

## Church Officer Qualifications - Deacons

Deacon means "table waiter." They are servants of the church. Deacons were charged by the Apostles to help with the temporal affairs of the church (Acts 6:1-6). In practical terms they assist the Elders as directed. They must meet certain spiritual qualifications.

Acts 6:3 *"But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task."*

1 Timothy 3:8-10,12-13 *<sup>8</sup>"Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, <sup>9</sup>but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. <sup>10</sup>And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. <sup>12</sup>Let deacons be husbands of one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. <sup>13</sup>For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."*

Deacons are to be:

### 1. MEN OF DIGNITY - v.8

A deacon is to be a grave, serious minded, steady, solid individual. He behaves in an honorable manner.

### 2. NOT DOUBLE-TONGUED - v.8

A deacon does not say one thing to one person and something else to another. He is not malicious gossips. They are consistent and righteous in what they say.

### 3. NOT ADDICTED TO MUCH WINE - v.8

A deacon does not abuse alcohol (or any drug). He is noted for his sobriety.

### 4. NOT FOND OF SORDID GAIN - v.8

A deacon does not in love with material wealth. His goals in life are not monetary.

### 5. HOLDING TO THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE - v.9

A deacon has solid convictions based on an understanding of Biblical doctrine. His conscience is clear because he lives according to those convictions.

### 6. LET THESE ALSO FIRST BE TESTED; THEN LET THEM SERVE AS DEACONS - v.10

A deacon is not a new believer, but one who has been tested and has proven himself to be faithful in serving. In a real sense a man must do the work of a deacon before being recognized as a deacon.

### 7. IF THEY ARE BEYOND REPROACH - v.10

A deacon's life is beyond reproach. He lives in such away that he will not be accused of wrong-doing, and if accused there will be no evidence to support the accusation.

### 8. LET DEACONS BE HUSBANDS OF ONE WIFE - v.12

A deacon is a one woman man. He is completely devoted to only one woman - his wife. If he is single, he does not "play the field," but explores one relationship at a time.

### 9. GOOD MANAGERS OF THEIR CHILDREN AND THEIR OWN HOUSEHOLDS - v.12

A deacon must demonstrate his ability to manage his children and household. He makes provision for those over whom he has responsibility and leads them righteously. He keeps the family in order through application of Biblically principles.

## Deacons

διακονος (diakonos) - "servant" - lit. a table waiter (Jn 2:5,9)

διακονια (diakonia) - "service"

διακονεω (diakoneo) - "to serve"

(Other terms for serving/servant - δουλος (doulos): bondservant. θεραπων (therapon): a servant acting voluntarily. υπερetes (huperetes): a servant, attendant)

### Table waiting

Jn 2:5,9 - Wedding at Cana. *"said unto the servants.... but the servants knew..."*

Luke 4:39 - Peter's mother after she was healed. *"she arose and ministered unto them..."*

John 12:2 - *"There they made Him a supper; and Martha served"*

Luke 10:40 - *"my sister has left me to serve alone."*

### General service

John 12:26 - general service to Christ. *"if any man serve Me... My servant..."*

Romans 13:3,4 - authorities are a *"minister of God to thee."*

Luke 22:27 - general service given by Christ. *"I am among you as he that serveth"*

### Spiritual Service

Romans 15:25 - Paul says, *"Now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints."*

Acts 20:19 - Paul says of himself, *"Serving the Lord with all humilty of mind."*

2 Cor 8:3,4 - Macedonian church supported Paul. *"the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."*

1 Cor 12:5 - a *"variety of ministries, but the same Lord"*

2 Cor 4:1 - Paul speaking, *"seeing we have this ministry ..." (Preaching Christ).*

2 Cor 9:1 - Giving financially. *touching the ministiring unto the saints*

Rev. 2:19 - The Thyatiran church, *I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith...*

Romans 12:6-7 - Whoever has the gift of *serving, let them serve*

1 Cor. 16:15 - Household of Stephanas - *"addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints."*

Eph 4:12 - Evangelists, pastors, techers equip the saints *for the work of ministry*

### Those specified as servants doing service

Paul: Acts 20:24 - the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus

Romans 11:13 - I magnify mine ministry (diakonia)

1 Tim 1:12 - the Lord...putting me into service

also see 1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 3:6; 6:4; Eph 3:7

Paul's office was an Apostle, but he served - see 2 Cor 10-12

Tychicus: Eph 6:21 - beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord

Epaphras: Col 1:7 - fellow bondservant (doulos), who is a faithful servant of Christ (in vs. 23,25

Paul calls himself (diakonos)

### References to an office of Deacon

Certain Philippians:

Phil. 1:1 - to the overseers (episkopos) and deacons (diakonos)

