

THE QUALIFICATION OF A DEACON ***Acts 6:1-7; I Timothy 3:2-13***

INTRODUCTION:

The first seven deacons were selected and ordained to "serve tables," that is to distribute food to the needy, especially the widows. But, from the fact the office became a permanent one – *Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-13*, and from the fact no church other than Jerusalem, so far as we know, had – "*all things common*" that required the original establishment of the office, as well as from the qualifications given in - *I Timothy 3:8-13*, we assume that the duties of the office must have undergone expansion. Perhaps the deacons came to have charge of all the secular affairs of the church and to be the pastor's helpers in spiritual matters.

However, let it be kept in mind that deacons are "servants," according to the meaning of the title, and not bosses. They are to take instructions from the church rather than dictating to the church. They are to help the pastor rather than telling him what to do.

Let deacons forever remember that their office is secondary to that of the pastor. The abuse of the office of deacon has caused deacons to be useless or worse than useless in many churches. Perhaps this is because churches have neglected to give proper attention to the scriptural qualifications of deacons. Those qualifications are the subject we will be spending some time studying.

In Part One We Saw:

They Are NOT:

1. The Pastor
2. The "ruling board"
3. The governor of the Pastor

They Are To:

1. Serve tables
2. Free the Pastor
3. Promote church harmony
4. Care for the welfare of the members
5. Create a more effective witness
6. Add stronger leadership
7. Basically
 - a. Serve the church
 - b. Serve the pastor

Biblical Requirements For Deacons

I. THE QUALIFICATIONS LISTED IN *ACTS*:

A. "*Of Honest Report*"

1. Deacons are to be men of good reputation in general.

2. They are to be men in whom the people have the utmost confidence.
3. Of course, first of all they should be men that are totally honest; men who can be trusted not only in church, but in all their daily dealings.

B. "Full of the Holy Ghost":

1. They were men who fulfilled the command of – *Ephesians 5:18*.
 - a. The word "full" means, "thoroughly permeated with; full, complete; lacking nothing, perfect"
 - b. It carries the idea of being "controlled" by the Holy Spirit
 - c. For a deacon, this is absolutely necessary
2. If a deacon is going to be a blessing to this church and not a burden, then he must walk in the Spirit so that the fruit of the Spirit can flow through his life - *Galatians 5:22-23*.
 - a. If he walks in the Spirit, he will be a blessing to his church, but if he begins to walk in the flesh he will hinder everything God wants to do in the church
 - b. Therefore, by the help of God he should determine to be a Spirit-filled man, or he should stay away from the position of deacon
 - c. A deacon is one who has not only all the spirit, BUT the Holy Spirit has all of him

C. "And wisdom":

1. Deacons are to be men of discernment and skill. The wisdom here spoken of is not human wisdom, but the wisdom which comes from God - *James 1:5; 3:17*.
2. A lot of damage and hurt can come from trying to carry on God's business after the manner of world. *James 1:5* tells how to obtain the wisdom necessary to be a deacon.

II. QUALIFICATION FOUND IN - *I Timothy 3:8-13*

A. In The Beginning, Deacons Were Chosen To Be Servants To The Church.

1. In fact, the word deacon comes from a word that means "to wait tables".
2. It carries the idea of serving with such dedication that the servant "kicks up dust as he serves". Maybe that is why the Bible says that deacons are to "use" the office, not merely "fill" it.

B. When we take the time to look at the list of qualifications in - *I Timothy 3*, it is easy to see that deacons are expected to live godly, separated lives. They are to be an obedient and surrendered servant to God the Father.

C. Let's Look At This List Of Requirements.

1. *V: 8 - "Grave"*
 - a. Men who are serious about their duty, worthy of respect and who live lives worthy of imitating
 - b. Men serious in their deeds and actions realizing the responsibility they have to God and the church as well as the accountability they have to God, the pastor, and the church

2. *V:8 - "Not double tongued"*
 - a. Not a gossiper
 - (1) One who does not know how to keep silent about any given situation
 - (2) Repeats those things that were told him in confidence (a member's family problems, pastor's burdens, conduct of members that he counseled with)
 - (3) Runs down the pastor, the pastor's family etc. Did you know?
 - b. A man whose word is dependable when he speaks he will stand behind it
 - (1) This means that deacons are not to be men who talk one way to one person and another way to another
 - (2) Such a deacon will be a constant source of shame to the church
 - c. Deacons are to be men whose word can be trusted

3. *"Not given to much wine,"*
 - a. In the New Testament times wine had not been abused as it has today; therefore it was not absolutely forbidden. Only the abuse of it was prohibited
 - b. But, today it has been so badly abused that it is best for all believers, and especially pastors and deacons to abstain completely from alcohol, even from wine except it be for a biblical purpose

