

## Deacons: Servants

by Lewis Willis

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.

## Gospel Meeting

with  
Larry Ping

April 22-27

# Offering For The Sanctuary

by John Isaac Edwards

Exodus 25-31 records instructions given to Israel for making a sanctuary during their wilderness-wandering. Its construction and erection is revealed in Exodus 35-40. I'm interested in the people's offering for the sanctuary.

1) **They Offered Unto The Lord.** The Lord said, "...that they bring me an offering...ye shall take my offering" (25:1-2). In Exodus 35 Moses said, "This is the thing which the Lord commanded..." (v. 4). "Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord..." (v. 5). "...an offering of the Lord..." (v. 5). "...they brought the Lord's offering..." (v. 21). "...an offering...unto the Lord" (v. 22). "...the Lord's offering..." (v. 24). "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord..." (v. 29).

2) **They Offered From A Willing Heart.** "...of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart" (25:2). Exodus 35-36 shows: "...whosoever is of a willing heart..." (35:5). "And they came, every one whose heart

stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing..." (35:21). "And they came, both men and women, as many were willing hearted..." (35:22). "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring..." (35:29). They brought "free offerings" (36:3).

3) **They Offered For The Work Of The Sanctuary.** "And let them make me a sanctuary..." (25:8). "...they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation..." (35:21), "...for all manner of work, which the Lord had commanded to be made..." (35:29), "...for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it..." (36:3), "...for the service of the work..." (36:5).

4) **They Offered What They Had.** Sacrifice was made as "...every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them..."

every man with whom was found shittim wood..." (25:3-7; 35:23-28).

5) **They Offered Regularly.** "...And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning" (Ex. 36:3).

6) **They Offered Much More Than Enough.** "And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make...the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much" (Ex. 36:5-7). Imagine that!

Let's make application of these principles, written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), to our building work today!

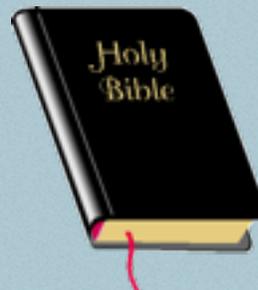
*But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee*  
— 1 Chronicles 29:14

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