

Deacon Study – Diving in Together

The invitation to be a deacon is rooted in Scripture. In Acts 6, the first deacons were set apart to keep the unity of the new church through supporting the disciples and serving the body in practical ways. Two thousand years later, this is still the role of the deacon. To assist the Pastor/Elder(s) in keeping the church's unity through support and service.

In the Book of 1 Timothy, Paul writes to Timothy, his apprentice, who has taken the assignment to lead the young church at Ephesus. The church in Ephesus was in need. False teachers were promoting their speculations (gossip, rumors, assumptions) over truth. There was division and some were leaving the church. There was a need for bonds to be built and healthy between generations and the sexes. There were those in the church with motives that were greedy and self-centered. There were a lot of needs and a lot of instruction was needed to assist Timothy as he led. There was a need, among many things, for godly deacons.

Today, two thousand years later, there is still a need in every church, including Parkway.

Over the next few pages, we'll take a journey through 2 Timothy 3:8-13. In this passage Paul writes the qualifications for a Deacon and (if he's married) his wife. This journey is meant to be shared. You'll share this with a deacon mentor couple and possibly other deacons, but if you are married, also with your wife. My prayer is that it will draw you both closer to one another as you dive into the world of Biblical qualifications and the importance of each one in a deacon/deacon couple's life. The biblical role of unity through support and service will be a trademark of Parkway because of, in great part, our deacon body.

*Process: This is a study for you to conduct as a couple (if married). Take your time as you complete the study. Talk through each area, pray together, and meditate on each part of the passage before moving on. We will have a Deacon Mentor Couple who will meet with you to talk through the study with you. The pace may be one quality at a time, one section at a time or you may find an area that is an area of greater prayer or growth, and the Deacon Mentors will dwell there with you over multiple times of prayer and additional meditation on the Word. It's not a race or competition. There's not a "proper" length of time that it should take. Each person/couple is at a unique place in their walk. There is a blessing for serving well and we want each person to be prepared in a way that helps them serve well, if and when the day arrives for them to serve the church in the role of a deacon.

Before you begin to study, take some time to meditate and pray through the passage below. In a quiet place, read it aloud (with your spouse), and let the Lord allow the Word to reflect on your heart like an image in the water. Don't rush it. Try and give 10, 20, or even 30 minutes listening to the Lord as you read the passage. Don't study it (yet), simply let it rest on your heart and mind.

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. ¹

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (1 Ti 3:8–13). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

Let's take a slow walk through the passage. Every word that the Lord has chosen carries important guidance and direction. In this study, we'll look at each one of the descriptors and passages that help us have a better understanding of the man who God sets apart to serve as a deacon. The purpose of this list isn't to make us pass a 'perfection test' (in that we'd all fail). Since a deacon is to guard the unity (peace) of the church through supporting and serving, how he (and his wife) do so is pivotal to the church's health.

We'll break this up into 4 sections:

- The Deacon (v.8-10)
- The Deacon's Wife (v.11)
- The Deacon's Family (v.12)
- The Blessing (v.13)

The Deacon

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.

Dignified (listed in both the deacon and deacon's wife passages)

1. Greek – worthy of esteem and respect
 - a. Applicative meaning: One's behavior is one that people respect and esteem (under stress, in disagreement, in victory, in celebration, in sorrow, etc.)
 2. Supportive Scripture (look up and read together)
 - a. (Greek) Phil. 4:8 - Whatever is *honorable*...think on these things
 - b. (Hebrew) Prov. 8:6 – I will speak noble *things*(opposite to a naturally fleshly response)...
 - c. (Hebrew) Prov. 15:26 - ...*gracious* (kindness, pleasant) are the word of the pure
 3. Further Consideration
 - a. A deacon (couple) is placed in many situations where a dignified life is necessary. A person or group of people is upset with the pastor or other church members. (See Acts 6). A person is showing frustration, anger, and not being kind and their actions are brought to one's attention. The reaction/response of a deacon must be one of kindness, not fleshly...one that looks out of place because it honors the Lord. Consider: When you (both husband and wife) are in such situations, what is the natural response you have? Does your spouse see that in you? Does your response to difficult situations bring calm? What does it bring? Discuss this openly with your spouse. Be lovingly honest to encourage or 'to spur one another on toward love and good deeds.'
 4. Application Question
 - a. No one is perfect. Whew! But we must strive to be holy.
 - i. Discuss areas where you need to be most alert against living or responding in an undignified way.
 - ii. What are some practical encouragements or actions of accountability that others (pastors/deacons) would equip you to stay dignified as you grow in maturity in Christ?
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Not Double-Tongued

