

Servant Leaders

The song “Make Me a Servant” is an appeal. It is a prayer and petition to God to make us like Jesus. Jesus was a servant, and He has called us to be servants (Mark 10:42-45).

The path to greatness in the kingdom of God is not being a Lord, CEO, or sitting at the head of the table. It is found in being a servant of members of the spiritual family. Jesus exemplified this in His life (John 13:1-17; Mark 10:45; Philippians 2:3-8).

The Lord has called for all His people to be servants. He has called for servant leaders in His church.

- Elders serve through leading, feeding, and nurturing the flock of God (1 Peter 5:1-4).
- The word “deacon” is often used to talk about men appointed to minister to specific needs in a local church.

To help us prepare to appoint additional deacons, let’s consider some critical things the Bible teaches about their work and qualifications.

What do deacons do?

- They are appointed by the church (Acts 6:1-3). The Jerusalem church appointed what were likely the first deacons. They ministered to the needs of widows.
 - The problem in the Jerusalem church was dangerous. It could have divided the church and distracted the apostles from their primary work (Acts 6:2).
 - These deacons were not “junior elders.” They did not occupy the work of deacons to prepare them to one day become elders.
 - Deacons have a work unto themselves. Their work is separate from the work of elders.
- They were “put in charge of this task” (Acts 6:3). They had authority. They had the liberty to use judgment in making decisions pertaining to their work. They were not micro-managed by the apostles. That would have defeated the purpose of them being appointed in the first place!
- They involved others in their work. Due to the size of the Jerusalem church and the number of widows, this would have been necessary (Acts 2:41; 4:4).
- Our deacons also serve the family of God. They are stewards over the physical aspects of God’s spiritual work. They are involved in works of benevolence, technology, security, maintenance, preparing class materials, and landscaping.

What are the qualifications for deacons?

- They must be men of good reputation (Acts 6:3).
- They must be spiritual men (Acts 6:3). They are influenced by the Holy Spirit.
- They must be full of wisdom (Acts 6:3). They can make sound decisions.
- They are dignified (1 Timothy 3:8).
- They are not double-tongued (1 Timothy 3:8).
- They are self-controlled (1 Timothy 3:8).
- They are not greedy and covetous (1 Timothy 3:8).
- They have character that has been tested (1 Timothy 3:10).
- Their wives have character that has been tested (1 Timothy 3:11).
- They are family men (1 Timothy 3:12). They are good managers of their children.
- Appointing deacons is serious business!

How does the work of deacons impact the church?

- How did their work impact the Jerusalem church?
 - The problem was solved (Acts 6:3).

- The apostles were freed and could focus on their work (Acts 6:4).
 - Everyone was pleased (Acts 6:5)
 - The gospel was preached, and souls were won (Acts 6:7).
- When the church follows God's plan for organization, everyone can do their work effectively, maintain unity, and glorify God.

What can you do?

- Take the process of appointing deacons seriously.
- Maintain a proper view of deacons and their work.
- Follow their example. Strive also to possess the mind and life of a servant.
- Pray fervently that we appoint qualified men who strive for excellence in their work!

Conclusion:

Great blessings come to those who serve in the office of deacon (1 Timothy 3:13).

- Shawn Jeffries