

The Office of Deacon

Pastor George M. Stahnke 05/16/99

The biblical record of deacons in the church is a well-established fact. The date 1st Timothy was written is uncertain. 2nd Timothy was written from Rome, AD 65-67 after the book of Philippians which was written about 60-64 AD. As we read Acts, 1st Timothy and Philippians we have an accurate record of the progression of the early church and the establishment of the office and ministry of deacons.

I. Three groups of people in the local church

Philip. 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons.

- (1) All the saints
- (2) The overseers (elders & five fold)
- (3) Deacons

II. Problems in the early church

Long before persecution broke out against Christians, there was already social discrimination. The Jews who accepted Jesus as Messiah were usually cut off from their families. As a result, the believers depended on each other for support. The sharing of homes, food, and resources was both a practical and necessary mark of the early church.

Acts 6:1-6 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ²So 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. ³Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." ⁵This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The *Hebraic Jews*, native Jewish Christians, spoke Aramaic, a Semitic language. The *Grecian Jews*, Greek-speaking Christians, were probably Jews from other lands who were converted at Pentecost. The Greek-speaking Christians complained that their widows were being unfairly treated. This favoritism was probably not intentional, but was more likely caused by the language barrier. To correct the situation, the apostles put seven respected Greek-speaking men in charge of the food distribution program. This solved the problem and allowed the apostles to keep their focus on teaching and preaching the Good News about Jesus.

—Life App Notes

III. Qualifications for deacons in the local church

The administrative task of distribution was not taken lightly. Those chosen to help manage were chosen for their integrity, wisdom, and sensitivity to God. People who carry heavy responsibilities

RENEWAL MINISTRIES

of Colorado Springs

and work closely with others must have these qualities.

Spiritual leadership is serious business and must not be taken lightly by the church or its leaders. In the early church, the chosen men were ordained or commissioned (set apart by prayer and laying on of hands) by the apostles. Laying hands on someone, an ancient Jewish practice, was a way to set a person apart for special service (see Numbers 27:23; Deut. 34:9).

—Life App Notes

1 Tim. 3:8-11 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

Churches Constitution & ByLaws

SECTION 5 – DEACONS:

Deacons shall carry on various ministries within the church to meet the physical needs of the church under the direction of the Senior Pastor and elders. In cooperation with the Senior Pastor, they shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the church, pray for those in their care, assist in the disbursement of benevolence funds, care for the work of ushering and extending the official hospitality of the church to its members and visitors. The deacons shall assist the Senior Pastor, pastoral staff, and elders in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries as directed by the Senior Pastor.

If a deacon becomes unqualified to serve (as determined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9), they shall no longer be considered a deacon, and shall no longer have the authority and responsibility of a deacon.

SECTION 6 – QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS:

(A) A deacon must be a “born-again” believer in Jesus Christ and must agree with the Statement of Faith, Constitution and By-Laws of Integrity Christian Fellowship.

(B) A deacon holds a position of trust and authority and is assigned specific tasks that minister to the physical needs of the church and its members. He must be full of wisdom, faith, and have a good reputation (Acts 6:3-6).

(C) A deacon shall be a man who is respectable, maintaining a pure conscience before God and man, careful in speech, sincere, not given to drunkenness, not greedy for money, and trustworthy. If married, he must be in a monogamous heterosexual relationship. (I Timothy 3:8-11).

(D) A deacon shall be a man who manages his home well, and if married, whose wife and children follow his example (I Timothy 3:12).

(E) A deacon shall serve the Lord and others and have demonstrated this commitment prior to becoming a deacon.