4. *V. 8 - "Not greedy of filthy lucre" - I Timothy 6:10 - "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*
 - a. Men who have a spiritual attitude toward money and who will not use their office for financial gain
 - b. Not concerned mainly with money, his heart and affection is not set on it
 - c. Will not let it stand in his way of service or duty to the church or God

5. *V. 9 - "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience"*
 - a. What is the - *"mystery"*? It is when something that was once hidden, but now revealed which is the Bible, God's Word

- b. Deacons should be sound in the faith
 - (1) Nothing but a sound Baptist should ever be elected or ordained as a deacon
 - (2) Note:
 - (a) Anyone who would believe that one church is just as good as another or
 - (b) Anyone who is the least bit contaminated with modernism, Arminianism, easy believism or
 - (c) Anyone who would deny any fundamental Bible truth is not fit to be a deacon
 - (3) The deacon is to hold the faith in a pure conscience, one that has been washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and renewed by the Holy Spirit

- 6. *V. 10 - "Let these also first be proved".*
 - a. Should never ordain a new man – *V:6*
 - (1) Who is new in the faith or new in the church – *V:6*
 - (2) Must have time to get to know him and be able to watch him under fire and under pressure to see how he handles himself
 - (3) Watch him and let time prove himself to be faithful in all things
 - b. As with bishops, so with deacons, we should lay hands suddenly or hastily on no man - *I Timothy 5:22*
 - c. A man should not be elected or ordained as a deacon just to honor them, nor because they are influential or wealthy; but only when they have proved themselves to be in possession of the scriptural qualifications

- 7. *V:10* - Let them *"use"* The Office - Too many men merely fill the office. God says use it! The office of a Deacon is something that is to be used, actively for the glory of God.

- 8. *V:10* – *"Being found blameless"*
 - a. Not 100 percent perfect but blameless
 - b. Above serious charges of reproach or misconduct

- 9. *V:11* – *"Wives"* - A man's wife can disqualify him from holding this office. The wife has a list of qualification also. A deacon's wife can cause great harm in the church if she is evil spirited or is long-tongued. Note the list of qualification she has:
 - a. *"Grave"*
 - (1) She must be able to be serious minded
 - (2) She will have many situations that will demand a strong helpmeet behind her husband
 - b. *"Not a slanderer"*
 - (1) The deacon will discuss many problems with his wife
 - (2) She must be capable to not repeat to the church
 - (3) She must be very careful to not verbally harm or abuse members to other people
 - c. *"Sober"* – moderate, temperate. She must abstain from over indulgence

- d. **"Faithful"**
 - (1) Faithful to the house and work of God
 - (2) Faithful to stand with and behind her husband that he might be able to perform his duties of a deacon without hindrance
- 10. **V:12 - "Husbands of one wife"**
 - a. Not a bigamist – (a very common practice of that day)
 - b. A deacon must have but one living wife. A divorced man is disqualified from being ordained as a deacon, and to do so is contrary to the qualification of God's Word
- 11. **V:12 - "ruling their children and their own houses well."**
 - a. He must be in control of his home
 - b. Not a dictator, but one who has earned the love and respect of his family
 - c. The deacon must be a family man! One who loves, nurtures and cares for his family
 - d. Can look at how a man's family treat him and respond to him and tell a lot about his spiritual condition

III. THE TEMPORAL REWARD OF A DEACON

In *verse 13* we read the temporal reward of a deacon. If he serves well as a deacon, he purchases a good degree and great boldness in the faith. The New Testament pictures the deaconship as an exalted office. How sad that the office has been much degraded through our failure to respect the qualifications laid down in the Word of God, and by our altering the work of deacons to suit our own notions.

CONCLUSION:

Yes, the first deacons set a high standard that must be upheld in this day as it was back then. How sad that in many churches the standards for deacons which are found in God's Word have been ignored. While in other churches the deacons no longer serve as servants of the church and helper to the pastor, but the ruling authority of the church. The Lord's churches needs good deacons, men who are serious about carrying out their office and being a servant of the church. What the church does not need are men who think they are God's gift to the church and who set themselves up as little dictators.

Those men who are ordained as a deacon and perform their duties in a proper way are promised that they will be blessed in their spiritual walk - *I Timothy 3:13*. The term *"good degree"* refers to "respect". Deacons who serve well are held in high esteem by the people of the church. They are also promised *"great boldness"*. This means that they can speak the truth in boldness, because they are living the life they should and they are being a blessing to the people of God.

THOUGHT: The work is great. The standard is high. The need is very present! The rewards are amazing.