#### DEACONS QUALIFICATIONS AND APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES

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Today is a time for rejoicing! As a congregation we are growing in numbers and hopefully, more importantly in spirit to the point where we can consider appointing deacons! In **Acts 11:23**, it is recorded that Barnabas “had seen the grace of God” when visiting the church at Antioch. Many times I see the grace of God in our assemblies here in Oak Ridge.

I hope to present part one of a two part study on the qualifications of Deacons. Larry and I believe we have men worthy of consideration for the work of a deacon. We would like every member to be completely engaged in following these lessons and in the appointment process. We all need to spend time thinking, meditating, and praying about this.

Within the lessons there are quite a few references to scriptures other than the passage on qualifications found in **1Timothy 3:8-13.** I encourage all to check the cross references and read them, as I may not be reading them all. The notes and powerpoint will be posted.

**DEACONS QUALIFICATIONS (part 1)**

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**1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13 “DEACONS”**

**Likewise deacons must be reverent (men of dignity), not double-tongued, not given (addicted) to much wine, not greedy for money (fond of sordid gain), holding the mystery (hidden truth) of the faith with a pure (clear) conscience. But let these first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless (beyond reproach). Likewise, their wives must be reverent (dignified), not slanderers (malicious gossips), temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of (only) one wife, ruling their (his) children and their own houses (his household) well (good managers of their children and their own husbands). For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good (high) standing and great boldness (confidence) in the faith which is in Jesus Christ. [NKJV (NASV, NIV)]**

* The Greek word translated “**deacon**” is “**diakonos**”, which simply means a servant, one who executes the commands of another, an attendant or minister. The word usually has the ordinary meaning of “**servant**”, and is applied to civil government (**Romans 13:4**); and to Phoebe, Apollos, Paul, Tychicus, Epaphras, and Timothy (**Romans 16:1, 1 Corinthians 3:5, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 1:7, 1 Timothy 4:6**).
* There is a definite reason that God labeled such men “deacons”. The word “**deacon**” comes from “**diakonos**”, which is probably the most fundamental word in the New Testament for service. The deacon is a man whose life is dedicated to serving.
* He is a servant. In fact, Jesus summed up His mission and purpose with the same word, “**just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve**” (**Matthew 20:28**).
* New Testament translators realized that this word also has a technical sense, a sense in which the word refers to a specific work. In these instances, they translated “**diakonos**” with the English equivalent, “**deacon**” (**Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 10, 12, 13**).
* The English word “**deacon**” is an anglicized word given by the translators to distinguish between the work of certain qualified men and the work, or service, of Christians in general.

**THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL WORK**

* This is a work that God has created. Definite qualifications are given, just as definite qualifications are given for those who serve as elders.
* **1 Timothy 3:8** states “**Likewise deacons must be**”. The term “**likewise**” means that elders must be qualified men and so must deacons. The man who will serve must be qualified in all respects mentioned. The qualifications for a deacon are just as important as the qualifications for elders. “**Must be**” requires that as long as he is a deacon, he must have these qualifications.
* A congregation can exist and function without elders and deacons (**Acts 14:23**), and yet things are lacking when those roles are vacant (**Titus 1:5**).
* It should be noted that the work of a deacon is not to oversee, not necessarily to speak publicly, not limited to material needs, and is not a temporary work.
* The deacon’s work is a service for “proven” or “tested” men. They are to be ready servants to fulfill any scriptural service within their ability.
* Deacons need to be available and responsive in order to help the brethren of the church and assist the elders.

**Being a Servant**

1. Proper attitude toward themselves (**Matthew 16:24, Luke 17:10**)

2. Often involves personal sacrifice (**Luke 10:25-37**)

3. Doesn’t always wait to be asked (**Luke 10:30, 33**)

4. Service is impartial (**Matthew 25:40**)

5. Eagerly serves (**Galatians 4:18**)

**Rewards – Good standing and great boldness in the faith (1 Timothy 3:13)**

1. He will gain greater confidence in the gospel and in his role as a servant for Christ.

2. With such boldness he will become more effective in his service.

3. He will be entrusted with new and greater tasks.

4. He will have the respect of fellow saints and be a great influence for good.

# THE QUALIFICATIONS: 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

**“Reverent (men of dignity)”**

* “Because a deacon has greater access to people who are hurting and weak, he can more easily exploit them. So Scripture warns us against hasty appointments (**1 Timothy 5:22**)” (Minister of Mercy, The New Testament Deacon, Alexander Strauch, p. 94).
* Here we learn that the deacon is a man not only fully known by the congregation, but respected for his moral character, dependability, serious-mindedness, reverence for God, especially in the realm of integrity and self-control.

**“Not double-tongued (devious in speech)”**

* Another essential ingredient in his character must be honesty in his speech. We live in a time when people try to “spin” things in a way that always makes them look good. The deacon must be honest, not only with others, but also with his own short-comings.
* **“Dilogos”** primarily means saying the same thing twice; saying a thing to one person and giving a different view of it to another with the intent to deceive. The idea is to not have one standard for self & friends and another standard for everyone else. Deacons are to be upright and straightforward men.
* The deacons will be reporting to the elders, therefore they need to be men who are reliable in the presentation of facts. Deacons must not speak anything but the truth in all matters and to all people. In dealing with people, and their problems, the deacon also will be subjected to the temptation of spreading gossip (**Ephesians 4:25**).

