

## THE PROFILE OF A GOOD DEACON

A title never makes a real leader and the office never makes a true deacon. In the eyes of God and men, it's what a man is, not the title he wears. In fact, few things generate more scorn and resentment than a man hiding behind the label of preacher or deacon when he's not holy. That's particularly true when he's full of himself and when he uses his position to bully people.

It is not my intent at this point to talk about deacon assignments; I'm here to talk about the spirit and mentality that should characterize every deacon. Watch a man and you'll see his heart, not directly as God sees, but indirectly by what he says and does. Attitude is hard to hide. Jesus said, *"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things,"* **Matthew 12:34-35**. What a man values soon shines through. Jesus also said, *"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,"* **Matthew 6:21**. It's pretty easy to spot a man stuck on himself and people who capitalize on their authority.

I don't have to convince this group that *"deacon"* is translated from the Greek word *diakonos* meaning *"servant."* In fact the word is translated *"servant"* (**John 12:26**) and *"minister"* (**Romans 13:4**). The noun *diakonos* is from the Greek verb *diakoneo* which literally means *"an attendant or waiter."* It was used much in the way that we view restaurant waiters and waitresses. It is the same word that is sometimes used of pastors as is Paul's letter to Timothy, **1 Timothy 4:6**.

How do we know the difference in the job description of a deacon and a pastor? Context! The context of the Scriptures makes clear what the role of each is. The role of the deacon is to serve the Lord in the church by taking as much as possible off the pastor in order that he might give himself to (1) Word of God and (2) prayer. **Acts 6** makes that quite clear. According to **Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 5:17, Hebrews 13:7 and 17** and other passages the role of pastor is that of *"overseer"* of the church.

I am about to highlight four areas that expose a deacon and present his profile. **1 Timothy 3:13** speaks of *". . . they that have used the office of a deacon well."* That implies that some deacons do not use the office of a deacon well. Their infamy is legendary and they have brought irreparable harm to the good office of deacons and to the reputation of those who have used the office well. Brothers, serve well and if you become a hindrance and reproach, have the courage and gumption to either get right or get out.

- I. **ATTITUDE IS AN AREA THAT EXPOSES and PROFILES A DEACON.** The attitude of a good deacon is characterized by three traits.
  - A. **Humility.** Pride and arrogance always stink.
  - B. **A servant's heart.**
    1. The very word *"deacon"* says it.
    2. Deacons exist to serve, not to pass along work to the pastor.
  - C. **Boldness.** *"And great boldness in the faith,"* **1 Timothy 3:13**. Stephen.

II. **SELF-PERCEPTION** ALSO EXPOSES and PROFILES A DEACON. Being a good deacon involves 3 proper mentalities.

- A. **He must have a proper view of authority.** Servant, not boss.
- B. **He must view himself as a servant, not a watchdog.** Supporters look for ways to strengthen. They're not waiting to pounce on the preacher.
- C. **He must view himself as a solver of problems, not as a conduit to pass problems and complaints on to the pastor.** You're not helping the preacher by bringing him more problems. Solve 'em.

III. A DEACON'S **REPUTATION** FURTHER EXPOSES and PROFILES HIM. Being a good deacon is not just a matter of how he sees himself; it also involves how others see him. To be a good deacon he must be seen in at least four positive ways. As I move through this list who comes to your mind?

- A. **He must be seen as exemplary in godliness. 1 Timothy 3:10**
- B. **He must be seen as exemplary in service. Matthew 20:26-27**
- C. **He must be seen as exemplary in his value system.** Spiritual things must be more important than material things. **1 Timothy 3:8**
- D. **He must be seen as an exemplary family man. 1 Timothy 3:11-12**

IV. FINALLY A DEACON'S **CHIEF VIRTUES** EXPOSE and PROFILE HIM. I will mention six essential virtues for a good deacon. The absence of even one of these would put a serious question-mark on the worthiness of a man to serve in this office. Again, who comes to your mind as I move through this list?

- A. **A deacon must be faithful.**
  - 1. *"It is required in stewards," 1 Corinthians 4:2.*
  - 2. Inherent in faithfulness is dependability, responsibility and accountability.
- B. **A deacon must be temperate.** Excess in nothing. **1 Timothy 3:8**
- C. **A deacon must be stable.** Let him *"1<sup>st</sup> be proved," 1 Timothy 3:10*
- D. **A deacon must be loyal.** *"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity," Proverbs 17:17.* To God, church and pastor.
- E. **A deacon must have integrity.** *"Not double-tongued," 1 Timothy 3:8.*
- F. **A deacon must lead by the power of influence and respect, not by the authority of the office.** I think all who serve in the Lord's church should do so upon the strength of respect and honor, never by force. It's the idea of **1 Peter 5:2-3.**

Do not suppose that strength in many of these areas and weakness in one or two makes you a good deacon any more than faithfulness as a husband except for one cheat a year makes you a good husband. Being a good deacon demand (1) a good attitude, (2) a proper perception of your self, (3) a good reputation or testimony among men and (4) a good set of core virtues.

I do not have the ability to calculate the value of good deacons to a church and pastor. I do know the value is tremendous. I also do not have the ability to tell you what a hurt and hindrance a bad deacon can be in a church. I do know the damage is tremendous.

I challenge every one of you to be *good* deacons! Use *"the office. . .well!"* When you face the Master to give account of your service, you'll be glad you did.