

# Now Is The Time Series

#3 – A Time For Deacons

January 16, 2005 (AM)

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

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I am putting this message in this series on “Now Is The Time,” because we have a need for at least one more deacon in our church at this time.

Now, before we go electing or choosing a deacon just because we need one or want one, let us consider some characteristics of a deacon and then think through and pray about whom the Lord would have us to bring into this position.

## I. A DEACON MUST HAVE A SERVANT’S HEART

- A. The very word deacon in the New Testament Greek language means “**to be a servant, attendant, domestic, to serve, wait upon.**”
- B. So, in order to be a deacon, one must have the attitude or the heart of a servant, an attendant.
- C. Mt 23:11 *But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.*
- D. Mr 9:35 *And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, [the same] shall be last of all, and servant of all.*

## II. A DEACON MUST BE CHOSEN BY THE CHURCH

- A. Read Acts 6:1-7
- B. Selecting deacons is a church function. It is not a popularity contest or even a leadership contest.
- C. These were men of honest report, not necessarily rich or poor.
- D. These men were full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, and that wisdom, I think, came from the Holy Ghost.
- E. They laid their hands upon them. Today we would say they ordained them.
- F. With the deacons in their proper place, the word of God increased, the number of the disciples multiplied, and a great company of the priests were obedient unto the faith.
- G. This is the result of doing things God’s way.
- H. There is no mention of these men having leadership skills or being able to make speeches or have influence in the church. They were merely servants who were chosen by the church to do a job that the church described.
- I. These men must have been great witnesses, because we see Stephen being a great witness of the truth of God’s word. He did great wonders and miracles among the people. These gifts were given to first-century Christians until the word of God was completed and verified to be God’s word.
- J. When the word of God was finished, the miracles and wonders had no more purpose, but God teaches us all things now through his word.
- K. The whole church was in agreement as to who these men would be. Verse 5 says the saying pleased the whole multitude.

- L. A deacon is not automatically a deacon in one church simply because he was a deacon in a different church. His ordination may be accepted, but he is not automatically in position if he moves to a new church. The church where he moved must accept him and choose him as a deacon just as the first one did.

### III. A DEACON MUST BE SOLD OUT TO HIS PASTOR

- A. Ro 14:4 *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.*
- B. A deacon answers to his own church, not to another. The church where he is a member holds him responsible for the work that he is allotted to do.
- C. As a deacon he also must give himself to the service of the pastor. Anyone who is not willing to submit wholly to the leadership of a pastor should not be a deacon.
- D. If a deacon is against the pastor, he can cause a lot of trouble. He can divide the church and cause chaos for the church and the community and bring a disgrace upon the church that will last for years.
- E. So, a deacon must be chosen with care and prayer.
- F. A deacon should be able to go to his pastor any time and talk about any problem or situation of the church without fear or favor. He should be able to work closely with the pastor, and he should be willing to go with the pastor to visit any time he can and to be faithful in visitation himself on a regular basis.
- G. A deacon can make a pastor's job easier and more pleasant.
- H. A deacon, then, should have a very high regard for the position of pastor, since the same man will not always occupy the office.

### IV. A DEACON MUST BE A MAN

- A. We read in the Bible of women who were great servants of God, but they were not deaconesses in the same sense that a man is a deacon.
- B. Many women are servants of the church. Paul said in Ro 16:1 *I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:*
- C. These women did not have official positions in the church; they were not chosen by the whole church as the deacons are.
- D. Women cannot meet the requirements laid down for deacons as Paul wrote to Timothy, which we will consider in the next point..

### V. A DEACON MUST MEET BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS

- A. We find these qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- B. In summing up these qualifications, John Gill says, "Their characters are, that they be "grave"; in their speech, gesture, and dress; honest, and of good report among men; and chaste in their words and actions; all which may be signified by the word here used;"
- C. The word grave means "venerated for character" or having a good reputation and a good nature pertaining to character.
- D. The deacons are to be grave, to present themselves as men of strong character and serious about their position and business. Gill mentions speech, which opposes the following condemnation of being double-tongued. A deacon must have a proper speech. Gill mentions gesture, which means a deacon must conduct himself in a business-like manner and in a godly and honorable manner. He mentions dress, which I believe to

be important. What a man wears tells a lot about his mind-set and, his nature and his attitude toward his dealings in life. If a man dresses down, his attitude will be flippant and youthful; if a man dresses up, his attitude will reveal his seriousness in business and his love for God and his surrender to the Lord's work.

- E. A deacon cannot be deceived by wine, alcohol, strong drink; and he cannot have an inordinate love for money.
- F. A deacon must have a grasp of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and hold it in a good conscience. Otherwise, he will be as the wind being tossed to and fro from one doctrine to another.
- G. Verse 10 says that a deacon must "first be proved." He cannot be a novice or a beginner. He must have experienced some trials and weathered some storms. He must be known to stay with the stuff when times get tough. He cannot be simply a hireling. Jesus says a hireling cares not for the sheep. He must be proved to be faithful. 1 Cor. 4:2 *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*
- H. This also implies that he must be questioned to show that he has some biblical foundation. We do this at the time of ordination.
- I. He must use his office, being blameless, lest he should be a castaway and bring shame upon himself and the church. This is not a trivial job; it is not a temporary job. It is for life.
- J. Their wives must be grave, strong in conscience of faith and not slanderers. They should have a balanced mind and be faithful in all things. Being a pastor's wife or a deacon's wife is not an easy position to be in. Therefore, a man should always consult with his wife before accepting this position.
- K. A deacon must be the husband of one wife and have their children in subjection. Is this a tall order or what? This just simply means that he is a good organizer and can get some things done.
- L. In this office, a man who uses it well will purchase unto himself great boldness in the faith and a degree that comes from God himself and not from a college.

## VI. A DEACON MUST BE SAVED

- A. This goes without saying. You might ask why I am bringing this up, because no one can be a deacon unless he is a member of the church.
- B. But we must remember that not every member of every church is saved. One of our deacons was a member of a church 14 years before he was saved.
- C. One of our deacons thought he was saved, but then the Lord convicted him and saved him after he had been a deacon for several years.
- D. We cannot know for sure and judge whether a man is saved or lost—only God can do that; but we must be as sure as we can be.
- E. Now, talking to everyone here, how long have you been a member of a church? How long have you sat there and taken for granted that you are going to heaven without really knowing for sure that you have been regenerated by God's Holy Spirit.?
- F. Pray about our choice of another deacon here at First Baptist Church. We are not in a hurry, but we should begin to think about choosing a man for that position.

## VII. A DEACON MUST BE WILLING

- A. A deacon is not simply chosen out, pointed out by finger and drug into the job.

- B. He must first be willing. The church is not directed to force anyone to be a deacon. A servant is one willingly. One that is forced is not of that persuasion but has been forced into the position of servitude and cannot serve his Master properly unless he is given to that.
- C. Notice Exod 21:5-6 *And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.*
- D. Jesus has marked us by his choosing us and saving us. We have become his willing slaves. We are bondservants of Christ. A man should willingly take the office of deacon if he is qualified and if he loves his Lord.
- E. But he must remember that this is a position for life.
- F. God has delegated authority to the local church to select our deacons. Let us do it well and be blessed as God uses deacons in our church prayerfully to multiply the believers in Jesus Christ. If we will do things his way, many will be obedient to the faith.
- G. Let's select a deacon, prove him, ordain him and then pray for him and respect him. He is God's man, and he can be a great help to me and to the members of First Baptist Church.