

Equipping of Deacons



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1 The Church

1.1 *Our Lord Jesus Christ the Head*

Ephesians 1:22 (NIV84)

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be **head over everything for the church,**

1.2 *Make-up of the Church*

Philippians 1:1 (NIV84)

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the **saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers(elders) and deacons:**

- Jesus the Head
- Flat structure
 - All servants
 - Different roles
 - Different gifting
 - Different anointing
- Elders
 - Governance
 - Doctrine
 - Direction
 - Discipline

1.3 *In Christ – Children, Sons, Servants*

John 1:12 (NIV84)

12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to **become children of God—**

Romans 8:14–15 (NIV84)

14 because those who are **led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** **15** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the **Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”**

- Become children of God
 - Born Again
- Grow up into maturity
 - Sons of God
 - Spirit of sonship

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2 Corinthians 6:4 (NIV84)

4 Rather, as **servants of God** we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses.

1.4 Does the New Testament speak about the office of a deacon?

- Because the variety of meanings attached to **diakonos** and related words
 - There one or two exceptions it's difficult to have a clear reference in the NT to an office of a deacon in the early church
 - References to **diakonos** used in their general meanings and have nothing to do with a church office
 - No reference to a select group in the church

Romans 12:4-8(NIV)

⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his⁸ faith. **7If it is serving, let him serve;** if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

- This does not support an office of a deacon
 - Office is not necessary related to gifts
 - E.g. a person with a gift of teaching doesn't have to be a pastor teacher to exercise the gift.
 - Gifts are related to callings and assignments, not just offices

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV84)

11 It was he who gave some to be **apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,** **12** to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- Ascended gifts of Christ

1.5 Grace Gift of leadership

Rom 12:8(NIV)

⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; **if it is to lead, do it diligently;** if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully¹

¹ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Ro 12:8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

He that ruleth” is *ho proistēmi* (ὁ προϊστημι), “he who is placed in front,” referring to anyone placed in a position of authority or superintendence²

- Whoever has authority, if you are a leader? He who is placed in front
 - Question if you are a leader?
 - One given authority
 - One who is placed in front
 - There is an anointing to lead
 - **Does not constitute elder, deacon**
 - **But rather saint with a grace gift of leadership**
 - Not building hierarchy

- Is the church constituted
 - Elders, deacons and saints
 - All saints in ministry

- So we rather are looking for the gift of grace – leadership.
 - Revelation and observation
 - Rather than just to fulfil a role

- Key to release this gift of leadership
 - One who stands in front
 - Gift of grace

2 Deacon

2.1 Ministers of God

2 Corinthians 6:1–10 (NKJV)

1 We then, *as workers together with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain. **2** For He says:

*“In an acceptable time, I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation, I have helped you.”*

Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. **4** But in all *things* we commend ourselves as **ministers of God**: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, **5** in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in sleeplessness, in fasting’s; **6** by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 by honour and dishonour, by evil report

² Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader* (Ro 12:6). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

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and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; **9** as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; **10** as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

2.2 With Christ's Nature/Character

2 Corinthians 6:6–7 (NKJV)

6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, **7** by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left (attack and defence),

3 Qualifications of a Deacon

1 Timothy 3:8–13 (NIV84)

8 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. **9** They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. **10** They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. **13** Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

God is very particular about those who have any authority or responsibility in the church. These qualifications are not "ideals" to be.

In the same way, deacons must be:

- People who are respected
- Have integrity
- Not be heavy drinkers – Alcohol
 - Church perspective
- Must not be greedy for money
 - Tithes
 - Offerings – Alms-(Isa 58), Apostolic, Other Specific
- Committed to the reveal Christ of the Christian faith.
- Must live with a clear conscience.
- Must be tested. Before they are appointed as deacons, they should be given other responsibilities in the church as a test of their character and ability. If they do well, then they may serve as deacons.
- In the same way, their wives or the women deacons. The Greek word can be translated women or wives – Must be respected.
- Must not speak evil of others.
- Must exercise self-control.
- Be faithful in everything they do.

