

Deacons's Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications (Serving the Church)

The word deacon means servant, minister, ministrant, deacon. It is from the Greek noun "deaconos." The verb form of the word means to serve, to minister, to serve in the ministry of a deacon, to provide relief. The noun and verb form of the word is used over 90 times in the New Testament. The emphasis is on service. All church leaders must be servant leaders!

Only 5 times in the English text is the word translated deacon(s). Scripture References:

Philippians 1:1

1 Timothy 3:8-10; 12-13 – noun in verses 8 and 12; verb in verses 10 and 13.

Also see:

Acts 6:1-7

Romans 12:7

Roles and Responsibilities of Deacons

Relationship with the Bishops, Overseers, Elders, Presbyters, Shepherds, Pastors:

- Deacons are not co-elders, junior elders, nor assistant elders.
- They are co-workers on the church leadership team.
- Deacons are under the oversight of the elders.
- A spiritual-physical division of the work is not scriptural.
- Elders have oversight of all the affairs of the church. - **Acts 20:28.**
- Elders can delegate and assign to deacons or others the responsibility, accountability, and authority to carry out any area of work.
- If a deacon is not capable of doing the job, he should not be appointed to do it. - **1 Timothy 3:10.**
- A church will not be any stronger than its leaders. Deacons' work is serious work!

Deacons are servants, not just office holders. Their work is all about serving, not occupying a position.

- They are to be given specific assignments by the elders to assist in the work of the church.
- They can relieve the elders. - **Acts 6:1-7.**
- Their work may be a certain one-person responsibility.
- Their assignment may be to administer a work involving supervision of other members in a given ministry or project.

Deacons always occur as a plurality in the New Testament. The number should be determined by two factors:

- The number of available qualified men.
- The number needed by the church.

Qualifications of Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-10; 12-13

No one is perfect. Only Jesus could walk on water. God created everyone with different gifts and talents. Don't compare one person with another. The Scriptures must guide our selection and appointment.

1. **Reverent** (8) – Grave, serious-minded, honorable, dignified, worthy of respect.
2. **Not double-tongued** (8) – Deceitful, insincere, two-faced, thinks one thing and says another.
3. **Not given to much wine** (8) – Does not have the habit of drinking wine. Sets an example and considers influence on others. - **Romans 14:13.**

What about the word "much?" **Ecclesiastes 7:17** says "Be not over **much** wicked." Does that mean that you can be a little bit or moderately wicked?

Also **1 Peter 4:4** speaks against "**excess** of riot." Does that approve some riotous living?

Letting the Bible interpret the Bible and other Bible passages should lead one to the conclusion that deacons or any other child of God should not use intoxicating beverages.

4. **Not greedy for money** (8) – Not greedy for filthy lucre. Not desirous, eager, or in pursuit of dishonest gain.

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Qualifications of Deacons, Continued

5. **Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience** (9) – Hold the deep revealed truth with personal holiness or a clear conscience. Believes and lives the truth. Not a hypocrite.
6. **First be tested; then let them serve as deacons** (10) – Not be appointed until character is demonstrated and experience indicates ability and dependability. Must already be serving in some way.
7. **Being found blameless** (10) – Beyond reproach. Unimpeachable. Nothing against his character. Free from legitimate accusation. Has a good reputation.
8. **Husband of one wife** (12) – A one-woman man. Not a bachelor and not a polygamist. Must be married and only to one wife.
9. **Ruling their children and their own houses well** (12) – Keeping his children under control with all dignity. Keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way. Manages his own household well. Demonstrates leadership and restraint at home. Can handle responsibility.

In addition:

Church leaders should possess all other qualities of the Christian life to a mature measure especially love. If a man truly loves, all other qualities will develop easier. - **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**.

Deacons who serve well deserve respect, appreciation, and recognition. - **1 Timothy 3:13**.

Church Leaders Wives Qualifications

God knew that men need a helper so He created women. He had a reason for requiring elders and deacons to be married. Godly women have enabled many men to serve well as church leaders as they support their husbands.

Church leaders' wives are often looked to as examples and have a powerful influence on other women. All women should aspire to these qualities and be taught to develop these from a young age.

1 Timothy 3:11

1. **Reverent** – Grave, dignified, serious-minded, and modest in manner of life, behavior, speech, and action. Not showy or flippant. Worthy of respect. Inspires respect by her conduct. Godly and mature.
2. **Not slanderers** – She devils (literally in Greek). Not malicious gossips, loose talkers, busy bodies, talebearers, false accusers. Does not relate overheard church business. Must have strict control of the tongue. **James 1:19; Ephesians 4:15**
3. **Temperate** – Sober, moderate, self-controlled, calm, prudent, wise conduct, free from unholy excitement, even-tempered, and moderate spirit.
4. **Faithful in all things** – Obedient, dependable, trustworthy, reliable, faithful in every relationship with all people and things. She is faithful to her Lord, husband, children, all people, and responsibilities.

In summary, she should be a **Proverbs 31:10-31** woman.

Think about These Questions Concerning the Qualities of Church Leaders

1. Why are the qualities listed for elders and deacons so important?
2. Why is character so important to being an elder or deacon?
3. Why is it such an important issue for both elders and deacons to be men of strong convictions regarding their faith in Christ and the truthfulness of His Word?
4. What are the reasons for the requirements concerning the families of elders and deacons?
5. Are appointments lifetime or temporary?
6. What about resigning, retiring, or removing one from these leadership roles?