

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(3)

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.

1. Personal qualifications (v.8).
2. Spiritual qualifications (v.9-10).
3. Family qualifications (v.11-12).
4. Results: reward reaped (v.13).

1. (1 Timothy 3:8) Deacons— Church, Officer of: deacons must be qualified; they must meet some personal qualifications.

1 Timothy 3:8 (NASB)

⁸ Deacons likewise *must be* men of [grave] dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

Diakonos is used to refer to soldiers and policemen who enforce justice (Romans 13:4).

Romans 13:4 (NASB)

⁴ For it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

In John 12:26, Jesus equated following Him with serving Him.

John 12:26 (NASB)

²⁶ If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Anything done in obedience to Him is spiritual service. In the general sense of the term, all Christians are deacons, for all are to be actively serving Christ and His church.

That is Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 12:5, where he writes that "there are varieties of ministries" (*diakoniōn*).

1 Corinthians 12:5 (NASB)

⁵ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

Every Christian is to be involved in some form of spiritual service. Leaders, through both teaching and modeling, are to equip believers to perform that service ([Ephesians 4:12](#)).

Ephesians 4:12 (NASB)

¹² **For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.**

But *diakonos*, *diakonia*, and *diakoneō* are also used in a second, more specific sense. The list of spiritual gifts in [Romans 12:6-8](#) includes a gift for service.

Romans 12:6-8 (NASB)

⁶ **Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;**

⁷ **if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;**

⁸ **or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.**

Those with that gift are specially equipped for service, though they may not hold the office of deacon. **Stephanas** and his family were so gifted. Paul wrote of them, “**they have devoted themselves for ministry (*diakonia*) to the saints**” ([1 Corinthians 16:15](#)).

1 Corinthians 16:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ **Now I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that they were the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the saints),**

The third use of this word group refers to the officially recognized responsibility of deacons. Everyone is a deacon in the general sense, some are specially gifted by the Holy Spirit for service, but still others hold the office of deacon. They model spiritual service for everyone else. They work alongside the elders, implementing their preaching, teaching, and oversight in the practical life of the church.

The only discussion of the office of deacon is in [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#), though there is a possible reference to it in [Philippians 1:1](#).

1 Timothy 3:8 (NASB)

⁸ **Deacons likewise must be men of [grave] dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,**

Philippians 1:1 (NASB)

¹ **Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:**

Some hold that Paul was officially identified as a deacon. While Paul was a servant in the general sense of the word, he held the office of apostle ([Romans 11:13](#); cf. [2 Corinthians 10-12](#)).

[Romans 11:13 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³ But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

Others have argued, based on [1 Timothy 4:6](#), that Timothy was a deacon.

[1 Timothy 4:6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶ In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.

In [2 Timothy 4:5](#), however, Paul seems to identify Timothy as an evangelist.

[2 Timothy 4:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵ But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Others have proposed Tychicus (cf. [Ephesians 6:21](#)), but Paul's use of *diakonos* ([Ephesians 3:7](#)) and *diakonia* ([Ephesians 4:12](#)) in a general, nonrestrictive sense makes doubtful the use of *diakonos* in [Ephesians 6:21](#) as a strict reference to the office.

[Ephesians 6:21 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

[Ephesians 3:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷ Of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.

[Ephesians 4:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

There is likewise no reason to assume that the use of *diakonos* in reference to Epaphras ([Colossians 1:7](#)) is limited to the specific office.

[Colossians 1:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷ Just as you learned *it* from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf.