

# OFFICE OF DEACON AND ELDER

## Part 8

### I. MANY MINISTRIES, TWO OFFICES

- A. Bishop (elder, overseer) - I Tim. 3:1 - "...if any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."
- B. Deacon (servant)
  - 1. I Tim. 3:10 - "...let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless..."
  - 2. I Tim. 3:13 - "For they that have used the office of a deacon well..."
- C. Bishops and Deacons - Phil. 1:1 - "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Phillipi with the bishops and deacons."
- D. Definition of office - A particular duty, charge, or trust; an employment undertaken by commission or authority; a post or position held by an official or functionary; specifically, a position of trust or authority under a government (Funk and Wagnall dictionary)

### II. MINISTRY OF THE DEACON (Foundational upon which all ministry is built)

- A. Meaning of word
  - 1. Transliterated, not translated
    - a. English letters to greek word
    - b. Theological problem connected
    - c. Examples: baptism, bishop, apostle, evangelist
  - 2. Word for deacon occurs many times
    - a. Most times translated
    - b. Not translated in connection with official position in church
  - 3. Four main Greek words:
    - a. Diakoneo - literally means "to be an attendant, to wait upon"
      - (1) Waiting on someone at table (Luke 22:24-27)
      - (2) Serving someone in general way (Mt. 4:11, 27:55, Acts 15:22)
      - (3) Caring or taking care of (II Cor. 3:2, Acts 6:2)
      - (4) Helping or supporting someone (Lu. 8:3 - women ministered to Jesus)
      - (5) Translated: minister, serve, administer, office of deacon
    - b. Diakonia - service or attendance as a servant
      - (1) Generally of all manner of service (Heb. 1:14 - angels)
      - (2) Service necessary for preparation of meal (Lu. 10:40)
      - (3) Service or function of all NT ministries

- (4) used in the sense of aid, support, or distribution of alms and giving to poor (Acts 11:29, Rom. 15:31, I Cor. 8:4)
    - (5) Specific ministry in body of Christ (Rom. 12:7 - wait on ministry)
    - (6) Translated: serving, ministry, ministration, relief, office, administrations, ministering
  - c. Diakonos - waiter, attendant, servant, or minister
    - (1) Servant (John 2:5, 9 - wedding at Cana)
    - (2) Civil ruler (Rom. 13:4)
    - (3) Translated: minister, servant, deacon
  - d. Diako - root word on which other words built (not actually in Bible)
    - e)
      - (1) To run or to hasten on errands
- B. Origin of the office (Acts 6:1-6)
  - 1. Beginning - based on following premises:
    - a. Greek word - diakoneo (serve tables)
    - b. Prominent position of passage
    - c. Spiritual qualities for seven
    - d. Tradition
  - 2. Guidelines for origination
    - a. Origin of deacons matter of practical consideration
    - b. Initiated by leadership with consensus of people
    - c. Set in action by leadership
    - d. While people had voice, leadership had final and directing voice
    - e. Apostles approved those selected because they met qualifications
    - f. Later churches realized as divine order
      - (1) Phil. 1:1
      - (2) I Tim. 3:8-13 (Ephesus)
      - (3) Borne out by church history that was universal principle
- C. Qualifications of Deacons (Acts 6:1-6; I Tim. 3:8-13)
  - 1. Moral
    - a. Not double-tongued
    - b. Not given to wine (above reproach in personal habits)
    - c. Not greedy of money
    - d. Blameless
    - e. Proven - should already be living life of a servant
  - 2. Domestic
    - a. Husband of one wife
    - b. Ruling own house well - to determine nature of deacon's Christian walk, not necessarily to determine leadership qualities
  - 3. Spiritual

- a. Full of Holy Ghost
  - b. Full of wisdom
  - c. Grave (inspire reverence, awe and respect of others)
  - d. Holding mystery of faith in pure conscience (bring spiritual encouragement)
- D. Work of Deacon
- 1. Performance of various services of a practical nature in the church, relieving the elders of burdens which might interfere with their ministry of spiritual oversight
  - 2. Acts 6 - aid in distribution of relief to poor
- E. Appointment and Term of deacon
- F. Honor and Reward of Deacons (I Tim. 3:13 - purchase to themselves a good degree)

