

The Ministry
of
Deacons
in the
Local Church



building relationships to spread the gospel and establish the church

Deacons are men or women who are appointed in the church to serve by carrying out ministries, projects, and tasks assigned by the elders.

A Biblical Model

The Bible gives us a model for the role of a deacon in Acts, chapter 6, when the Apostles responded to a need that arose in the Jerusalem church:

So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said: "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:2-4)

We can see two benefits as the Apostles assigned these first deacons to serve: they carried out a task which provided for the good of the congregation, and their service freed up the Apostles to address themselves to their ministry.

Service is Timeless

Although our times may be different from the first century, and each local church's needs may vary, the timeless principle of service remains true. The men and women who serve among us as deacons help meet the needs of the congregation, while freeing the elders to address their primary calling to oversee and care for the church through the ministry of the word.

Our deacons also provide for us living examples of the desired attitude for every believer, that we would emulate our Lord Jesus who said:

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)

Jesus further underscored this attitude when He washed the feet of His disciples at the last supper, saying: *...you also should do as I did to you.*

Understanding "Deacon"

In the New Testament, the Greek verb *diakoneo*, meaning *to serve, minister*, is translated "administered, administration, cared for, deacons, do the serving, employ in serving, minister, ministered, ministering, servant, serve, served, serves, services he rendered, serving, take care, wait on, and waited on."

The noun *diakonos*, meaning *a servant, a minister*, is translated "deacons, minister, servant, and servants." These words are used to describe both the *actions* and the *office* of those who served Christ during His earthly ministry, and those in the Church after Pentecost.

The character qualities required for one to serve as a deacon are enumerated by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The Apostle also affirms the place of women in this ministry in his commendation of Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2.

As Paul exhorted, we have allowed our candidates to serve for a period of time, to be tested, before we ordain them through the laying on of hands.