

Chosen to Serve; Acts 6:2-3

I. Servant

- A. We have talked often about what it means to be a Christian
- B. Philippians 2:3–5 (ESV); ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,
- C. We are all supposed to be servants
- D. Matthew 20:26–28 (ESV); ²⁶ It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- E. Even the Great Shepherd Himself, Jesus, was a servant to us
- F. Being a servant is so important that both offices in the church are servants, Shepherds and Deacons

II. Deacon

- A. 1 Timothy 3:1 (ESV); The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.
- B. Verse 8 starts out with, “Deacons likewise...”
- C. There are functionally two offices in the body, that of the Shepherd and that of the Deacon — some would argue a third, a minister or evangelist, but that is not clearly expressed in the Bible
- D. Philippians 1:1 (ESV); Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:
- E. Deacon
 - 1. A transliteration from the Greek word “Diakonos” (just as baptize is from the Greek word “baptizo”)
 - 2. One who gets something done at the behest of a superior, assistant
 - a) Table attendants
 - b) Those in the service of Jesus
 - c) One who serves as an assistant
 - d) Used 29 times in the New Testament, only translated “deacon” 3 times
 - 3. There are two other words with this same root (at total of three words)
 - 4. Diakonia - used 34 times — serve (ice, ing), ministry, relief, and distribution
 - 5. Acts 6:1–4 (ESV); ¹ Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”
 - 6. Diakoneo - used 37 times — translated serve or minister almost every time
 - 7. Diakonos, Diakonia, Diakoneo — used 100 times in the New Testament — only 3 times as “deacon” (a fourth time as deacon or deaconess in certain translations)
 - 8. Phoebe — the majority of word for word translations use “servant”
 - a) It would seem that she is traveling through (or moving to) Rome
 - b) Paul wants to make sure that the church in Rome provides the help she needs
 - c) Commend — to bring together as friends or in a trusting relationship ¹

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 972.

- d) Romans 16:1–2 (ESV); ¹ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, ² that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.
- e) Patron — a woman in a supportive role, patron, benefactor ²
- F. We are all servants in our congregation, but there are some who are chosen for the office of a servant (Deacon)

III. Characteristics

- A. 1 Timothy 3:8–13 (ESV); ⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.
- B. All too often we use this as a list of line items to be checked off
 - 1. I attended a class at the Sunset Vision Workshop a number of years ago
 - 2. Dr. John Hobbs was the instructor — he had at that time over 60 hours of Greek Language instruction
 - a) Depending on the university you only need 6-8 hours of instruction in Greek to receive a Bachelor’s degree
 - b) Out of 60 hours required you only need 6-8 hours.
 - 3. “μιάς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα” was written on the white board when I walked in
 - 4. “One woman kind of man” (husband)
- C. These are characteristics that God wants His leaders to have
 - 1. Dignified — human beings worthy of respect/honor, noble, dignified, serious ³
 - 2. Not Double-tongued — insincere, dishonest
 - 3. Not addicted to much wine — an alcoholic whose sole focus is his drink
 - 4. Not greedy for dishonest gain — shamefully greedy, avarice (one word in the Greek)
 - 5. Hold to the faith — hold to the revealed secret of the Gospel without twisting or perverting it
 - 6. Tested — to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, ⁴
 - 7. A one woman kind of man — not given to adulterous affairs, faithful to his wife
 - 8. Managing their children and households — good leaders
- D. Their wives also have to have certain characteristics
 - 1. Dignified — human beings worthy of respect/honor, noble, dignified, serious
 - 2. Not slanderers — making false and damaging statements about someone
 - 3. Sober-minded — very moderate in the drinking of an alcoholic beverage; being restrained in conduct, self-controlled, level-headed ⁵
 - 4. Faithful — this means way more than just attendance (we seem to get stuck on ascribing faithfulness based on attendance)
- E. We should all attain to these characteristics!
- F. The church needs leaders!

IV. Servants of Servants

- A. We are all servants in the Kingdom of God

² Ibid, 885.

³ Ibid, 919.

⁴ Ibid, 255.

⁵ Ibid, 672.

- B. Some desire to more humility and servitude
- C. Deacons (and Shepherds) are that group of people