

Deacon Retreat Teaching

I. Deacons Described

1. Importance of a deacon
 - 1.1 Only two New Testament offices
 - 1.2 Two must then be enough
 - 1.3 All other officers in church are derivatives
 - 1.4 Church failure or success will be found in these offices.
No church split when these two are together.
 - 1.5 Pastorate and Deaconate are like a pair of shoes, having one is better than none, but never realize full potential with just one.

2. Definition of a deacon
 - 2.1 *Diakonos* = servant.
 - 2.2 Matt. 23:11-12
 - (1) v. 11 – action – serving, servant; results in greatness
 - (2) v. 12 – attitude – humility; pursued humility results in exaltation
 - (3) Humility is –
 - a. God-wards – pawn in His hands
 - b. – is not personality; John the Baptist, Paul, Andrew
 - c. – John 3:30, John, Peter
 - d. – call faithfulness
 - 2.3 Matt. 20:28 – Jesus came to serve.
 - (1) Gave His life for many (others).
 - (2) You give your will, comfort, money, time, gifts, ability, and reputation, for others.
 - 2.4 Servants do what they're told by the master for His benefit.

3. Concepts of the Deaconate
 - 3.1 Board of Directors – make decisions Baptist Deacon Model
 - 3.2 Board of Managers – run the machine
 - 3.3 Body of Ministering Servants – meet needs for advancement of the Kingdom.
(Some believe baggage from Baptist Deacon Model precludes biblical *diaconate* in Baptist Churches.)

* If wrong concept, you cannot have a New Testament Church.
 - 3.4 Don't confuse elders with deacons
 - (1) Elders serve by equipping and leading.
 - (2) Deacons serve by meeting needs so elders can equip, and body can be built to do ministry.

- 3.5 New Testament church authority
- Chief Shepherd – whose will is primarily articulated in the Scriptures.
 - Local Church – vote to hire and vote to fire
 - Under Shepherd – lead, equip, with authority granted in hire and by nature of office
 - Local Church – under direction and leadership and authority of Pastor/s while retaining the authority to terminate.
- Pastoral authority is derived from the New Testament and therefore must be respected by the church and not exceeded by the Pastor.
 - Pastor does not get permission from Deaconate but counsel.
- 3.6 New Testament ministry structure

Chief Shepherd

Under Shepherd/s

Equipping & Leading

Ministry

Deacons

Serve & Equip
 Physician Needs
 Counsel
 Peacemakers
 Spiritual Needs
 Examples

Lay Ministers

Evangelism Children
 Teaching
 Administration
 Future Deacons

- 3.7 Deacons fulfill the role of a deacon when they work with the pastor to relieve him of meeting church needs to he can study, pray, preach and equip.
- 3.8 Deacons may also serve in other areas of ministry, but that does not fulfill their role as a deacon but only as a ministering Christian.

4. Logical Necessities.
 - 4.1 You must come to church.
 - (1) In order to know the needs and to minister, you must be among the people to whom you minister.
 - (2) In order to be an example of godliness, you must be active in the life of the church.
 - 4.2 You must be spiritual – how can you be trusted with spiritual responsibilities if you are not a spiritual person. By spiritual, we mean walking with the Lord Jesus Christ and maturing in the faith.
 - 4.3 You serve God, then the people.
 - (1) You are not a politician representing the people; you are a servant representing God.
 - (2) You are to serve God by serving the people and carrying some of the ministerial responsibilities of the pastor so that he may pray, study the Word, and give leadership.
 - 4.4 To be a deacon, you must commit to more time and involvement than the average member.
 - 4.5 The purpose of the deacon is to relieve the pastor of temporal and other responsibilities so that he can pray, study and preach. (Acts 6:5)