**“Not given (addicted) to much wine”**

* The Bible is filled with warnings against the dangers of wine and strong drink (**Proverbs 20:1, 23:30-35, Habakkuk 2:15, Galatians 5:21**). “Deacons work with people, often those who are troubled. If a deacon has a drinking problem, he will lead people astray and bring reproach upon the church” (Strauch, p. 98).
* The deacon does not need a drink to get him going or keep him motivated, rather he has the Holy Spirit’s message that gives him all the motivation he needs (**Ephesians 5:18**).
* **1 Timothy 3:8** indicates alcohol is a very dangerous substance, something so dangerous that even spiritual men like deacons need to stay away from it. Therefore, the man who thinks that he can “handle” alcohol has a mindset contrary to what God seeks.

**“Not greedy for money (dishonest gain)”**

* This is the same admonition as found in **1 Timothy 3:3** and **Titus 1:7** for elders/bishops/pastors.

(1) Deacons may have charge over funds and distribution

(2) Men might neglect spiritual duties in pursuit of material gain

(3) Men might neglect personal spiritual development (e.g., prayer, study, fellowship, etc.) in the pursuit of money

(4) Greediness for money can lead to other sins (e.g., lies, theft, jealousy)

* One translation renders this phrase, “**Or to questionable money making**” [Twentieth Century New Testament (TCNT)]. This man is not greedy, money is not his number one priority, and in his personal life he is not involved in cutting the ethical corners in his business or being preoccupied with getting rich-quick.
* Contentment in Christ sets the correct example (**Hebrew 13:5**).

**“Holding to the mystery (hidden truth) of the faith with a pure (clear) conscience”**

* The mystery of the faith is another way of referring to the spiritual truth revealed in the gospel (**Ephesians 3:3, 6; 6:19**). The idea that deacons are nothing more than “church janitors” or “maintenance men” is flawed thinking.
* These men must have a firm grasp of the truths in the gospel. They must practice what they teach and believe so they can hold the faith in a clear conscience. A deacon is stable, steadfast, and living a life consistent with his understanding of what is right in the faith (**Colossians 1:23; Jude 3**).
* The deacon knows his Bible and is one of sincere character. He should be able to freely discuss the truths found in the gospel message, his convictions, and his understanding (**2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:14, 1 Peter 3:15**).

 **“But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons”**

* This “**testing**” is prior to them serving. Thayer defines this as “to test or examine (to see whether a thing be genuine or not)”. Some other translations: “**let them also be tested first**” (RSV) “**should first be tested till approved**” (Wms), or “**they must first undergo a scrutiny**” (NEB). A thorough examination of character must precede the deacon’s appointment.
* Selection is not the idea that if a church makes him a deacon, he’ll stop his criticizing; he will start behaving like a Christian, etc. Let’s place him on the nomination for deacons; if selected, maybe we can make something of him. A deacon must demonstrate his willingness, availability, and eagerness to work and to serve before being appointed.
* The church proves the men when the selection is made from among them (i.e., no unqualified man can serve).

**“Being found (if they prove themselves) blameless”**

* Blameless here means that which cannot be called into account, unreprovable, unaccused, nothing to take hold upon, or proven innocent. A deacon’s life and character must be totally above reproach.
* Vine’s explains that this implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person. Deacons are not to be hastily appointed and are to be found blameless by the congregation.
* Blameless Does Not Mean:

(1) He was not dead in sin (**Ephesians 2:3**),

(2) He does not ever sin (**1 John 1:9-10, Galatians 2:11**), or

(3) He will not be accused of wrong (**Job 1:8, Matthew 5:11, 11:18, 1 Peter 2:12, or 1 Timothy 5:19**).

* Blameless Does Mean:

(1) He is forgiven of sin (**Ephesians 2:8**)

(2) He repented of sin (**Luke 22:61-62**)

(3) He is walking in the Light (**1 John 1:7**)

(4) There is nothing Satan (the accuser, **Revelation 12:10**) can use against him to shame him and the church

(5) He is a person against whom no evil can be proved (Clarke)

(6) He is a person of sound moral character (solid, dependable); therefore he has a solid reputation

If you are not a Christian this morning, you are in your sins. **Jesus is the only answer for you.** He can wash all your sins away and make you spotless, pure, and blameless! Believe Him, confess that He is the Son of God, repent of your sins, and then be baptized to wash all your sins away (**Acts 22:16**).

For those of us who are Christians, we need to “**be diligent to be found in Him in peace, and without spot and blameless**” (**2 Peter 3:14**); true servants of God and their fellow man.

**How are you doing in your service to God and man?**

***WE CAN ALL BE PURE AND BLAMELESS THIS MORNING BECAUSE OF JESUS!***

If we can help you now, please let your wishes be known as we stand and sing.