

## The Role of the Deacon

Acts 6: 1-7

If you remember when I was elected pastor here at Fellowship, I shared with you my commitment to looking to Scripture in all that we do. It is to be the basis and standard for all that we do. I believe that much of the confusion in the modern church is due to a lack of biblical instruction.

In a couple of weeks we will be making an important decision in regard to our church. Deacons will be selected and called upon to serve the church. I cannot emphasize the importance of godly deacons enough in our day. This is not just a concept that has gained popularity in the modern era. The office of deacon was ordained of God and has been a vital part of the New Testament church since she was born.

Over the next couple of weeks I want to consider the passages of Scripture that deal with the office of a deacon. Now, let me clear up some-thing before we even get started. I have no problems with the men that have served or are serving this church. It has been a pleasure to work with them thus far. My desire is to look at what the Bible says concerning the office of a deacon so that we can pray, seek the Lord's will, and make an informed decision based on Scripture when calling those who will be elected to serve the upcoming term. Tonight I want to begin by looking at the elements involved in: [The Role of a Deacon](#).

**I. The Condition of the Church** (1) – [And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.](#) Deacons are a part of the church and the need for deacons was born out of the condition of the church. As we look at the church in Jerusalem, some 2,000 years ago, you will find similarities that remain in the modern church.

**A. The Multiplication** – We find that the [number of disciples was multiplied](#). The word [disciple](#) means *“learner or pupil; those who followed the Lord and His teaching.”* We all know what multiplication means. The church was growing and it was growing quickly.

- The Holy Spirit had indwelt the believers; the gospel was being preached and shared, and the church was growing by leaps and bounds. [Acts 2:41, 47b; 4:4; 5:11, 14.](#)
- A healthy church will be a growing church. We need to work toward, plan for, and anticipate growth. That ought to be a priority here at Fellowship!

**B. The Murmuring** – As the church began to grow, she experienced some growing pains. It didn't take long for problems to arise and murmuring began. This has the idea of *“secret debate; displeasure not openly shared; whispering.”* The church was made up of Jews from

Jerusalem as well as those who had returned to Jerusalem from other areas who had been influenced by the Grecian culture. A secret dispute arose between them.

- The church was in her infant stages and yet the enemy was already on the attack. The problems within the church needed to be addressed and taken care of if the church was to continue to prosper.
- We are all aware that problems will and do arise among us. Where there are people coming together there will always be issues that need to be addressed. The adversary likes to use these issues to cause strife and contention among the church. The overwhelming majority of the church's problems are internal. If we can identify those issues and address them, we can prevent even greater problems that lead to devastating turmoil.

**C. The Ministration** – The basis for the problem was the fact that certain widows of the Grecian Jews felt as if they were being overlooked in the daily [ministration](#). Simply they felt they were being neglected in the service and ministry of the church. The early church met the needs of their own. They sold their possessions so that all might be cared for. Some felt that they were not getting their share of what was provided.

- The church was busy and it was active, but there were needs that were not being met. They had grown so much that the apostles could not meet the needs of everyone.
- Churches need to be busy; we need to be active and meeting the needs of our people, but if we are to meet these needs, someone has to be willing to do the work. The pastor can't do it all.

## **I. The Condition of the Church** (1)

**II. The Concern of the Church** (2-4) – The church was aware that there were needs and they were concerned about those needs being met. There are two specific areas of concern that are pointed out in the text. Notice:

### **A. The Priority of the Pastor**

**1. The Need for Preparation** (2) – [Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.](#) The needs that had surfaced within the church were physical needs: food, finances, daily provisions, etc. The apostles felt they had a greater need to study the Word of God and prepare to preach. They felt it would be an injustice to the church for their focus to be meeting physical needs. They had to prepare if they were to preach.

**2. The Need for Prayer** (4a) – *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.* They realized the importance of prayer. Few in our day stop to consider the need for prayer by the pastor. He needs to have time that he can devote to prayer.

**3. The Need for Preaching** (4b) – *and to the ministry of the word.* These men had been called to preach the Word. That was their priority and their focus. This must be the priority of every man of God who pastors a church!

