

DEACONS STIR UP THE DUST (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

A. God has always placed a great deal of importance on work & in particular service; not self-service, but people-service.

1. The new Christian, who had been a thief, was commanded to work with his hands that he may give to one who is in need (Eph 4:28).

a. But that goes for all of us. The implication is that serving others is what a Christian does; he works so that he might help others – and only secondarily is this good therapy for a former thief.

2. Adam was commanded to “tend & keep the garden” to not only provide for his needs but for Eve’s as well.

a. And after the sin, labor became very difficult as he then had to support a family.

3. The greatest characters in the OT (like Moses) gave themselves mind & body to serving others.

a. Moses had so much work to do for others that he had to farm-out (delegate) much of his duty.

b. But still, who would want to be the servant of a nation, the man to whom everyone griped when something was not to their liking.

c. The buck stopped with Moses & it was a tiresome chore, but he served to the end.

4. Ultimately, Jesus is the greatest example of how a servant serves others.

Mark 10:45 – For even *the Son of Man DID NOT come to BE served, but to serve, & to give His life* a ransom for many." (Matt 20:28)

a. This, He said, after James & John requested positions of honor; these words should have been a wakeup call for what lay ahead.

B. So it is only logical that God would desire from us the kind of service Jesus offered, which He does.

Mark 10:42-44 – But Jesus called them to Himself & said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, & their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but **whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant**. 44 And **whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all**."

1. Jesus said that service is a mark of "greatness" in the kingdom, but THIS "greatness" won't come with the kind of recognition for which many people serve.
 - a. The Lord's servants won't be given awards at public gatherings or handed out medals to wear around their necks.

2. In a world full of people who "self-serve"; the Lord wants His people to "others-serve".
 - a. Read & comment: (Phil 2:19-21; 1 Cor 16:13-18).

b. Jesus served others in a humble & compassionate way.

a. He didn't seek recognition; He was moved by the needs (desperate needs) of others.

2 Cor 5:14-15 – For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that **if One died for all, then all died**; 15 & He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them & rose again.

- c. So servant hood is the realm of our spiritual occupation.

- d. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ in order to stop serving sin & self, & to begin serving the will of God & others (1 Pet 4:1-2).

- e. Jesus built His church in order to put His new creation into the garden of His Kingdom to "tend & keep" it – *and His Kingdom is people*.

[I heard about a church building that has a hand-lettered sign over the front door: “Servant’s Entrance.”

Deacons are men who can show us how to find that door where the servants go in.

Deacons are models of servanthood for a community of servants.

Deacons are men we can imitate because they imitate the perfect Servant (Jesus Christ) Who told us that the highest calling in the kingdom of God is to serve others.]

I. WHAT IS A DEACON?

A. He Raises The Dust.

1. The word “deacon” comes from two Greek words, *dia*, which means “through”, & *konos*, which means “dust.”
 - a. “To raise the dust by hastening” (Thayer, pg. 138).

2. In other words, deacons are men who believe it’s better to wear out than rust out.
3. The church will always need godly men who will make personal sacrifices to stir up the dust in service to their spiritual family.
4. Deacons are men interested in “ministration” not “administration” (as depicted in many churches).

B. He Is A Proven (Tested) Servant (1 Tim 3:10).

1. You don’t ask men to be deacons & hope they will start serving; they are proven dust raisers.
2. The first men whom we might classify as deacons in the church were proven men.

Acts 6:3 – Therefore, brethren, **seek out from among you** seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit & wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business... [The brethren had enough evidence to make those choices.]

C. He Is Self Controlled (1 Tim 3:8).

1. Deacons are “*reverent*”, which means they behave in an honorable or honest manner.
2. They are “*not double tongued*”, which means telling one person one thing & another person something else.
 - a. Deacons are believable men because they are not given to just telling you what you want to hear – *they are straightforward, honest, truth speaking men.*
3. When Paul said that a deacon “*is not given to much wine & not greedy for money*”, he was explaining that a deacon’s life is not driven by sinful appetites, but rather by the Spirit of God.
 - a. The seven men were “*full of the Holy Spirit ... wisdom ... & faith*” (Acts 6:3, 5, 8; cf. Eph 5:18).

- b. So deacons are primarily chosen for their spiritual qualities.
- c. Their thoughts are already in captivity to the obedience of Christ.
- d. Their actions display self-control, & the church can put its confidence in their ability to do a work without giving-in to temptation & carnal distractions.

D. He Hold The Faith W/A Pure Conscience (1 Tim 3:9).

1. The “mystery of the faith” had to do with God opening up His Kingdom to every nation (Eph 3).
 - a. So deacons cannot be prejudicial, on the basis of race, in their dealings with others.
2. But more than that, deacons “hold” firmly to all the truths of the gospel revealed to the apostles.

- a. It's not just a strong back & a willingness to work & serve that makes deacons.
- b. They will also have a deep knowledge & a practical understanding of God's word.
- c. They are men who diligently study & who continually hunger & thirst for righteousness.
- d. Because in the course of their work they will need to use the Word of God in a practical way as they minister to the saints.

E. **He Is Respected In His Home** (1 Tim 3:11-12).

- 1. Deacons are not the only models of servanthood, but their families too model their behavior.
- 2. So a deacon does not ignore his family to serve others, his family supports him & even joins him in the work.

CLOSING

- A. **As with the qualities of Elders**, aren't these qualities of deacons ones we should expect to find in any Christian?
 - 1. According to our abilities, shouldn't we all be stirring up the dust in service to God? ...proving & examining ourselves? ...resisting our sinful desires? ...desiring the "pure milk of the word that [we] may grow thereby" ...respecting & following God's leadership in the home?
 - 2. When men are finally appointed to serve as deacons this will not mean that the rest of us are free to coast, free of any responsibility to serve others.
 - 3. No, in appointing deacons we are simply setting before ourselves servants who are also servant leaders.
 - 4. Deacons are men who model servanthood for a community of servants.

[In our next lesson we will discuss four things that a deacon does.]

DEACONS STIR UP THE DUST (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

God has always placed a great deal of importance on diligence in work & in serving others (Eph 4:28; Adam, Moses, Jesus; Mark 10:45, 42-44; Phil 2:19-21; 1 Cor 16:13-18). The Lord has seen fit to command the appointment of men in the church who can be models of servanthood for us.

I. WHAT IS A DEACON?

A. He Raises The Dust.

1. *Dia* (through), *Konos* (dust). “To raise the dust by hastening” (Thayer).

B. He Is A Proven (Tested) Servant (1 Tim 3:10).

1. The seven had already proven to be qualified for service (Acts 6:3).

C. He Is Self Controlled (1 Tim 3:8).

1. Reverent: dignified, honorable, honest.
2. Not double tongued: believable, will not say two different things.
3. Not given to wine or greedy for money: motivated by the word of God revealed by the Holy Spirit, rather than by sinful appetites (Acts 6:3, 5, 8).

D. He Holds The Faith With A Pure Conscience (1 Tim 3:9).

1. Not prejudicial in his dealings with others (Eph 3).
2. Holds firmly to the truths of the gospel revealed to the apostles.
3. Not just a laborer, also an edifier, encourager.

E. He Is Respected In His Home (1 Tim 3:11-12).

1. Will not forsake family to serve, but has family support.

When deacons are appointed we are not free of any duty to serve others.

Deacons are servants who are also servant leaders.

Deacons are men who model servanthood for a community of servants.

GOD’S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:

Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible: Acts 2; 3; 13; 17; Rom 10:17

Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior: Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

Repent of your sins: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins: Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48