

Sermon Mark S. Aites  
**DEACONS - INSTALLATION SERVICE**

**TEXT: 1 TIM. 3:8-12**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. Paul said, *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice (Phil. 4:4).*
2. In view of installing deacons, this is a reason certainly to rejoice:
  - 1) It affords us an opportunity to select qualified men to function as servants as God has ordained.
  - 2) We know that elders and deacons are important to the church and pleasing to His sight.
  - 3) It is also a great benefit to the church, as these men serve in the various ways that the elders see fit.
  - 4) And we know too it is a great benefit to the elders, as it helps them to then devote their own time and energy more to spiritual matters.
5. Relative to the government of the church, we know that the Lord Himself is the supreme authority and head of the church.
  - 1) **Matt. 28:18** *...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*
  - 2) **Col. 1:18** *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*
6. Under His divine guidance, which He has afforded us through the Word of God, each congregation is to be autonomous, with a plurality of elders overseeing each congregation.
  - 1) The biblical text tells us of Paul and Barnabas, and says, *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed (Acts 14:23)*
  - 2) **Titus 1:5** *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.*
  - 3) Paul told the elders at Ephesus: *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).*
7. Under the oversight of the eldership, we then learn of deacons.

**DISCUSSION:**

**I. THE WORK OF DEACONS.**

- A. The word *deacon*, is derived from the Greek word *diakonos*, found some 28 times in the New Testament.
  1. Where it actually applies to *deacons* as those who occupy that position or responsibility in the church, it is only found about three or four times.
  2. The word refers to a minister or servant, and is translated as such a number of times.
- B. As a matter of fact, the term was even used of Christ in **Rom. 15:8**, where it refers to him as a minister, and also in **1 Cor. 3:5** where Paul and Apollos are referred to as ministers (which could also be translated *servants*).
- C. In the **6th chapt. of Acts** the word is translated *serve*.
  1. On that occasion the apostles said: *It is not reason (desirable) that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables (6:2).*
  2. Although there is not much said about deacons in the New Testament, we

- should understand that the emphasis is then upon service.
- D. I once encountered a concise statement of the work of deacons:  
“To relieve the church of any burden that it might function more effectively, both in evangelism and the edification of the church.”
- E. Obviously this can embrace a broad area or range of tasks, involving both the spiritual as well as the physical.
1. It can involve education, benevolence, building and grounds, transportation, finances, teenagers, fellowship activities, etc.
  2. These are areas used by other congregations, along with many more areas of service.
- F. From the biblical standpoint, the general reference used for the work of deacons is **Acts 6**.
1. Now let me say up front, that the word deacon is not so translated in the text; however, it is used in **vs 2** as I mentioned translated *serve*.
  2. **Read Acts 6:1-7**
- G. To better explain the situation: the widows were being neglected who were Grecian, or Hellenist.
1. They were Jewish, but had adopted the culture of the Grecian way of life.
  2. They were being overlooked, perhaps because they were not seeking to be pure with their Hebrew background.
  3. There was a great deal of prejudice which existed at that time: obvious from the problems between Jews and Gentiles, and also how they regarded Samaritans.
  4. Whatever the exact reason, they were being neglected and not receiving the assistance which they needed.
- H. As a point of interest, at the end of verse one it speaks of the *daily ministration*, or as some translations render it, *distribution*.
1. The word translated *ministration* or *distribution* is a form of the word from which we get deacon.
  2. It refers to the idea of the “daily serving of food.”
  3. Notice how that twice, here in **vs 1**, and then in **vs 2**, the word from which we get deacon, is used referring to service.
  4. This helps to further emphasize the role that these men play in assisting the Lord’s church.
- I. The apostles had a concern, and it needs to be looked at carefully by elders: notice in **vs 2** the consensus that these men came to: *It is not reason (or desirable) that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables*.
1. I wish more elderships could learn from the wisdom of what the apostles were saying.
  2. While elders certainly should have concerns with the place in which we assemble, or other physical aspects of the work -- they are those who *watch for souls* (**Heb. 13:17**).
  3. I have known of elderships which thought they were doing elder work when in fact they were doing the work of deacons.
  4. Taking care of various services that need done, leaves the elders to devote much more time to the needs of the flock.
- J. The account in **Acts 6** shows that certain qualifications needed to be met in order for

these men to serve.

