

# Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13 (20)

## 1 TIMOTHY: DUTIES AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH, [1 Timothy 2:1-3:13](#) The Deacons of the Church, [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#)

[\(1 Timothy 3:8-13\)](#) **Introduction:** this passage discusses the second officer of the church, the deacon. The office of deacon is so important that the qualifications required are just as high as those demanded of a minister or bishop. In this day and time, when worldliness, immorality, and lawlessness are running so rampant, the qualifications for deacons need to be studied, heeded, and guarded ever so diligently.

The Seven, as a group, were appointed to a ministry of deeds, although, at least two of them were also mighty in word. No matter which gifts or other interests the individual men had, as a group they were the church's administrators of charitable welfare. This in no way suggests, however, that only the Seven (or deacons today) had the responsibility to care for the needy.

When the apostles said, **“But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word,”** they didn't mean they would exclusively spend their time teaching and never again help needy people. The apostles faced the problem that their charitable work was hindering them from doing the primary job of proclaiming Christ. Although their primary duties are to teach and govern, they are to be concerned for the needy, too.

In [Galatians 2:10](#), we see the apostles' concern for the poor when they ask Paul **“to remember the poor.”** Paul, who God appointed to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher ([1 Timothy 2:7](#)), responded, **“... the very thing I also was eager to do.”** (See also [Acts 24:17](#); [2 Corinthians 8-9](#)).

Paul also emphasizes the importance of caring for the poor in his instruction to the Ephesian elders:

**“You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ ([Acts 20:34-35](#), cf. [Acts 11:29-30](#)).**

So it is not only the deacons' responsibility to help the needy, although they are the official church coordinators of benevolence. **Every Christian—shepherd, apostle, teacher**—is to be concerned about helping the needy.

## Understanding The Seven's Task

If any organization is to maintain integrity and effectiveness, good management of funds and resources is essential.

Some Christians seem to equate disorganization with spirituality, but just the opposite is true. Disorganization and mismanagement always significantly multiplies problems and frustrate people. A newspaper reported that the **Director of the General Accounting Office, Charles Bowsher**, informed the Congress of the United States that 150 billion dollars or more of taxpayers' money would be wasted in 1992 by mismanagement: "Bowsher said the multibillion-dollar scandals ... were likely to be followed by billions more in fraud, waste and abuse for a common reason: lousy management."

Mismanagement and disorganization ruins families, businesses, governments, and churches. It is the product of the polluted soil of greed, laziness, carelessness, lovelessness, and selfishness. It is not from God. Therefore the family of God should not be mismanaged. God should receive our best effort, energy, and skill. The entire account of [Acts 6](#) is a sterling example of good organization and loving care for the people of God.

The task the apostles gave to the Seven was specific. Its nature is partially described as "**the daily serving**" ([Acts 6:1](#)) and "**to serve tables**" ([v. 2](#)). The Greek word for "**tables**," "*trapeza*," is often used figuratively to mean food or meals ([Acts 16:34](#)). But the term "**tables**" is also used figuratively for finances, a money table, or a bank ([Luke 19:23](#)). For example, the *Good News Bible* translates [Acts 6:2](#) this way: "**'It is not right for us to neglect the preaching of God's word in order to handle finances.'**" It also renders the end of [Acts 6:1](#) as "**daily distribution of funds.**" In *The New Testament in Modern English*, J. B. Phillips gives his rendering of [Acts 6:2](#): "**It is not right that we should have to neglect preaching the Word of God in order to look after the accounts.'**"

If "**tables**" here means money tables, then the Seven were to distribute money for food daily to the widows and keep careful accounts of their expenditures. If not, the Seven were to administer communal meals for these widows, which of course would involve money and accounting. It is difficult to be certain, but [Acts 4:34-35](#) suggests that we are to understand "**tables**" to mean money tables where money is distributed and collected.

In detail, the Seven were:

- (1) to collect money and goods contributed to the needy ([Acts 4:34-35](#), [37](#); [Acts 5:2](#));
- (2) to distribute the money or goods to the needy ([Acts 4:35](#));
- (3) to ensure that the church justly and fairly distributed the money; and
- (4) to coordinate the church's overall charitable services to the needy.