- A deacon must be faithful to his wife.
- Must manage his children and household well.
- Those that do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others.
- And will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus

4 Moral Qualifications

4.1 *Not double tongued*

- His word is his word. He does not say one thing to one person to someone else

4.2 *Not given to much wine*

- This is included in his personal habits – not in bondage to anything

4.3 *Not greedy for money*

- Possibly because he will handle a lot when assisting others. He must not be able to be tempted by money

4.4 *Blameless*

- He must be above reproach in every area of his life. This has to do with motives more than just deeds! He must be an example of godly living.

4.5 *Proved – Tested*

- Not to be a novice. There must be sufficient time for him to have been scrutinized. Is he a mature servant?

5 Spiritual Qualifications

5.1 *Respected and have Integrity.*

- He should inspire the reverence, awe and respect of others.

5.2 *Holding the Mystery of the Faith with a pure Conscience*

- What he teaches he lives – his conscience is clear.

5.3 *Full of the Holy Spirit & Wisdom*

Acts 6:3 (NIV)

³Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be **full of the Spirit and wisdom**. We will turn this responsibility over to them

- Empowered and motivated by the Holy Spirit. Not depending upon natural abilities and talents.

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6 Home Life Qualifications

6.1 *The husband of one wife*

- Faithful
- Undivided love

6.2 *Ruling their children & their homes well*

- A good father & mother
- Their children obey them

7 Functions & Duties – Deacons / Ministry Leaders

Acts 6:1–8 (NIV84)

1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be **full of the Spirit and wisdom**. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

8 Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.

Although this passage does not specifically say these people were deacons it does give us a picture of a deacon’s potential what they should aim to do:

- a. **They see that the practical areas and needs of the church are taken care of,** ensuring that the leaders can “give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.”
- b. **Here the primary task was to maintain Godly and workable**
 - i. **relationships** between the Greeks and Hebrews, and not just performing practical, menial and mundane tasks. They are therefore not to be restricted to practical or menial service.
- c. **Leaders together with and under the oversight of elders, exercise oversight in home cells.** In this content they help to maintain Godly and workable relationships, relieving the leaders of some of this burden.

d. They could even preach, evangelize etc.

e. Other things deacons/ ministry leaders can be involved in:

- i. Keeping the buildings and ground tidy and workable.
- ii. Organizing ushers.
- iii. Operating nursery and crèche facilities.
- iv. Distributing to the needy.
- v. Transport etc.

1 Tim. 5:17 (NIV)

¹⁷The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

1 Peter 5:1–3 (ESV)

1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: **2** shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; **3** not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Acts 6:6–7 (ESV)

6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Elders and deacons/ministry leaders jointly serve the church. Their functions are different, the elders lead and govern, (1 Timothy 5:17) but they together serve (1 Peter 5:1-3). The result will be a growing, peaceful, secure and stable church **(Acts 6:6-7)**

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8 The Function of a Deacon

8.1 In a Life Group

- Discipling/mentoring (this would include counselling/biblical advice).
- Shepherding
- Teaching: -
 - Apostolic/Prophetic foundations
 - Re-enforcing what elders have taught and not introducing new subjects (i.e. avoiding working through video series or courses outside elders' approval) or directions (i.e. your pet subject) usually, the message from Sunday can be applied: -
 - What did it mean to you?
 - Were there any aspects you did not understand?
 - How would you apply it personally?
 - What is going to change in your life now that you have heard this message?
 - What action are you going to take?
 - Etc...
 - Life skills (finances, prayer, family...etc). Always with a practical focus.
 - The vision and values of the church.

NOTE:

It is neither your authority nor responsibility to introduce new Direction, Doctrine or Discipline. Re-enforcing and explaining these is in order.

- Praying (**1 Timothy 2:1-8**, for the nations, for each other, for the church).
- Bringing through the next generation of leaders.
- Building away from yourself and bringing people through. The challenge is can you bring through bigger capacity people than yourself?
- Seeking and saving the lost.
- Encouraging and administrating the gifts of the Spirit and the anointing of God.
- Encouraging a lifestyle of worship.
- Being a peacemaker by maintaining relational integrity in the group.
- Be current with the prophetic. (Explain prophetic 'one liners').
- Breaking bread.
- Showing, growing and imparting hospitality.
- Working with the elders to equip believers for ministry, to have a plan of success for every person, even those with quirks, peculiarities and personalities that clash with you!!!
- Lead by example, especially with reference to all the church's vision, values, 'vehicles' (meetings) and ventures. Constantly address busyness. Leading by example is the biggest opener of doors!

8.2 During Corporate Meetings

- Look for ways to administrate the routine. Be pro-active in releasing the elders to prayer and the ministry of the word.
- Be highly relational, be culturally relevant.
- Use every public meeting time to integrate those on the outside. You should be gathering at those times. At all costs avoid your home group clique.
- Reaching out to the lost.
- **Lead by example (1 Corinthians 11:1).**
- Anticipate in all circumstances. E.g. in meetings sort out the disturbances.

8.3 Personally

- Push into the elders.
 - They should not be looking for you.
 - Communicate everything always!!!
 - Look to work with them, learning and growing. Make yourself available for this.
 - Make yourself vulnerable and available.
- Study and prepare yourself for where God is taking you.
- Remain in a place of accountability.
- Constantly work on the excesses of the human nature.
- Look to develop the scope of your ministry and influence
- Remain in Christ.

8.4 The Appointment of Deacons

- We have only one example in Scripture and that is **Acts 6:1-6**.
- Here the people were told to choose from among themselves certain men who qualified.
- They were probably already serving without the office having been officially recognised.
- There would have been a “*proving time*” (**1 Timothy 3:10**).
- They were then “*set in*” by the leaders (**Acts 6:6**).
- Do not be hasty in appointing a deacon through the laying on of hands (**1 Timothy 5:22**).

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8.5 Questions to ask Deacons before their Appointment

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Will you follow Church on the Way Vision/Mission "To know our LORD JESUS CHRIST and make HIM known GO partner with HOLY SPIRIT "?		
Are you prepared to serve? At times whatever the cost.		
If married, how is your marriage? Is your wife loved? Is your husband respected? How are your children?		
Are you living a life of biblical generosity - tithing, giving offerings and living debt free (or at least have developed a program to get debt free)?		
Do you know and will you carry the vision and values of Church on the Way? Look for ways to be led by the Holy Spirit and initiate His leading on in team.		
Do you carry the apostolic/prophetic mandate on the church in your heart?		
Are you blowing wind in the elders' sails, or are you consumed with your own thing?		
Can you follow this eldership in full submission and obedience?		
Are you carrying the burden of the church with us?		
Have you got any undisclosed issues or skeletons in your cupboard? If so these matters need to be disclosed.		
Have you dealt with a critical attitude, loose tongue, grumbling heart?		
Do you see the need to build disciples? This requires: - Setting a Godly example Building away from yourself Opening doors Raise and release leaders		
Do you love the local church? Serve with your Holy Spirit given gifting and talents in the local church		

Will you protect the elders, releasing them to prayer and the ministry of the word?		
Will you communicate well at every level? To those you lead To those who lead you (Informing of what you are doing and your where abouts, especially if unable to attend the corporate meetings)		
Will you take up the vision and values responsibly and look for ways to initiate?		
Will you shepherd the flock in submission to the elders and with diligence?		
<u>Expectations:</u>		
Make disciples of those whom the Lord gives you oversight of. This may take time, training and much patience. Raise sons and daughters of God. Please use the empowering the disciple/disciple series or whatever means the Holy Spirit reveals to you.		
Expectation to participate and partner in corporate prayer, corporate meetings of the Church, leader's meetings and deacons' meetings. Communicate with the elders when unable to attend.		
Expectation to participate and partner in Life Group – Example of following Christ in Fellowship		
Communicate changes in the specifics that relate to your oversight i.e. cancelation of meetings, change from agreed format, Holy Spirit leading in a different direction etc.		
Expectation to have oversight for a calendar year. Review before the Lord your commitment and season. Leadership is not always for a lifetime.		
Raise and release leaders under eldership oversight		
Attend Gauteng Equip once a year		
Envision those with whom you have oversight to be Apostolic and Prophetic – Sent by Jesus to be ambassadors of Christ and having a testimony of Jesus into our Jerusalem, all of Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.		
Do the work of an evangelist?		