

The Role Of A Deacon

- Introduction:
1. When discussing the success of the church, we often focus on the preacher and the elders.
 2. However, I'm convinced that the work of deacons, though often overlooked in this discussion, is every bit as important as the work of elders or the preacher.
 3. Where deacons do their work, the church flourishes, and where they don't, the church flounders.

I. God And The Church Needs Deacons

- A. The church is a manifestation of God's wisdom (Ephesians 3:10-11).
- B. The organization of that church, which includes deacons, is also a part of God's plan.
- C. That said, notice this amazing truth.
 1. (Ephesians 1:22-23).
 2. The church is the fulness of Jesus.
 3. In other words, Jesus is incomplete without his church.
 4. Or to say it yet another way, Jesus needs the church, including deacons.
- D. With that in mind, we should be very reluctant to joke about and belittle the role of deacons.
 1. Jovial banter about the work of deacons erodes at their respect.
 2. Over time, this "harmless" banter takes a toll.
 3. Don't find yourself making fun of any of God's divine arrangements.
- E. Even apart from the disrespectful banter, there is also a general misunderstanding of the role of deacons.
 1. How many have heard that "elders are to take care of spiritual matters and deacons are to take care of physical matters?"
 2. Where's the scripture for this?
 3. I recently read a book that said the following concerning a deacon's work... "Deacons should be responsible for church property, cleanup, ushering, distributing bulletins, and preparing communion."
 - a. Reminds me of a preaching student who said that while woman can't preach, they still have a role in the church...they can go around after services and pick up trash.

II. The Role Of A Deacon Is To Be A Servant

- A. The Greek word for "deacon" is "diakonos" which simply means "a servant."
- B. And if there's one thing the world and the church needs, is people who have the heart of a servant.
- C. (Matthew 23:11) The Greatest in the kingdom of God is the servant of all.
- D. (Acts 10:38) Jesus went about doing good.
 1. You're never more like Jesus than when you "pick up a pitcher and a towel and wash another's feet."
- E. This role is a "stand alone" role.
 1. It's not a "stepping stone" to bigger and better things.
 2. Being a deacon isn't a necessary stepping stone to becoming an elder.
 3. Nor are those who serve as deacons "Junior Elders" with "junior authority" over the church.
- F. Consider the deacon's role in light of Acts 6:1-7.
 1. While I understand the term "deacon" is not used in this context, what we have is an example of what "servants" can do.

2. Whether they did or didn't meet the qualifications Paul would eventually give isn't the point. This is to demonstrate what a deacon can do.
 3. There was a church problem (Acts 6:1).
 4. The problem wasn't dealt with properly (Acts 6:1).
 5. While the problem needed resolved, it wasn't a problem in which the apostles thought they should be involved (Acts 6:2,4).
 6. So they had the congregation select good men to take care of the problem (Acts 6:3).
 7. This solution pleased the congregation (Acts 6:5).
 8. Seven men were appointed to address the problem, and the church greatly multiplied (Acts 6:5-7).
- G. Consider Stephen (One of the Seven Selected).
1. (Acts 6:5-7:60).
 2. Stephen preached the gospel (Acts 6:9-10).
 3. His life was such that his enemies could not discredit him by his lifestyle (Acts 6:10-11).
 4. Stephen didn't give in to pressure or threat (Acts 7:2-60).
 5. Stephen loved the very people who were killing him (Acts 7:60).
- H. Consider Philip (One of the Seven Selected).
1. Philip Preaches In Samaria (Acts 8:5-25).
 - a. There was a persecution of the church (Acts 7&8).
 - b. This persecution scattered the Christians and as they scattered, they preached the word, Thus, we find Philip in Samaria, preaching Christ
 - c. As far as we know, nobody assigned Philip this work, he saw the need and went to work (Galatians 6:10).
 - d. While in Samaria, Philip attitude as a servant is put to the test twice.
 - 1) Test One - The apostles were sent to Samaria.
 - a) There is not a hint of jealousy from Philip.
 - b) Some preachers and churches act like competitors rather than companions.
 - 2) Test Two - Philip was told to leave Samaria.
 - a) He was told to go leave a large growing church to preach to one man.
 - b) How do servants act when called from the limelight? They humbly and eagerly obey.
 - c) Servants don't serve for personal glory.
 2. Philip Living In Caesarea (Acts 21).
 - a. Philip is married and has a family (21:9).
 - b. Although a faithful servant of God, he evidently had time for his family.
 - 1) It is wrong for a man to work to save his community and lose his own family.
 - c. Saul, now Paul, has been converted and is staying in Philip's house.
 - 1) How would you react to someone who took part in the killing of one of your close friends?
 - 2) Would you extend hospitality to this extent?
 - d. Philip welcomed Paul because servants forgive (21:10).
- Conclusion:
1. The role of a deacon is service!
 2. And I would like to call you to serve as did your brothers, Stephen & Philip!