### III. THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP (ELDER)

- A. Meaning of Word
- 1. Presbuterion - assembly of aged men, or order of elders, presbytery
  - 2. Presbuteros - elder, older person, senior
  - 3. Episkipos - overseer, superintendent, guardian, bishop
    - a. Acts 20:28 (overseers)
    - b. Phil. 1:1 - bishop
    - c. I Tim. 3:2 - bishop
    - d. Titus 1:7 - bishop
    - e. I Pet. 2:25 - Shepherd and bishop of your soul
  - 4. Episkopeo - verb form, exercising oversight, to oversee, care for, look after, take care of
    - a. I Pet. 5:2 - oversight
- B. Origin of Office
- 1. Elders instituted as matter of practical considerations
  - 2. Elders always plural in number
  - 3. Elders always had a specific function and charge
  - 4. Elders of OT parallel to NT:
    - a. Leader in war
    - b. Judges in disputes
    - c. Men of good advice and counsel
    - d. Represented and maintained community
    - e. Authorities of various cities
  - 5. Similar to parental authority in family
  - 6. Elders find their place, so people can find their place
- C. Qualifications of Elders
- 1. Moral
    - a. Blameless
    - b. Temperate
    - c. Sober
    - d. Good behavior

- e. Not given to wine
  - f. Not a striker (not physical battles)
  - g. Not greedy of money
  - h. Not a brawler (not be contentious, quarrelsome, argumentative)
  - i. Not covetous
  - j. Not self-willed (self-pleasing, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others)
  - k. Lover of good
2. Domestic
    - a. Husband of one wife
    - b. Hospitable (not afraid to become involved with people)
    - c. Rule well own house
  3. Spiritual
    - a. Apt to teach
    - b. Not novice or young convert
    - c. Good report among unsaved
    - d. Just
    - e. Holy
    - f. Hold fast faithful word
    - g. Exhort and convince in sound doctrine
    - h. Patient
- D. Work of Elder (general oversight and care of the church)
1. Ruling
    - a. I Thes. 5:12-14
    - b. I Tim. 5:17 - elders that rule well
    - c. Heb. 13:17, 24
    - d. Responsibilities:
      - (1) Accountable (Heb. 13:17)
      - (2) Rule with proper spirit and attitude (I Pet. 5:2-3)
  2. Shepherding
    - a. Feed flock (Acts 20:28)
    - b. Watch out for wolves (Acts 20:29-31)
    - c. Help weak (Acts. 20:29-31)
    - d. Minister to sick (Jas. 5:14-15)
    - e. Set good example (I Pet. 5:3)
  3. Instructing
    - a. Give stability to church
    - b. Bring unity among body
    - c. Convince gainsayers
    - d. Establish doctrine in questionable areas
- E. Appointment of Elders
1. Not elected by people
  2. Called by Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28)
  3. Recognized and appointed by leadership (Acts 14:23)
  4. Appointed, given charge

5. All rule comes from God down and not from the people up
- F. Honor of Elders
1. Know those who are over them (I Thes. 5:12)
  2. Esteem very highly (I Thes. 5:13)
  3. Submit to (Heb. 13:17)
  4. Support financially
  5. Not to be charged with wrong-doing hastily
  6. Remember leaders and pray for them

#### IV. RELATIONSHIP OF ELDERS TO DEACONS

- A. Priests and Levites
1. Constant clean-up and preparation
  2. Repairs to be taken care of
  3. Minor tasks to be done by the people
  4. Levites given to priests
- B. God has given deacons to elders
1. Authority given to elders
  2. Eldership delegates authority to deacons
- C. Deacons not a God-called office
1. Recognized and appointed by human leadership
  2. Deacon as long as functions as a deacon
- D. Deacons may be promoted