1. Greek – not insincere. Devious in speech. Not speaking with ambiguous or crafty intent.
 2. Supportive Scripture:
 - a. Gen. 20-8-13
 - b. Gen. 29:18-26
 - c. Matt. 6:47-49
 3. Further Consideration
 - a. Sometimes we can intentionally speak in a way not to be nailed down or a way that leaves things open to interpretation. When a deacon does this, it shows a lack of character by caring more about his personal “footing” than trying to truly resolve a problem or bring lasting healing to a conflict. A deacon cannot be salve on a wound while having ulterior motives. A deacon is invited into a special place of trust, not by each individual, but by the body. If it’s misused a deacon can cause great harm and endanger the integrity of the church. Have you seen a time when this has happened? What was the damage that was done?
 4. Application Question
 - b. The word faithful means “steady or consistent.” If you struggle with this at times (if acceptance or approval is a craving that you have battled, this is one of the areas to be alert in), what are some natural ways that a brother could help you in instances where this temptation could arise?
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Not Addicted to much wine

1. Greek – Addicted (not being alert for)
2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. Prov. 23:20-21
 - b. 1 Peter 4:3
 - c. Isaiah 5:11
3. Further Consideration
 - a. Are there things in your life that you are drawn to? That seems to “woo” you or call you and you know that consuming it or even too much of it is something you give into all too often? This qualification isn’t against getting drunk. That is already noted as a sin that isn’t to be embraced. It’s referring to an addiction that has its claws in you. In the Greek Culture of Ephesus as well as ours today, longing for the feeling the addiction soothes or the rush it provides is a real and present danger. Wine had its claws in many. Such things dull your spirit, and decision-making and get in the way of serving the Lord faithfully.
4. Application Question
 - a. Are there things in your life that you make a place for even when they aren’t necessary? Don’t think just wine/alcohol, but additions to other things that in moderation may be ok, but you can’t get enough of it. Things that would make you unavailable to serve? (Look at your calendar,

are there things that stand out or point you to blind spots in this area?) What barriers have you put up to guard against such things?

Not greedy for dishonest gain

1. Greek- gain at the cost of others
 2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. 1 Peter 5:2
 - b. Malachi 3:8-10
 - c. Matt. 23:23-24
 3. Further Consideration
 - a. Ensuring your position at the cost of others is a danger for a deacon. First, if he isn't faithfully tithing and giving to the Lord and His way, he is building his bank account by stealing from the Lord. In the same way, a deacon has the role of a helper and therefore is often in a situation where someone could be taken advantage of or not helped, because of the cost to the church or deacon. Such living shows a lack of trust in the Lord's provision and desires to carve a life the Lord will bless, instead of living in the path the Lord has carved, believing He desires to bless those who follow.
 4. Application Question
 - a. Talk about your money drivers. Someone once said, just open your checkbook and you'll know where your treasure is. We don't use a lot of checks anymore, but open your credit card statement and you may have the same opportunity. Are you in a place where honoring God with your finances is happening, possible, or is it a place where discipleship and growth are needed? Are your financial markers a high priority where it keeps you from helping others in need? What areas need affirmation and what areas need to change?
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Holding the mystery of faith with a clear conscience

1. Greek-
 - a. mystery means divine revelation. Holding to it means, not letting go, but securely being set in the truth of God's Divine revelation that points to and is found in and through Christ Jesus.
 - b. Clear conscience means pure...without doubt or defect in the thoughts you hold about the Revelation of Faith through Christ Jesus.
2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. Eph. 4:14
 - b. 2 Tim. 3:12-14
 - c. Gal. 1:6-10

3. Further Consideration
 - a. Doubt and poor understanding of the revelation, witness, and coming of our Lord Jesus has caused many who started the path to wander. When a leader wanders, there is often a following. A deacon isn't called to know all things but is called to have a right understanding of God's revelation and what the call to faithfulness is within the Scripture.
 4. Application Question
 - a. Are there areas of your faith that feel at odds with what you've read or with the church's leadership or direction on a biblical issue? Are these areas that are core truths about Jesus or the revelation of God that can't be overlooked? Are there areas of doubt that further conversation, study, and discipleship would be beneficial before serving as a deacon?
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Tested (The role of church leadership)