1. **6:3** *"Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.(NKJV)*
2. The church was given the opportunity to select some men to take care of the necessary business; but as we see here, these could not be just any men, but only those men who met the criteria established by the apostles.
3. We must remember that the apostles themselves were inspired in this matter.
  - 1) **John 16:13** *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*
  - 2) The choice of men of good reputation, being full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom then was of God's design.
- K. There is an added note that I want to bring out that is of significance following the appointment of these men, and that is in **vs 7**: *Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.*
  1. Whether it was a coincidence that the word spread following their appointment is not clear.
  2. I would suggest that it certainly may have helped things in a much more positive direction, for which we hope will be the case here in this congregation.

## **II. THE QUALIFICATIONS.**

- A. **Read 1 Tim. 3:8-13.**
- B. Personal character: 2 positive.
  1. **vs 8** *Likewise deacons must be reverent; other translations, grave.*
  2. It stresses the idea of dignity, one who is honorable in conduct, respectable.
  3. Certainly they need to be reverent in their relationship with God, but also serious and very thoughtful about the task that has been given to them.
  4. When they function as deacons, they reflect upon the church, and even upon the Lord Himself.
- C. Also positive in character, deacons must hold *the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience (vs 9)*.
  1. The word *mystery* may provide some misunderstanding as we tend to want to use our modern definition for that which is difficult to understand, or that is beyond comprehension.
  2. In that time in which these thoughts were penned, it referred to that which had been unknown or concealed but now had been revealed and made plain.
  3. The Gospel is referred to as a mystery in Scripture.
    - 1) It is found within the doxology at the end of the book of Romans.
    - 2) **Rom. 16:25-27** NKJV *Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began*  
**26** *but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith*  
**27** *to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.*

- 3) Paul there writes of *the revelation of the mystery*.
  4. The Gospel in fact was a mystery even after it was revealed.
  5. For a deacon to hold *the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience* suggests that it is entrusted to one who is pure and sincere in heart.  
**1 John 3:20-21** *For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*  
**21** *Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.*
  6. Lip service would be insufficient; it must be demonstrated in their lives in their words and deeds.
- C. With their personal character comes also 3 negative qualifications:
1. **3:8** *not double-tongued* - which lit. means, "speaking with 2 voices," or as sometimes is said, being "two-faced."
  2. This refers to a person who says one thing and means another.
  3. In other words, he can say something to someone's face and say something different to another person about the same individual.
  4. Respect is lost when men who aspire to be deacons are given to gossip and slander.
- D. *Not given to much wine.*
1. This one should seem rather obvious, as one who would imbibe in alcohol can lead to a loose tongue, and improper conduct.
  2. Plainly put, it can seriously destroy any kind of influence they would have for the Lord and His church.
  3. It is good not to touch the alcohol for those who aspire to be deacons, as well as elders, preachers, and other members of the Lord's church.
- E. **vs 8** *not greedy for money* (KJV, *filthy lucre*).
1. This refers to one being covetous, having in this case an inordinate desire for money.
  2. The Bible gives us examples of men who succumbed to greed for money:
    - 1) Balaam, who for compensation sold out Israel by giving advice to the Moabites to cause Israel to sin and be punished of God (**Num. 22ff.**).
    - 2) Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, who sought to charge Naaman for being cleansed of his leprosy (**2 Kings 5**).
    - 3) And certainly Judas Iscariot, who betrayed our Savior for 30 pieces of silver (**Matt. 26:15**).
  3. Men who would be deacons need to be trusted wherein money is concerned.
  4. Judas Iscariot was the treasurer, the money keeper for the disciples; but John tells us that he was a thief, and that he would steal money from the money bag (**John 12:6**).
- F. Paul then provides a test in the qualifications.
- 1 Tim. 3:10** *But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.*
1. This suggests that before a man can be a deacon, he must prove himself.
  2. He should be investigated and observed to see if there is anything that would disqualify him from appointment.
  3. Just appointing a man without first giving serious consideration would go against Scripture, and for that matter, common sense.

