

Theme: Deacons are men and women of Christian character and a mature, orthodox faith, who are set apart by the church to serve the church, her members, and others in practical ways.

I. A New Series Next Week

- A. Next week we will be starting Game of Thrones Pt 2
- B. Please be in prayer for outreach at the fair
- C. Ask God to draw folks here to learn the Gospel
- D. This week - a quick look at deacons
- E. What are deacons? Why are they important?

II. Church Offices In the NT

- A. The New Testament only speaks of two offices
Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an **overseer** desires a noble task....⁸ In the same way, **deacons** are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 1 Timothy 3:1, 8

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the **overseers and deacons**... Philippians 1:1
 - 1. Two offices - overseers (or elders), and deacons
 - 2. Overseers given a variety of names (elders, presbyters, shepherds, etc) - same person
 - 3. Churches often began with elders, then added deacons
 - 4. Pattern in early church - then added 'bishops' above the elders
- B. The simplicity of the New Testament church

- 1. Titles were not really important - serving was
- 2. Did not create big hierarchy - just elders & deacons
- 3. These helped oversee the spiritual and practical ministry of the local church

III. Deacons In the New Testament

- A. The role/function of deacons in the NT
In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 1 Timothy 3:8
 - 1. Nothing about their function in this text
 - 2. Office only appears 5x in NT - 3x here; Philippians 1:1; Rom 16:1 - never discusses function
 - 3. However, some form of the words appears 89 times!
 - a. Often translated 'servant' or 'serve'
 - b. Basic idea - serving someone or something, or acting in official duties
 - c. So deacons are officially set apart 'servants'
 - 4. The basic functions - caring for practical ministry in the church
 - a. Overseers/elders/shepherds - oversee spiritual ministry of the flock
 - b. Deacons - oversee practical ministry of the flock
 - c. A good example - Acts 6
In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily **distribution** of food.² So the Twelve gathered all the

disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to **wait** on tables.³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the **ministry** of the word." Acts 6:1–4

1. Not called deacons - but seem to be the model for deacons later
 2. Some form of word deacon appears 3 times in passage
 3. Key idea is again serving - waiting on tables, distributing food
 4. Apostles have different function - serving the Word!
 5. This breakdown foreshadows elders & deacons
 6. This is why deacons almost always mentioned with elders
5. The nature of this practical ministry can change over time
 6. The key idea - freeing elders for spiritual ministry of Word and prayer

B. The qualifications for deacons

1. Deacons must be people of Christian character
In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain...¹¹ In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.¹² A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. 1 Timothy 3:8, 11–12
 - a. In the same way - like elders - character is central

- b. In the kingdom, character is king
 - c. Basic idea - respectable, not drunk, gossips, or greedy
 - d. Husband of one wife - one woman man; faithful, not polygamous
 - e. Obviously must desire to serve others in practical ways
2. Deacons must be orthodox and mature believers
They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. 1 Timothy 3:9–10
 - a. Must be orthodox - holding to the faith (story of deacon who did not hold to deity of Christ)
 - b. Must be mature - tested; not a flash in the pan
 3. Deacons can be men or women
In the same way, **the women** are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. 1 Timothy 3:11
 - a. Distinct from elders, deacons can be men or women
 - b. Reasons this seems to be the point here:
 1. No qualifications for elders wives, so does not make sense that it would be deacons wives
 2. Deacons are not a ruling position like elders so 1 Timothy 2:11 does not apply
 3. Phoebe is called a deaconess
I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. (Romans 16:1)
 4. Deacons are men and women of Christian character and a mature, orthodox faith, who are set apart by

the church to serve the church, her members, and others in practical ways.

IV. Applying the Word

A. Do we see that the church needs everyone to help?

1. The church is not 'professionals' doing everything
2. The church grows strong as each part does its work
From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
Ephesians 4:16
3. We are not spectators, but participants in the game!
4. We are not performers and consumers - we are partners in ministry together!
5. Title does not matter - serving others does!
6. How has God gifted you? Are you trying to serve there?
7. Where do you serve - just to help out?

B. Announcing BRCC proposed deacons

1. Elders have recognized we have lacked deacons
2. We have studied, talked and prayed about this
3. We have 5 men and women we want to put forward to be appointed as deacons
 - a. Karen Trostle
 - b. Patrick Allison
 - c. Renee Younger

- d. Theresa Allison
- e. Ronnie Younger

4. We believe all of these folks meet the qualifications and are already serving in ways that fulfill the call of deacons
5. They have different gifts, but we think will serve well as a team to serve the body and others, and to free the elders of these tasks
6. The process
 - a. As with potential elders, we want input from the body
 - b. Please be praying for and about these folks
 - c. If you have questions, go to them or one of the elders
 - d. After several weeks, we will let everyone know if the body seems to be confirming these folks
 - e. At the conclusion of the process we will set in deacons on a Sunday
7. As you see needs arise - these are the folks to go to

C. Prayer for BRCC and the proposed deacons

Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-13 NIV2011
September 7, 2014
Prayer
Revelation 1:4-6

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. Revelation 1:4–6

In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹ In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. ¹² A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 3:8–13