

I. THE REASON FOR DEACONS

- A. This is first account of Deacons in the Word of God
1. The membership had grown to a large number and helpers were needed
 - a. ACTS 2:41 – 3000 souls and added to the membership by Baptism
 - b. ACTS 4:4 – 5000 men (not including the women and children)
 - c. Plus, the number already saved before Christ’s Ascension
 - d. 1 COR. 15:6 – “After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.”
 2. The word Deacon means “Servant” or “Helper”
 - a. Help is an interesting word – synonymous with “gap filler”
 - b. GEN. 2:18 – “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”
 - i. A bit of a pet peeve – like “house on the hill”
 - ii. No offense to anyone’s pastor or uncle or whomever
 - c. diakoneō (G1247) – “to be an attendant, that is, wait upon (mentally or as a host, friend or [figuratively] teacher); technically to act as a Christian deacon: - (ad-) minister (unto), serve, use the office of a deacon.”
 3. There is no hint of a RULING COUNCIL FOR CHURCHES here!
 - a. Only board in the Bible is the one Paul clung to after a shipwreck.
 - b. They were not in CHARGE but servant to the church
 - c. And someone has to be in charge!
 - d. HEB. 13:17 – “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”
- B. There was a murmuring among the people (vs. 1-2)
1. Murmuring is never good, btw. It usually leads to disunity (as in this case)
 - a. It is complaining. It deals in the realm of “perceived” fairness
 - b. FAIR is a four-letter word in our house
 - c. It is a condition that happens when we feel offended
 - i. That our rights have been trampled under feet
 2. GAL. 2:20 – “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
 3. A dead man cannot be offended – kick him, insult him, etc.
 - a. Don’t murmur or complain – take your needs to God in prayer
 - b. If someone offends you, go to them privately (biblically!)

- c. If it's made right, then NO ONE ELSE should EVER hear about it
 - d. Mortify your members which are in the world - Colossians
 - 4. There was lack of care given to the Grecian widows (vs. 1)
 - a. JAMES 1:27 – “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
 - b. We support the widows of three missionaries and will continue to
 - c. God tells us to do it in James and exemplifies it here in Acts
 - d. But the Apostles ALSO had another responsibility (vs. 2 & 4)
 - e. A single person has a limited capacity!
- C. So, we see the REASON for Deacons
 - 1. But let's study this morning the REPUTATION of deacons
 - 2. The REQUIREMENTS for deacons, the REFERENDUM for deacons
 - 3. And the RESULTS from deacons

II. THE REPUTATION OF DEACONS

- A. Look ye out (vs. 3)
 - 1. They were to have a well-known OPENLY-LIVED faith and character
 - a. They were not the Lord's “undercover agents”
 - b. They were not hiding their lamps under a bushel
 - 2. They were public examples, or they couldn't have been “looked out”
 - 3. Do people know you by your reputation? Not just for zeal but wisdom?
 - 4. They picked men who were among the foreign Jews (had Greek names)
 - a. And one Gentile convert (Nicolas)
 - b. He was a proselyte of Antioch (vs. 5)
- B. They had qualifications listed (vs. 3)
 - 1. To be MEN – in this case seven, but that is not a “required number”
 - a. It was due to the size of the church and the need
 - b. When our church is running 8500, we'll probably need that many
 - 2. They were to be MEMBERS of the church – “among you”
 - 3. They were to be REPUTABLE – “of honest report”
 - a. What a title! – men of STERLING character
 - b. Among the membership but also OUTSIDE of the church
 - 4. They were to be SPIRITUAL – “full of the Holy Ghost”
 - a. The Spirit of God should dominate their lives
 - b. Not full of “money” or “possessions” or “pride” or “position”
 - 5. They were to be WISE – not with worldly wisdom but from God
 - a. JAMES 1:5 – “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”
 - b. JAMES 3:17 – “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

- C. This is a BOTH a tall order and only to be expected!
 - 1. We sometimes get the idea that only certain people should live like that
 - 2. But this is the reputation that ALL Christians should carry
 - 3. MATT. 7:20 – “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

III. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DEACONS

- A. The Bible has more requirements for Deacons in 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-10, 12-13
 - 1. Grave – not frivolous, but giving due weight to eternal matters
 - 2. Not double-tongued – this isn’t ONLY lying but also indecisive
 - 3. Much wine (no, not even a little) / filthy lucre (anything for a dollar)
 - 4. Pure conscience – the guilty flee when no man pursues
 - 5. PROVEN FIRST, being FOUND (legal term) blameless
 - 6. One Wife (not one wife at a time)
 - a. What God has put together let not man put asunder
 - b. Divorced people can serve the Lord, just not as deacon
 - c. Kevin in N.C. (wife left him when he got Saved)
 - 7. There are BENEFITS to doing a good job! (vs. 13)
- B. The Bible also has requirements for the Deacon’s wives (vs. 11)
 - 1. Also Grave – not joyless, just aware of the importance of spiritual things!
 - 2. Not slanderers – that’s talebearing and gossiping (a negative spirit)
 - 3. Sober – not silly
 - 4. Faithful in all things
- C. The word “must” indicates that it is a requirement (vs. 8)
- D. There are no optional requirements for Deacons

IV. THE REFERENDUM FOR DEACONS

- A. And so the church voted!
 - 1. True New Testament churches have always been democratic in polity
 - a. The “saying” pleased the WHOLE multitude (vs. 5)
 - b. Can you imagine a Baptist church where everyone is pleased?
 - c. All at the same time?
 - 2. It was a marvelous spirit that prevailed in the church
 - 3. And THEY (the multitude) chose these men
- B. And they were set before the Apostles (vs. 6)
 - 1. This indicates that the pastoral leadership were ALSO in tune with God
 - 2. They prayed and laid hands upon them
 - 3. This is a symbolic gesture not a supernatural act
 - 4. It simply means “we IDENTIFY and SUPPORT these men”
 - 5. And we CARE about them – same for sending out missionaries
 - a. When Paul and Barnabas were sent out from Antioch
 - b. ACTS 13:3 – “And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”

- C. This is called “ordination” – a word that simply means set apart for a purpose
 - 1. It is an endorsement and association in the work of God
 - 2. They will work as an extension of the church (the “right hand”)

V. THE RESULTS FROM DEACONS

- A. The WORD of GOD increased (vs. 7)
 - 1. No more murmuring or complaining, the matter was ended
 - 2. The apostles had more time for prayer and preaching
 - 3. Many more were Saved and added to the church by Baptism
 - 4. Even some of the PRIESTS became believers
- B. We’ve talked a lot about the qualifications for deacons today
 - 1. But what about the qualifications for going to heaven?
 - 2. What about the requirements to become one of God’s children?
 - 3. What about the need to be adopted into God’s family?
 - 4. We call that “being Saved” because truly we need a Savior
- C. We cannot save ourselves
 - 1. Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags
 - 2. Our just deserts are death and hell (for the wages of sin is death)
 - 3. BUT the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord
 - 4. Be Saved Today!