4. Those who are blameless, are those who earn respect and admiration over a period of time.
- G. The Holy Spirit then focuses upon the wives of those who aspire to be deacons.  
**vs 11** *Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.*
1. Like their husbands, the wives' conduct and demeanor comes under scrutiny.
  2. As they are supportive of their husbands, it is important that they also see the seriousness of the service to which their husbands have given themselves to do.
  3. Further, they most not be slanderers -- that is given to gossip and scandal, not speaking evil of others.
  4. They must also be sober or temperate indicating that they must have the ability to exercise self-control.
  5. They also must be *faithful in all things* showing themselves to be trustworthy in every aspect of their lives.
  6. Why? Simply put: a wife can help or destroy her husbands work and effectiveness as a deacon.
- H. Paul then directs our attention to their home life:  
**3:12** *Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.*
1. Being a husband of one wife suggests one is not a polygamist: in our own time not so much of a problem, but in ancient times it was.
  2. They are to rule their children and their own houses as well.
    - 1) We note that the requirement given to elders is not mentioned here, of having *believing children*.
    - 2) It has been suggested that this may be because many who serve as deacons do so at an earlier age in life.
    - 3) This lends to children that are not old enough to obey the Gospel.
- I. With this qualification is mentioned a reward: **13** *For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*
1. Obtaining a good standing again suggests being respected, loved, admired, and even imitated.
  2. Imitated in the sense in which Paul taught the church in Corinth:  
**1 Cor. 11:1** *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*
  3. Notice also the reference then in **vs 13** to *great boldness in the faith*.
    - 1) A deacon is aware of his service. When a deacon does his task, with God's help, to the best of his ability, he can and does feel good about himself.
    - 2) It is this which lends toward boldness in service to Christ.
    - 3) One is bold because of his deep and abiding faith in Christ, and his strong faith in the reward of Heaven.

### **III. INSTALLATION.**

- A. I am happy to say that you as a congregation had the opportunity to recommend men for being deacons.
1. The elders reviewed your recommendations; and may I add very patiently, met with and discussed the matter with a number of husbands and wives.

2. After careful deliberation, the elders concluded that \_\_\_\_\_ men meet the qualifications who desired to be deacons.
  3. They are: \_\_\_\_\_ (list names).
  4. You of the congregation were granted a period of time for giving any scriptural objections as to why they may not serve.
  5. Nothing has been given that would disqualify any of these men.
- B. In view of the elders careful review, and sufficient time for any scriptural objections, therefore, I charge you \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, in the presence of God, and before your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as witness today, that you faithfully uphold the honorable position, or for lack of a better term, office of deacon; that you recognize the committment and responsibility involved, that you acknowledge the authority of the eldership, and that you will, to the best of your ability, carry out the assignments which they give you, in a manner which will bring glory and honor to God.
1. Those present, please acknowledge your acceptance of the charge by standing.
  2. Thank you, you may be seated.
- C. Having been reminded of the qualifications, and having charged you men in the presence of God, and those assembled, and in the absence of objection, I do hereby appoint you as deacons of the Lord's church this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. Let us pray:  
Our Heavenly Father, Our hearts are joyful this hour, that nine of your servants have committed their lives and hearts to a greater service in your kingdom. Father we commend these men to you and pray humbly that you will bless \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ and their families. We humbly ask that you will help them to faithfully carry out all of their duties and responsibilities in a way which would be pleasing in your sight. We pray that you will richly bless the work here, and help us to move forward, that we might be a loving, growing, and faithful congregation in this community. In Jesus name, Amen.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. I encourage these men to use the talents that God has given them to do the best they possibly can.
2. I want all of the church to consider that service for every one of us, can help to lead to spiritual growth; the more involved, the more we grow.
3. May we all strive to be doers of the word, and not merely hearers only (**James 1:22**).
4. And may the young men here, look up to these men and prayerfully one day be deacons, or perhaps even elders or preachers.
5. Our goal and our desire must always be to honor Christ and to give God the glory.