1. Greek – critically examined – in minute detail
 2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. 1 Cor. 3:13
 - b. 2 Cor. 13:5
 - c. Gal. 6:4
 - d. 1 Thess 2:4
 3. Further Consideration
 - a. Throughout Scripture, the testing of men and their motives is brought forward. Every role that we are called to will be tested by the Lord. In the process of setting aside men to serve as deacons, the Lord has commanded church leaders to critically examine (in minute detail) those who are being considered to be set apart to serve in positions that are held in esteem.
 4. Application Question
 - a. The only one who is good with a test is one who's prepared. This is the topic of the next question. Here we are reminded that the examination a man goes through isn't to judge if they are a good person or even one that ascribes different values to people. What is the benefit to you of such a process? To the church?
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Prove themselves blameless

1. Greek – worthy of a charge of wrongdoing
2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. 1 Cor. 7
 - b. Col 1:21-23
 - c. 1 John 1:9
 - d. Matt. 5:24

3. Further Consideration

- a. The examination that God calls each man to endure is one to see if there is sin that is outstanding and in need of attention. It doesn't mean perfect but without a worthy charge. When a deacon "does wrong" and the charge stays unaddressed the bride of Christ is always harmed. This means a deacon must be and remain in this state as he serves. The first to confess sin, make a wrong right, and avoid engaging in wrongdoing.

4. Application Question

- a. Are there any outstanding wrongs that need to be "righted?" Are there areas of your life that seem more susceptible to this trap than others? What are actions that could be taken to begin making wrongs right and what could be done to help you be alert when the temptation arises to do wrong?
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The Deacon's Wife

Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.

Dignified

1. Greek – worthy of esteem and respect
 - a. Applicative meaning: One's behavior is one that people respect and esteem (under stress, in disagreement, in victory, in celebration, in sorrow, etc.)
2. Supportive Scripture (look up and read together)
 - a. (Greek) Phil. 4:8 - Whatever is *honorable*...think on these things
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3. Further Consideration
 - a. A deacon (couple) is placed in many situations where a dignified life is necessary. A person or group of people is upset with the pastor or other church members. (See Acts 6). A person is showing frustration, anger, and not being kind and their actions are brought to one's attention. The reaction/response of a deacon must be one of kindness, not fleshly...one that looks out of place because it honors the Lord. Consider: When you (both husband and wife) are in such situations, what is the natural response you have? Does your spouse see that in you? Does your response to difficult situations bring calm? What does it bring? Discuss this openly with your spouse. Be lovingly honest to encourage or' to spur one another on toward love and good deeds.'
4. Application Question
 - a. No one is perfect. Whew! But we must strive to be holy. As a woman, dignity doesn't have anything to do with the value of the clothing you wear or the position you hold. It doesn't have to do with you being an introvert or extrovert. Instead, it has to do with how you engage with others when struggles and trials come your way. Dignified defines the action you take in every situation. How your actions exalt the reputation in every situation...from sorrow to joy!
 - i. Discuss areas where you need to be most alert against living or responding in an undignified way.
 - ii. What are some practical encouragements or actions of accountability that others (pastors/deacons) would equip you to stay dignified as you grow in maturity in Christ?

Not Slanderers

1. Greek- The Greek word is “diabolos,” devils. Another word is adversary.
 2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. 2 Tim. 3:3
 - b. Acts 13:10
 - c. Matt. 16:23
 - d. Lev. 19:16
 - e. Eph. 4:29
 3. Further Consideration
 - a. This is a pretty sweeping statement. The call here is that the wife of a deacon is a servant too! They are called to make peace, not stir up trouble, divide people into factions, or cause harm to other’s reputations by their speech, action, or lack thereof. The wife of a deacon is in a peculiar spot to hear gossip, multiply discord, and ‘cry out’ on behalf of those who are discontent. The emotional care of the wife of a deacon matters as she has the opportunity to stir up disunity, with good intentions or bad, and cause harm to the bride of Christ. She must not contribute to the work of the adversary, but instead, take on the qualities of Christ and the Role of peacemaker.
 4. Application Question
 - a. What a role to be called to. Are there areas of your life where you may have taken on an adversarial role and not thought about it until now? What would it look like to make that right? Looking forward what are areas that you may need to be on guard against being drawn into such a role by the words or deeds of those who may come to you? What steps of accountability and growth can you pursue now that would help fortify you against such attacks?
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Sober-minded

