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.""

The better servants we become, the greater our faith grows. Deacons embody this truth by laying down pride and lifting up the needs of others. Their service is not about status—it's about spiritual strength. Pastors and deacons set the tone for the entire church, leading not just by word, but by example.

They remind us that greatness in God's eyes is not found in position, but in **humility**, **faithfulness**, and **sacrifice**. And as we follow their example, we too grow in boldness, wisdom, and faith.

Deacons are not “junior pastors.” They are ordained **servants**, chosen for their **purity, faith,** and **devotion to Christ’s people**. Churches that appoint deacons for status, tradition, or politics violate Scripture.

We must raise up a generation of men willing to serve with humility, strength, and holiness. In doing so, they uphold the Word, support the church, and glorify Christ.

Let's pray.