

**“Elders & Deacons:
Servants in Word & Deed”**
Sermon Notes

➤ **When the trellis of deed ministry is built soundly, the vine of word ministry can grow steadily**

**Elders are essential for our church’s mission, but they’re not enough - therefore we must...*

1. Examine the problem that deacons address (v.1)

2. Emphasize the principle that deacons protect (vv.2, 4)

3. Embrace the prescription that deacons offer (vv.3, 5-6; Philippians 1:2; 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

4. Enjoy the prosperity that deacons produce (v.7)

Next Week: 1 Timothy 3:8-13 - “Descending Into Greatness”:
The Office of Deacon in the Local Church

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the week of July 12th-18th

Getting Started

1. When you hear the word “deacon” what comes to mind? The word may carry with it a variety of ideas or different connotations given the spectrum of church backgrounds represented in your group. What do you understand a deacon to *be* and *do* in the local church?

Digging Deeper

2. Though the word “deacon” is used dozens of times in the pages of the New Testament referring generically to a “servant” or a “minister” in the church (see 1 Timothy 4:6; Ephesians 6:21), the *office* of deacon is only spoken of a handful of times. Apart from the early account in Acts 6:1-7, the words of Paul in Philippians 1:2 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 are the only crystal clear references to the office of deacon in Scripture.

How ought this reality (i.e. the scarcity of information) impact our study and implementation of what the Bible says about deacons in our church? How ought it to effect the way we evaluate the decisions of other churches that may differ with ours in this area?

Open Your Bible to Acts 6:1-7...

3. These seven verses are often considered to be the template or prototype for the office of deacon in the church. Read carefully through this account as a group, taking time to review the sermon outline as you read. What’s the *problem* deacons address? The *principle* they protect? The *prescription* they offer? The *prosperity* they produce? Do you see evidence that we are actively seeking to apply these points and this passage in the life of our local church? Yes or no, why or why not?
4. Though the formal term for the office of deacon does not appear in this passage, two other forms of the word for “deacon” do emerge (see v.2 - “*serve tables*” and v.4 “*ministry of the word*”). The net effect of this is that some officers in the church give themselves to *deacon* tables while other officers in the church give themselves to *deacon* the word. Why is this language important? What does it communicate about the nature of all of our work in the church?
5. Sometimes we get the idea that deacon ministry represents perhaps the “B” team of church leadership. How do the words of our Lord in Mark 10:45 and Matthew 23:11 seriously challenge that assumption? (Note: the Greek word for “deacon” appears twice in the first verse and once in the second).
6. Though we’ll dig deeper into this issue next week, it’s clear enough from Acts 6:3 and 6:5 that character matters *greatly* when it comes to congregational selection of deacons for the church. In these two verses, Luke cites at least three (perhaps four) key character qualities for those who would serve in this office. What are they? How do they manifest themselves and how do we evaluate the presence of these qualities in a person’s life?

7. Acts 6:6 describes some sort of prayerful public recognition and installation of those who were called to the office of deacon. While we might want to stop short of saying the Bible *prescribes* this, it certainly does *describe* it for us. Why? What could the value be for us as a congregation to begin to publicly set aside such servants in our midst (both elders and deacons - see 1 Timothy 5:22 for elders) by prayer and the laying on of hands?
8. Just as we had the opportunity to grow in our understanding and application of the office of elder as we studied Paul's Letter to Titus this past season (Titus 1:5-9), so too we'd like to take the next couple of weeks together to do the same as it relates to the office of deacon. As you close your time in prayer, please pray that the Spirit would cause this to be a fruitful time in the Word for us as a congregation. You may wish to reflect the priorities from our sermon text in your prayers or the points from the sermon outline.