Certain Ephesians

1 Tim. 3:8-10,12 - qualifications for Deacons

## Notes on the "Deaconate" in Acts

### Acts 6

- A) Vs 1,2 - Apostles saw that it was "not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables" (diakonia).
- B) Vs 3 - Apostles ask congregation to choose men who have certain characteristics "whom we may put in charge of this task." Note the word "deacon" (diakonos) is not used, but instead serving tables (diakonia) in verse 2 is referred to here as being a task - not an office)
- B) Vs 4 - Apostles will devote themselves to prayer and the ministry (diakonia) of the word.
- C) Vs 5,6 - the seven are chosen and then brought to the Apostles who ordained (laid hands on) them.
- D) The New Testament never refers to the men listed here as deacons. Only Stephen and Philip are mentioned again. The only title given Philip is that he is called "the evangelist" in Acts 21:8. Stephen is preaching in Acts 7 - which is performing a function more in keeping with an elder rather than deacon (see 1 Tim. 3), and in addition, he is not carrying out the duties given to him in Acts 6.
- E) Note in Acts 6:5 that all those chosen have Greek names. If an office of deacon was being established it seems very strange that in Jerusalem there were no non-Hellenistic Jews that would have been chosen. The men seem to have been chosen to carry out a specific task to the Hellenistic widows.

### Acts 11:29-30

Note that deacons are not mentioned in this passage even though the relief food sent to help would have fit the function of the seven in Acts 6. Instead the relief supplies were sent in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

### Acts 15

Note that deacons are not mentioned anywhere in the text. The council of the Jerusalem church of Barnabas and Paul going to the apostles and elders (vs 2,6,22,23)

## The Qualifications for Deacons

### 1 Timothy 3:8-10,12

## The Work of Deacons

The qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 indicates mature men of God who serve as servants (vs 10) under the direction of the elders (overseers).

If Acts 6 does refer to an office of deacons - they served under the apostles as those that distributed food, etc. to the needy.

## Conclusions

Deacons are servants that serve under the direction of overseers/elders. The New Testament gives no indication whatsoever that Deacons serve in a capacity of leaders who direct the church. That responsibility belongs to the overseers/elders.

See also "Every Reference of διακονος (diakonos), διακονια (diakonia), and διακονεω (diakoneo)"

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διακονος (diakonos) - Noun meaning "servant" - lit. a table waiter (Jn 2:5,9)  
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διακονος (diakonos).  
Noun Form meaning "servant"

Matthew 20:26 - But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

Matthew 22:13 - Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 23:11 - But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

Mark 9:35 - And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Mark 10:43 - But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

John 2:5 - His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it*.

John 2:9 - When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

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 *My* Father honour.

Romans 13:4 - For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Romans 15:8 - Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

Romans 16:1 - I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: [note, diakonos is neuter and can be used for a female).

1 Corinthians 3:5 - Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

2 Corinthians 3:6 - Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

2 Corinthians 6:4 - But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

2 Corinthians 11:15 - Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

διακονος (diakonos).  
Noun Form meaning "servant"  
Continued

2 Corinthians 11:23 - Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Galatians 2:17 - But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

Ephesians 3:7 - Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

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

Philippians 1:1 - Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Colossians 1:7 - As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

Colossians 1:23 - If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Colossians 1:25 - Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

Colossians 4:7 - All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord:

1 Thessalonians 3:2 - And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

1 Timothy 3:8 - Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

1 Timothy 3:12 - Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

1 Timothy 4:6 - If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

διακονία (diakonia) - Noun meaning "service"

Luke 10:40 - But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

Acts 1:17 - For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

Acts 1:25 - That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

Acts 6:1 - 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.

Acts 6:4 - But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Acts 11:29 - Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

Acts 12:25 - And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Acts 20:24 - But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 21:19 - And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

Romans 11:13 - For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Romans 12:7 - Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

Romans 15:31 - That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

1 Corinthians 12:5 - And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

1 Corinthians 16:15 - I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

2 Corinthians 3:7,8,9 - But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

2 Corinthians 4:1 - Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

2 Corinthians 5:18 - And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

2 Corinthians 6:3 - Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

διακονια (diakonia) - Noun meaning "service"  
Continued

2 Corinthians 8:4 - Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

2 Corinthians 9:1 - For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

2 Corinthians 9:12,13 - For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*;

2 Corinthians 11:8 - I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service.

Ephesians 4:12 - For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Colossians 4:17 - And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

1 Timothy 1:12 - And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

2 Timothy 4:5 - But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

2 Timothy 4:11 - Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

Hebrews 1:14 - Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Revelation 2:19 - I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.

διακονεω (diakoneo) - Verb meaning "to serve"

Matthew 4:11 - Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Matt 8:15 - And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

Matthew 20:28 - Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Matthew 25:44 - Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Matthew 27:55 - And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

Mark 1:13 - And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Mark 1:31 - And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

Mark 10:45 - For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 15:41 - (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

Luke 4:39 - And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

Luke 8:3 - And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Luke 10:40 - But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

Luke 12:37 - Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Luke 17:8 - And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Luke 22:26 - But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

Luke 22:27 - For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

John 12:2 - There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

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 *my* Father honour.

Acts 6:2 - 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.



διακονεω (diakoneo) - Verb meaning "to serve"

Continued

Acts 19:22 - So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Romans 15:25 - But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

2 Corinthians 3:3 - *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

2 Corinthians 8:19,20 - And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and *declaration of* your ready mind: Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

1 Timothy 3:10 - And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.

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.

2 Timothy 1:18 - The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

Philemon 13 - Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

Hebrews 6:10 - For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

1 Peter 1:12 - Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

1 Peter 4:10,11 - As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.