**B. The Provision of the People** (2-3) – *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.* The apostles were not hard-hearted or unconcerned. Their priority was centered on the ministry of the Word, but they knew that these were legitimate needs that must be taken care of. They did not brush these needs aside or overlook them.

- The church is not the building; it is the people. Believers are the church. Without the people, the church would cease to exist. Preparation, prayer, and preaching are all vital to the health and growth of the church, but we cannot overlook the needs of our people. Where people are, needs will arise; and we must be prepared to meet those needs. This is where the deacons are so vital to the welfare of the church.
- Nothing can take the place of sound, biblical preaching. It is the focus and emphasis of our worship, but it is not the only aspect of the church. We could have the best preaching in the world, but if we neglected the needs of our people, and they moved on elsewhere, what profit would the preaching be? Ministry to the people of Fellowship Baptist Church must continue and it must be a priority among us. That is the priority and focus of the deacons. I need you men to fulfill this obligation and the church needs you also!

## **I. The Condition of the Church** (1)

## **II. The Concern of the Church** (2-4)

**III. The Charge to the Church** (3) – *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.* The apostles charged the church with the responsibility to appoint seven men to serve as deacons. You too have received that charge and will fulfill that obligation in a few weeks.

- Lord willing, next week we will look at the Requirements of a Deacon. There is an alarming trend in the modern Baptist Church, even among conservatives. There are basically two requirements that are observed: 1) Proper Marital Status 2) A Pulse. This is ridiculous,

but that is where we are in today's society. If he isn't disqualified concerning marriage and he is breathing, then most are ready to ordain him to be a deacon.

- This is an office ordained of God and He established the requirements. The church at Jerusalem was given a set of criteria when selecting the first deacons. We find that deacons are to be:

**A. Sound Men** – **Men of honest report.** This means “*men who are well reported of; bearing a good witness; having a good reputation.*” Deacons must be men of integrity who are faithful, trustworthy, morally upright, and trusted by all. This has the idea of “*men who have experienced something.*”

- Falling just under the pastor, deacons are the most scrutinized of all church members. The world expects them to rise above average when it comes to integrity, behavior, and Christian responsibility. The deacon is a very visible ambassador of the church and our Lord. He must be a man who is recognized among the church and the world for his Christian character.

**B. Spiritual Men** (3) – **Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.** Also these men are to be full of the Holy Ghost. Eph.3:19 – **And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.** Eph.5:18 – **And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**

- To me, this is the one requirement that is often overlooked, but is likely the most important. A man who is filled with the Holy Ghost will have no problem maintaining his character and standing concerning his office. I know some men who have served as a deacon for years that are not filled with the Holy Ghost. This is a most grievous error. If I could challenge you in one area in the coming weeks, seek out men who are full of the Holy Ghost.

**C. Seasoned Men** – Men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and **wisdom.** Deacons are to be men full of wisdom. Paul warns of ordaining a novice, one who is not settled and mature in his faith.

- I served as a deacon for ten years and I can assure you that it is not the coveted position that many think. It is a demanding office that requires men to make decisions, some of which are not easy. Deacons need to be filled with the wisdom of God so that their decisions are based on the Word and will of God rather than the pressures or desires of the flesh.
- The future of our church will be influenced by those who are placed in positions of leadership. We cannot afford to compromise the biblical standard. **Jam.3:17 – But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.** Seek men who are full of wisdom to lead!

**D. Serving Men** (3) – Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, **whom we may appoint over this business.**

Remember the issue at hand. There were needs among the people. Widows were being neglected and overlooked. The church needed those who would see to the business of service. The word **deacon** literally means “*to kick up dust.*” It has the idea of a servant who moves so quickly that he leaves a cloud of dust in his wake. God never intended deacons to be lords over the church, but servants who waited tables, meeting the needs of the congregation.

- When seeking out deacons, we need to seek men who are willing to be used of the Lord in service to His church, including His people. If a man doesn't have a desire and willingness to serve, he isn't qualified biblically to hold the office of a deacon.

We have considered the role of a deacon this evening. The church will appoint men to serve in this capacity in a few weeks. I would urge the church to seek the Lord in regard to this vital office. Maybe you need to come before the Lord tonight, seeking His will.