

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

January 8

2023

Deacons: Servants

The Bible term diakonos refers to an officer in the Lord's church. Vine says the word "primarily denotes a servant" (I, 272).

In a general sense, the word can be applied to many. Preachers are servants (Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:17; 1 Tim. 4:6). Also, every Christian is a servant (Jn. 12:26).

Additionally, there is a special sense in which the word "deacon" is used. This second usage associates it with the office and work of bishops or elders. The word, when used in this special sense, designates the office of a deacon. Note the following statement on the organization of a local New Testament church: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1).

1) Deacons Are Special Servants.

Observe a contrast in the office of elders and deacons. The elders are the overseers (Acts 20:28), and the deacons are helpers or servants. Deacons work, as do all the other members of the congregation, under the oversight of the elders. But, in their office, deacons are special servants to the elders and the church. They relieve the elders of some duties that would

otherwise fall on them, allowing the elders to provide the oversight they are charged to give. If the men of Acts 6:1-6 were deacons, they relieved the apostles of the duty of serving tables, enabling them to give themselves more fully to their teaching responsibilities. Deacons serve that kind of function today toward the elders and the congregation in which they serve.

2) Their Qualifications Defined.

The qualifications of deacons are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Here is the list of their qualifications, with a brief definition: (1) Grave — serious in purpose and conduct; not flighty or flippant. (2) Not double tongued — not saying one thing to one person, and another to others. (3) Not given to much wine — neither given to wine, nor much wine; not a drinker. (4) Not greedy of filthy lucre — not greedy for money, which leads to sinful and unethical means to get it. (5) Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience — he is sound in the faith. (6) Blameless — does not mean sinless, but rather means no charge of a continuing sin can be established against him. (7) Let these first be proved — they have lived so they are known as good, faithful servants of God. (8) Husband of one wife — he is a married man. (9) Rules his children and his own house well — he is in control of his home and family. (10) Their wives must be grave (serious minded), not slanderers (false accusers), sober (self-controlled, temperate, and discreet), and faithful in all things (to God, the church, her husband, and her family).

The church needs leaders! It needs men who will accept special responsibility, and not shun or evade it. Families in the church need to study the need, qualifications and responsibilities of deacons, and work together to qualify themselves to perform this special, needed service. The future well-being of the church depends upon our commitment to do and be what God appoints.

✍ Lewis Willis

Deacons Are Given To Help Us In The Lord's Work

Sometimes we speak of the office of deacon as if it were an inferior work, only a stepping-stone to greater things. But it is a mistake for us to think of those who serve as deacons as men not quite mature enough to be elders. Similarly, we ought not to relegate the office simply to those who are "on their way up" to becoming elders, as if the work were simply a preliminary work. The work of the deacon is important in its own right, and we need to view the office in a better light.

In truth, deacons are given to help us in the Lord's work. The responsibility is a vital part of what has been provided to make the church strong and effective in its work. We cannot neglect this office or diminish its importance without hurting ourselves in regard to the work of the gospel.

It is true, the work of deacons is subordinate to that of elders, and in our power-hungry culture "subordinate" is often equated with "inferior." But that is not true in the New Testament. If being subordinate makes one inferior, then the Son of God is inferior to God the Father.

The word "deacon" simply means "servant." Deacons are men who meet certain scriptural qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8-13) and are appointed to the work of serving the congregation in its various needs (Ac. 6:1-7). The work of the deacon is one of two appointed offices in the local congregation. The apostle Paul addressed the Philippian letter to "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi,

with the overseers and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). To Timothy, Paul wrote that "those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13).

It takes a special person to allow himself to be designated as a servant to his brethren, and to carry out the service assigned to him in a hard-working, responsible way. Perhaps in no other part of the Lord's work is the servant attitude of the Christian more important. Those who do this work well ought to receive our appreciation and cooperation. Let's renew our gratitude for those who serve us as deacons, making this a week of meditation on this important aspect of the Lord's church. And let's make our gratitude known not only to the Lord, but to the men themselves.

✍ Gary Henry

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Elders

David Lockhart	(317) 714-6213
David Thomas	(317) 945-8539

Evangelist

Brad Phillips	(765) 720-2816
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