



COASTAL CHURCH

WHY DEACONS?

Elder's Statement on Deacons

“Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, ‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.

THEREFORE, BROTHERS, PICK OUT FROM AMONG YOU SEVEN MEN OF GOOD REPUTE, FULL OF THE SPIRIT AND OF WISDOM, WHOM WE WILL APPOINT TO THIS DUTY. BUT WE WILL DEVOTE OURSELVES TO PRAYER AND TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.’

And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Phili, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.”

— ACTS 6:1-6 (ESV) —

WHY DEACONS?

The more the Lord has grown Coastal Church, both in our understanding of the church and the amount of people coming, the Elders see a need to adopt the formal office of deacon. Many people within the congregation already function as deacons, however, we have grown in our conviction to use the biblical office name, deacon and create a biblical process by which we appoint deacons to help in the vast shepherding needs at Coastal Church.

John Piper, summaries best why local churches need deacons. He states, “The deacon office exists to assist the leadership of the Church by relieving the elders of distractions and pressures that would divert them from the ministry of the Word and prayer and the general visionary oversight of the Church.”

Therefore, the Elders at Coastal Church are in unity on our adoption of the biblical word and office, deacon, who can be qualified to be a deacon, and the process by which deacons will be appointed at Coastal Church.

WHO ARE DEACONS?

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Simply, the Greek noun, *diakonos* means servant or minister and is sometimes translated into the English word “*deacon*” as it is in our text. This person is a trusted officer of ‘*helps*’ and service in the context of the local church.

The Elders of Coastal Church are in unity that both *MEN* and *WOMEN* are permitted to aspire to the office of Deacon. We believe that is Paul’s intention in 1st Timothy 3:11 when he speaks of women. Some translations (*such as the English Standard Version, the New King James Version, King James Version*) add the definite article ‘their’ in the text, rendering the translation ‘and their women’ or ‘and their wives’. We do not believe that is Paul’s intent because there is no definite article in the Greek. The New International Version (*NIV*) actually corrected this in their 2011 updated version. In the *NIV*’s 1984 edition verse 11 reads, ‘their wives, likewise...’ and the 2011 reads, ‘women likewise...’

We believe that if the office of deacon is for men only, then Paul added a qualification to become a deacon

’This translation (NASB) is more faithful to the Greek than the others. With every translation, the careful translators have to make interpretive decisions they believe best capture the author’s intent. For this passage, the Elders at Coastal believe the NASB captures Paul’s intent that both men and women can and should be deacons.

WHO ARE DEACONS?

that he did not require of elders (*whom deacons answer to and are shepherded by*) in 1st Timothy 3:1-7. In that passage the Apostle Paul does not say Elder's wives must be 'dignified, not malicious gossips, temperate, faithful in all things' (*as is said in his discussion regarding deacons*). If Paul were going to have qualifications for a wife, it would certainly be an elder's wife.

Therefore, we believe a more natural reading on Paul's discourse regarding deacons is that the office is open to both men and women. We believe this approach to the passage harmonizes well with other passages (see *Romans 16:1 for instance where Phoebe is introduced as a diakonos*).

WHO ARE DEACONS?

Reading Flow of 1st Timothy 3:8-13

Verses 8-10²: Exhortations to Deacons

All Deacons must be dignified, have control over their speech, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold to the gospel of Jesus Christ with a clear conscience. They must go through a testing and prove themselves to be blameless.

Paul is giving Gender-Specific Exhortations

Verse 11: Exhortations to Women Deacons

There is a special exhortation to women pursuing the office of deacon to watch their tongues and to be sober minded and faithful.

Verse 12: Exhortations to Men Deacons

Men will give an account for their homes. Therefore, Paul shifts back in verse 13 to remind men of their spiritual headship.

Verse 13: To Serve is to Live a Blessed Life

Paul closes in verse 13 with the blessings that come from being a deacon.

²*Ironically enough, the NASB translation we are using in this document includes the word “men” in verse 8. This word is not in the original text. Most modern translations do not include the word “man” (see for example the ESV). We believe the word ‘man’ should be omitted from English translations. We believe this captures Paul’s intent to address both men and women in verses 8-10.*

“Deacons [diakonos] likewise must be

MEN OF DIGNITY, NOT
DOUBLE-TONGUED, OR
ADDICTED TO MUCH WINE OR
FOND OF SORDID GAIN, BUT
HOLDING TO THE MYSTERY
OF THE FAITH WITH A CLEAR
CONSCIENCE.

And let these also first be tested; then
let them serve as deacons if they are
beyond reproach.

WOMEN MUST LIKEWISE BE
DIGNIFIED, NOT MALICIOUS
GOSSIPS, BUT TEMPERATE,
FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS.

Let deacons be husbands of only
one wife, and good managers of their
children and their own households.

For those who have served well as
deacons obtain for themselves a high
standing and great confidence in the
faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

— 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13 (NASB)¹ —

WHAT DO DEACONS DO?

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Again, according to Piper, it seems “that deacons would care for the building and grounds; supply the communion and baptismal needs, as well as all other food and fellowship materials; administer a fund for the manifold material needs of the people and be ready to step in during crises of all kinds; handle the greeting and welcoming ministries; provide practical assistance in job-hunting, housing matters, legal-aid, child-care, etc. In general, they would be ready to assist the elders of the Church in any “service” that would support and promote the ministry of the Word.”

So, at Coastal, we believe that a deacon works alongside of the pastors/elders of the Church by implementing through serving, the preaching, teaching and oversight into the practical life of the church. In other words, if the pastors and elders are faithfully executing their job and the deacons are faithfully executing their job, the gospel will be tangible to Coastal Church and those outside Coastal by the power of the Holy Spirit.

WHAT DO DEACONS DO?

Examples of things Deacons do at Coastal Church³

Includes, but not limited to:

- Counseling
- Financial management
- Food ministry
- Hospitality
- Small group coaching
- Addressing physical needs of church
- Conflict resolutions
- Facility management
- Benevolence ministry
- First impressions
- Security
- Legal helps

Becoming a Deacon at Coastal Church

Step 1: Must be a member.

Step 2: Must already be serving.

Step 3: Must be nominated by at least 1 Elder
at Coastal

Step 4: Elders of Coastal must unanimously agree.

Step 5: Must complete Coastal's Deacon
Training Curriculum (60-week process).

³Just because someone is serving in this area does not automatically qualify them for the office of a deacon. They must be appointed by an elder, tested, and demonstrate 1st Timothy 3 character.



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