

The Deacons

by John Isaac Edwards

For the church to be fully organized after the New Testament pattern, deacons must be appointed (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13). To that end, this study is dedicated.

1) **Their Office.** 1 Timothy 3:10 & 13 speak of “the office of a deacon.” “Deacon” is an *office to be used*; not a *title to be worn*. The Bible says, “...let them use the office of a deacon...” The word “deacon” denotes a servant; minister. It is connected with a verb meaning to hasten after, pursue (said of a runner). It occurs in the New Testament of domestic servants (Jn. 2:5, 9), the civil ruler (Rom. 13:4), Christ (Rom. 15:8), followers of Christ in relationship to the Lord (Jn. 12:26; Eph. 6:21) and to one another (Mt. 20:26; 23:11), preachers and teachers (1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 3:7; 1 Tim. 4:6), and those who serve with the bishops in the local church (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12). Though not mentioned as deacons, the kind of service in which the table-serving men of Acts 6 engaged is of the character committed to deacons.

2) **Their Qualifications.** The office of a deacon requires qualified men. Their qualifications are recorded in 1

Timothy 3:8-12. The word “likewise” indicates that just as there are abilities and qualities necessary to the appointment of men to the office of a bishop (1 Tim. 3:1-7), the same is also true of men to the office of a deacon. “Must” denotes things that are essential. Thus, the qualifications are indispensable. Their qualifications include:

Character qualifications:

1. **Grave (v. 8).** This suggests august, venerable, reverend; to be venerated for character, honorable. Other translations render this “serious, honorable, serious demeanor, dignified.” He is not to be frivolous or lighthearted, but a serious man, whose life is such that he would be dependable and trustworthy in the work.

2. **Blameless (v. 8).** One against whom no evil charge can be sustained; one who is above an established charge of evil. Other translations: “without reproach, irreproachable.” He must live in such a way that no charge of evil can be proved against him.

Negative qualifications:

1. **Not doubletongued (v. 8).** To be doubletongued is to be double in speech, saying one thing with one person, another with another (with intent to deceive). Other translations: “Not talebearers;

straightforward men, not deceitful in speech, no gossips, sincere in their talk.” He must be given to straightforward, truthful speech. He must not have a double language; not one who speaks two different things.

2. **Not given to much wine (v. 8).** Not addicted to much wine, not under the influence of strong drink. The condemnation of “much” does not sanction the use of “little” (Eccl. 7:17; 1 Pet. 4:3-4). He must not be a user of that which intoxicates.

3. **Not greedy of filthy lucre (v. 8).** Eager for base gain; sordid. Some translations say, “no lover of money; not addicted to dishonest gain.” He must not be a lover of money (1 Tim. 6:10), engage in dishonest means of obtaining money, and willing to do his duty when called upon; not sacrificing it in search for money.

Ability qualification:

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (v. 9). He knows the truth and is steadfast, being grounded in the word of God (1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 1:23; 2:7; 1 Th. 5:21).

Experience qualification:

Let these first be proved (v. 10). To prove is to test, examine, scrutinize. They are men who have shown by their lives the ability to do what is

required of them.

Family qualifications:

1. **Husbands of one wife (v. 12).** Excludes women from using the office. Literally, a one woman man. He must be a Scripturally married man.

2. **Ruling their children and their own houses well (v. 12).** He must be a father. He must rule well both his wife and children. His children are well behaved and under his control. Children of a deacon may be young as nothing is said of their being "believing children." "Children" stands for one or more. He must properly stand before and manage his family (Gen. 18:19).

3) **Their Wives.** "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (1 Tim. 3:11).

Grave suggests she is to be prudent, dignified, quiet, of sound judgment; not giddy. Wives of deacons must not be foolish, unconcerned and indifferent to the work of their husbands, but rather good helpers and companions.

Not slanderers indicates they must be able to control their tongue and not be busybodies or talebearers of idle gossip (1 Tim. 5:13).

Sober requires them to be sound in their thinking, temperate, self-controlled; self-possessed. They must be calm, and even tempered (Titus 2:3-4).

Faithful in all things is a comprehensive expression. They must be trustworthy in every phase of their lives: faithful in worship, living as Christians, fulfilling their place

in the church, to their husbands, to their children and all others.

Men may meet the qualifications, but be disqualified from using the office by their wives.

4) **Their Reward.** 1 Timothy 3:13 speaks to the reward of using the office of a deacon. Paul said, "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

May we look out among us men are well-qualified to be appointed to use the office of a deacon. Let us be determined to serve in the best way we can to the glory of God (1 Pet. 4:11).

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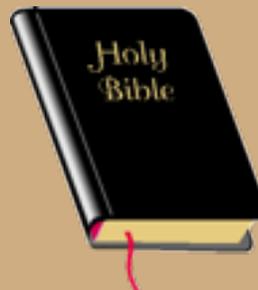
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