II. Deacons in action. Acts 6:1-7 (read all verses)

1. Deaconate was born out of a crisis (v.1).
2. Deacons are trouble-shooters, not trouble makers.
(Ministers or reconciliation) The criticism of the early church was directed at the apostles. These men equal Jethro principle of the Old Testament.
Exodus 17:1-4, 13-15, 17-18, 21-23.
3. Deacons meet physical needs directly and, indirectly, spiritual needs.
4. Preachers and deacons are a team (v.3).
5. Deacons are to be of one accord.
6. Deacon Priorities – widows, trouble spots in the church, temporal needs.
7. Preacher’s ministry
 - 7.1 v.2, v.4, Eph 4:11-12
8. Deacon Ministry – meets needs of the local body so that the ministry of prayer and preaching by God’s preacher is not hindered.
9. Result of proper priorities of deacons and preachers.
 - 9.1 v. 7 (Matt 28:18-20)
 - 9.2 Confusion priorities and ministries result in the opposite
10. v. 3 – Put in charge of meeting temporal needs as designated by the apostles.
 - 10.1 Need money
 - 10.2 Need authority to act
 - 10.3 Need to recognize people’s spiritual well-being in your trust
 - 10.4 Need close relationship to pastors
11. Qualifications
 - 11.1 Men – v.3; I Tim. 3:8
 - 11.2 Good reputation (honest report).
People must be able to trust you based on your character. You will be slandered, questioned and doubted; therefore he must be trustworthy.
 - 11.3 Full of the Spirit – godly men, spiritual temperament.
 - Can’t come from where you haven’t been
 - Can’t teach what you don’t know

- Can't model when you don't have
- * Goal is to help people be godlier.

11.4 Full of wisdom.

- (1) Several persons' spiritual well-being will be affected by your attitude and actions.
- (2) Many of your decisions are not addressed explicitly in Scripture, but rather implicitly in principle.
- (3) You will deal with delicate decisions affecting individuals, families and the church (a lot of women)

11.5 Deacon before ordained – He's already doing it and ordination recognizes it (although the purpose of service is more narrowly defined as a deacon).

11.6 Gifted – Not all godly men are to be deacons.
(I'm an example)

11.7 Present tense of qualifications –

- (1) v. 3 – of good reputation (of = possessing) Reputation is a present reality, not a past reality.
- (2) I Timothy 3 – all the verbs are present tense.
- (3) Servant serves or he is not a servant; hence, there can be no inactive servants.
 - a. The failure to serve or meet qualifications is a withdrawal from the Diaconate.
 - b. These are not merely the qualifications to become a deacon but also to remain a deacon.

11.8 No deacon rotation. This was designed to remove bad deacons, but it also removes good deacons.

11.9 There is New Testament flexibility to allow different models of the Diaconate, implementation, rotation, continuous shifts, etc.

12. Notice that Stephen became a preacher, Phillip was an evangelist. Athanasius, in the Fourth Century, helped defend the truth of Scripture against the heresy of Arius: at the time Athanasius was a deacon.

- * Deacons should know, live and share the Word of God.

13. Notice –

- 13.1 Only seven deacons for a church of over 5000 men. Acts 4:4 (This does not count women and children).
- 13.2 There were more elders (apostles) than deacons.
- 13.3 The task of the Deacons was decided by the elders (apostles)
- 13.4 The congregation was involved, but elders had final approval
- 13.5 There are no prescribed responsibilities for deacons in the New Testament because they are to serve in a way to help elders fulfill their many obligations prescribed by the New Testament.

III. Elder Qualifications.

(Present tense verbs)

1. Bishop = Pastor – Plural
2. Blameless – above reproach
Husband, one wife – not divorced.
Views past & present &
 - 2.1 Wife (spouse dies, must remarry single)
 - 2.2 Must be married to pastor
 - 2.3 Polygamy – no New Testament references – not a problem
 - 2.4 Monogamy – all scriptures relate to divorce
3. Vigilant = temperate, well balanced
4. Sober = prudent, self-controlled, disciplined
5. Good behavior = respectable
6. Hospitable
- *7. Apt to teach
8. Not given to wine
9. No striker – not violent – anger
10. Not greedy – not pursue ministry for personal gain
11. Patient
12. Rule house well
13. Not a novice
14. Respected in community – honest, hard worker
15. Pastor and his wife give up their rights as servants of the church

