

The Qualifications of Deacons

The office of deacon is generally considered to have originated in the election of the seven as helpers to the apostles (Acts 6:1-6), although they were not called deacons. They were set aside to serve and minister to the needs of the church in Jerusalem. They were to be peacemakers, preserving harmony, order and unity within the church.

The term deacon in the New Testament means minister or servant. The deacons should be involved in deacon family ministries. They should not be looked upon as business managers of the church.

As is true of the office of minister or pastor, the office of deacon is not a hierarchical office. No spiritual graces and no particular authority are bestowed in the act of ordination. The office of deacon is one of example. Only men who measure up to the spiritual qualifications mentioned in Acts 6:1-6 and I Timothy 3:8-13 should be considered for the office.

- **A man of honest report** (Acts 6:3)—a good reputation among those in the church
- **Full of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 6:3)—bigness of character, in spiritual outlook and personal dedication.
- **Full of wisdom** (Acts 6:3)—an ability to discern right and wrong and to stand for his convictions.
- **Full of faith** (Acts 6:5)—like Stephen's, a deacon's faith requires him to risk himself and his possessions.
- **Grave** (1Timothy 3:8)—possesses Christian purpose, who has great reverence for spiritual matters, and whose word carries weight.
- **Not double-tongued** (1Timothy 3:8)—dependable and honest in relating to all persons, publicly and privately.
- **Not given to much wine** (1Timothy 3:8)—temperate in living, abstaining from alcoholic beverages, steward of good influence, doing all to the glory of God.



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- **Not greedy of filthy lucre** (1Timothy 3:8)—a right attitude toward material possessions, never exploiting others for his own gain.
- **A holder of the faith** (1Timothy 3:9)—gives strength to the church fellowship and possesses spiritual integrity beyond reproach.
- **Tested and proved** (1Timothy 3:10)—demonstrates his commitment to ministry before being elected to serve as a deacon.
- **Blameless** (1Timothy 3:10)—a person against whom no charge of wrong doing can be brought with success.
- **Christian family life** (1Timothy 3:11-13)—a person whose family is well cared for, whose family relations are healthy and growing.
- **Husband of one wife** (1Timothy 3:12)—a model of faithful devotion to one spouse committed to the sanctity of the marriage bond.
- **Ruling their children and their own houses well** (1Timothy 3:12)—loved and respected by all family members, caring for them as Jesus cared for others.
- **Bold in faith** (1Timothy 3:13)—holds firmly to what he believes, taking every opportunity for ministry.

Deacons should be selected from among men who have proven themselves faithful to Christ and the Christian calling in the ministry of the church. It is better not to elect deacons unless they are men qualified for leadership.

The duty of a deacon, along with the pastor, includes responsibility for the pastoral care and counseling of sick and needy members, and working with the pastor in implementing the general work of the church in both its material and spiritual areas.



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