SM 062115
Why Deacons?

Deacon Ordination Message

Scripture - Acts 6:1 - 8

The word "deacon" or "deacons" is found only five times in the New Testament: 4 times in 1 Timothy 3 (vs. 8, 10, 12, & 13)

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:" (Philippians 1:1)

The Greek word used in Philippians 3:1 is διάκονος (*diakonos*), which literally means servant, minister, attendant, or waiter, and is translated into these and other similar words nearly 70 times.

Illustration - A little boy just got saved and sat on a bench next to old man who looked upset. The little boy said to the man, "Sir, do you need to get saved?" The man startled said abruptly, "I'll tell you I've been a Deacon in this church for over 30 years and Chairman of Deacons for 15 years." The little boy responded, "Sir, it don't matter what you done, Jesus loves you and He'll still save you!"

I The Demand for a Deacon (vs. 1 & 2)

Why did this church at Jerusalem need deacons in the first place, and why do churches need deacons today?

1 The disciples were multiplied. Started with 120 in the upper room; 3000 added at Pentecost; 5000 more men added in Acts 4; multitudes added later. A safe estimate would be that the Church at Jerusalem at this point was probably numbering at least 20,000.

2 The Grecian widows were being neglected in the daily ministration.

"Grecian" means that these Jews were not from Palestine. They were Jews that were born abroad.

The word "ministration" is the word "diakonia", which comes from the word "diakonos", meaning servant.

There was a need for some men to take care of group of widows that needed to be ministered to. Also, the deacons could have helped settle the dispute between the Grecians and the Hebrews.

II The Decision of Selecting a Deacon

The men that the congregation was to look for were to have the following

qualifications:

1 Honest Report

2 Full of the Holy Ghost – meaning: that they manifested the gifts of the Spirit:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. ... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." - (Galatians 5:22-23, 25)

It also means that they are soul winners:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." - (Acts 1:8)

3 Full of Wisdom

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." - (Proverbs 11:30)

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." - (Psalm 111:10)

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." - (Proverbs 3:13)

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." - (Proverbs 11:2

Turn to 1 Timothy 3:8 - 13

III The Duties of a Deacon

There is a broad range of opinion regarding the duties of a deacon. In many churches, the deacon board is a group of men that pretty much run the church. The pastor is merely a figurehead, and these men control his ministry. They even control what is preached, and who is put in positions of leadership within the ministry. This often happens when a church has been without a pastor for a long period of time; or when a previous pastor has hurt the church.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are churches where the deacons are merely "yes men", who don't really have any authority whatever. Oftentimes, when this occurs, the pastor is a dictator, that lords it over God's heritage.

The Bible gives pretty clear direction as to the duties of both the pastor and the deacons.

Turn to 1 Peter 5:1 – 4

It is clear that the pastor is to take the oversight of the church, but that does not mean that he will be the only one making decisions. The pastor is to be the chief minister in the church, and is to be primarily responsible for casting the vision of the church, and for the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, and they are to be in prayer for the flock.

What then do the deacons do?

They free the pastor up of duties that keep them from praying, and ministering the Word of God to the congregation.

In our text, the particular problem involved widows.

Turn to 1 Timothy 5:3 - 16

Conclusion (vs. 7 – 8)

How was the Church at Jerusalem benefitted from the ordination of deacons.

1 **The Word of God increased.**

2 **The number of disciples increased.**

3 **Many priests were saved.**

4 **Sometimes being a deacon is a stepping-stone to other areas of ministry. (v. 8)**

"For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." - (1 Timothy 3:13)

The word "degree" means standing – meaning they will have great influence in the church. Notice, however, that the standing does not come with the appointment – it only comes when they have used the office of a deacon well.

The story of Stephen begins in v. 8, and continues down through to the end of chapter 7.

Chapter 8, tells us about another deacon who purchased a good degree, by using the office of a deacon well; and he too went on to other things for the Lord, beyond the area of the Church at Jerusalem.