IV. Deacon Qualifications.

(Present Tense Verbs)

1. Grave = dignified – not clowns – worthy of respect.
2. Not double-tongued = honest, not hypocrites –
Speak different tune depending on whom you speak to.
3. Not given too much wine = Tapes.
4. Greedy of filthy lucre – dishonest gain (deacon handles money).
5. Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.
 - 5.1 Men of spiritual depth
 - 5.2 Must know to hold
 - 5.3 Live what profess – clear conscience
6. Proved = prove their deacons by God’s design demonstrating characteristics and gifts before placed in office.
7. Let them serve as deacons being found blameless i.e. if accused not guilty.
8. Wives – not deaconess.
 - 8.1 *Yuvaiikos* – v.2, 11, 12.
 - 8.2 Not called deaconess here or elsewhere
 - 8.3 No deaconesses ever set apart –
 - (1) Phoebe – minister, non-technical use.
 - (2) 3rd ct – had them – not script
 - 8.4 Why so few qualifications?
Deacon – 9
Wife - 4
 - 8.5 Why go back to deacon again in v. 12?
 - 8.6 Wives = wives of deacons
 - 8.7 I believe these are deacon’s wives
 - (1) Grave – not clowns, worthy of respect
 - (2) Not slanderers – *Diabolous*
She devils, slanderers, gossip, malicious talkers, accuse falsely – she will know more
 - (3) Sober – self-controlled, disciplined
 - (4) Faithful – to Christ first
9. Husband of one wife – refer to elders

10. Ruling their children and houses well – preside
 - 10.1 *Proistamenol* (?) – stand before, rule with care and diligence
 - 10.2 Same as I Tim. 5:17 – used of pastors

11. All verbs – present tense (v. 13)
 - 11.1 Gain an excellent standing – before other Christians who understand and appreciate the beauty of humility
 - 11.2 Also excellent standing before God
 - 11.3 Boldness in the faith – build confidence in your faith
 - 11.4 Also in relation to God and men

12. Deacons and their wives give up their rights in the church as servants.

13. Deacons’ service is for the limited purpose of relieving the preacher so the Word can go forth and the Kingdom advance.

V. Deacons in Ministry.

1. Kinds of ministries
 - 1.1 Give list of ministries (and other handouts)
 - 1.2 Ministries must directly or indirectly facilitate in spiritual growth, kingdom advancement.
 - 1.3 Deacon ministry must be for the purpose of relieving the pastor.
2. Reasons for not ministering. (Backdrop is the feeding of the 5000 in Matthew 14:13-21)
 - 2.1 They don't deserve it.
 - 2.2 They won't use it correctly.
 - 2.3 That's the government's job.
 - 2.4 The father is an alcoholic.
 - 2.5 They're not members.
 - 2.6 They will not be able to reciprocate.
 - 2.7 They already mismanage their affairs.
 - 2.8 They are where they are because of their sin.
 - 2.9 We will be taken.
3. Reasons for ministering
 - 3.1 To be like Jesus.
 - 3.2 We are commanded to.
 - 3.3 Then they will look to church for spiritual needs.
 - 3.4 Part of making disciples and being made a disciple.
 - 3.5 Open door to share the Gospel.
 - 3.6 People depend on who takes care of them.
 - 3.7 Alternative is disobedience and death.
 - 3.8 Realize unity, blessing, sense of purpose of Deaconate and gifts of the body.
 - 3.9 Creates an environment conducive to spiritual growth and serving.
4. Guidelines for continuing ministry to a particular person
 - 4.1 Lord's leadership
 - 4.2 Severity of problem
 - 4.3 Ability to recover
 - 4.4 Are they trying?
 - 4.5 Don't expect a quick, complete change.

5. Ministering to needy

5.1 Biological

- (1) Sick, handicapped, disabled, abused, elderly, hungry, surgery
- (2) Our help – doctor, medicine, counsel, friendship, acceptance, help to overcome detrimental habits, compassion, food, shelter, meals, mow lawn, etc.

5.2 Cognitive

- (1) Their condition
 - a. They don't know the differences you think they should.
 - b. Low IQ
 - c. Uneducated
 - d. Inadequate in Bible knowledge
 - e. Crooked thinking – doomed, catastrophic, etc.
- (2) Our help
 - a. Re-educate, training, reading programs
 - b. Time
 - c. Church/Christian life
 - d. Right job

5.3 Affective

- (1) Their condition
 - a. Emotionally drained, breakdown, weak, depressed
 - b. Blahs, suicide
 - c. Nervous - worry
- (2) Our help
 - a. Love
 - b. Care
 - c. Bring to church
 - d. Check on them

5.4 Sociological

- (1) They are in a social snare, vicious cycle, limited options
 - a. Lose job – little training
 - b. Divorced
 - c. Smoking only joy
 - d. VCR and Curtis Mathis TV – can't pay utilities – escape, significance
 - e. Trying to survive

- (2) Our help
 - a. Meet where they are
 - b. Identify with them at some point
 - c. Demonstrate love, compassion, friendship, concern

5.5 Spiritual

- (1) Their condition
 - a. Lost or saved
 - b. Lost – hardened, open or confused (think they are saved)
 - c. Saved – backslidden, immature, mature, faithful, growing, stifled
- (2) Our help
 - a. Witness
 - b. Testimony
 - c. Bible, tracts
 - d. Appropriate counseling
 - e. Church life

* All ministries must consider all five dimensions of human existence in order to minister to the full range of needs.

6. Example – Heart surgery

6.1 Biological

- (1) Physical condition
 - a. Face death before, during and after surgery
 - b. 12 week recovery; pain, limitations
 - c. Limitations – not drive for 3 weeks; not lift over 10 pounds for 6 weeks, or 25 pounds for 12 weeks; energy level, low; sleeping irregularities; X amount of energy needed for recovery which would go to others normally; diet, a life-style change
- (2) Our help
 - a. Patience
 - b. Protection (from other problems)
 - c. Mow, fix house
 - d. Family matters
 - e. Food
 - f. Transportation
 - g. Cleaning
 - h. Doing his/her job
 - i. Carrying patient's responsibilities
 - j. Cards, calls

6.2 Cognitive

- (1) State of Being
 - a. Not remember all visitors and words said
 - b. Confusion – why? Meaning? Evaluate past, present and future
 - c. Worry
- (2) Our help
 - a. Reassurance
 - b. Support
 - c. Time
 - d. Not overloaded with other matters

6.3 Affective

- (1) Emotions
 - a. Fear – dying, reinjure injury, shower, drive
 - b. Depression – too young, fragile
 - c. Rage, anger, hurt, etc. (emotions not easily controlled)
 - d. Cry over little things
 - e. Inability to do anything exacerbates emotional trauma
- (2) Our Help
 - a. Not share our problems
 - b. Not ask to do something or tell about what they would want to deal with but can't
 - c. Accept their emotional instability
 - d. Time
 - e. Accept unique experience

6.4 Social

- (1)
 - a. Whole family affected
 - b. Wife = trauma, except biological
 - c. Financial concerns
 - d. Relationships never the same
 - e. Impact on others
- (2) Our help
 - a. Show concern for all
 - b. Help the whole family
 - c. Do something; don't ask "If there is anything I can do...."
Look for something

6.5 Spiritual

- (1) Lost
 - a. Witness to show God's love

- (2) Saved
 - a. Pray God's use for growth
 - b. Pray they would be faithful in trial
 - c. Pray they would grow closer to the Lord
 - d. Pray protection from satanic attack at weak moment