1. Greek means to come to one’s senses, be self-controlled, not given to extreme behaviors. Also to be alert for what is coming your way.
2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. 1 Thes. 6-8
 - b. 1 Peter 1:13
 - c. 1 Peter 5:8
 - d. Phil. 4:8
3. Further Consideration
 - a. Consider this in light of the opposite that was just introduced, “slanders.” “But Sober-minded.” The word, “but” means an about-face. The thesaurus finds the antonym of the word slanderous to be “complimentary.” What a great thought! To be sober-minded is to compliment the work

that God is doing! To point towards unity and his glory in every circumstance. This is an active role in a position where others are looking for leadership. The Bible warns not to let your actions cause strife and discord, but instead ones that compliment the work of God and His people and invites others to leave their “venting” behind and embrace the sweetness of unity and beauty of Christ Jesus!

4. Application Question

- a. When you think of the word compliment what pictures come to mind? In your world, what would it look like for your thoughts to be always alert for the good of the Lord? How could God use that to bring peace where disunity is brewing?

Faithful in all things

- 1. Greek–faithful means being committed to the way of Jesus

2. Supportive Scripture

- a. Hab. 2:4
- b. Luke 16:10
- c. Matt. 24:45
- d. John 14:1-6

3. Further Consideration

- a. Nike would say, “Just do it.” You don’t have to make up how you need to live...Jesus has already told you. Hold tightly to and follow the direction and leadership of Christ in each situation. Don’t abandon it for feelings or the esteem of others. Stick to the way of the Christ. When others invite you to act differently, to join them in their conversations, their way...don’t. Instead, show them the Jesus Way!

4. Application Question

- a. Well, that’s a lot, but it’s also it’s also very simple. As a believer are you committed to following the Lord in over your feelings and instincts? Are you willing to follow the way of Christ in conflict, in need, or in trials you face or are brought before you? To live this life takes a consistent personal walk of faithfulness in the word, prayer, fasting, and fellowship. What does this rhythm look like currently in your life? What could be changed to help strengthen this rhythm? Who can help encourage you in this commitment?

The Deacon’s Family

Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.

Husband of one wife

- 1. Greek – A one-woman man.

2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. Deut. 5:21
 - b. Matt. 5:27-32
 - c. 1 Cor. 7:1-16
3. Further Consideration
 - a. Look throughout the pages of Scripture and the Lord calls a man to demonstrate faithfulness in his relationship with his wife. Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the Song of Solomon all proclaim the beauty of this commitment and the danger of not being faithful to it. There is room for interpretation, as the word divorce was available for the Spirit to inspire Paul to use, but even that must fit under the banner of being a one-woman man. In the family, when the father is faithful to his wife (Eph . 5) the fruit that it bears is exponential. In the same way, when a man lacks faithfulness in his eyes or his story, it causes damage to the family.
4. Application Question
 - a. Are you a 'one woman man?' What is the impact of the truth of these passages on your life? What new did you discover about the Scripture's teaching on being a one-woman man?

Managing their children well

1. Greek – applying yourself, leading. This means to apply yourself to lead your children in a way the Father would call 'good.'
2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. Eph. 6:1-4
 - b. Prov. 1:8
 - c. Prov. 29:15-17
 - d. Prov. 22:6
 - e. Deut. 21:18-21* Note, as you read the following, there is OT judgment applied. Don't let that distract you from the seriousness of a father's need to lead them well.
3. Further Consideration
 - a. Leading is tough, leading your children is not for sissies. It takes intentional modeling, disciplining, training, and investment. To do so means seeing your children as they are. How hard is this when other parents aren't doing the same? Raising Pastor's Kids was tough when they were disciplined and their friends weren't. When we trained them as servants when others were selfish. To a developing mind and heart, this took a lot of conversation, prayer, and consistency on my part. In our story, there have been those watching for my kids to fall (and they did) and celebrated their stumbles. It was infuriating! I didn't want to manage my kids well in times like these, I wanted to set the adults straight! It takes faithfulness on your part to drown out the noise see your children as they are and love them into being who God is calling them to be. Sure, you need to be their protector. You need to provide care when they are hurt...that's part of the gig. But leading your children well is all that and more. Show them Jesus, show them faithfulness, and draw them near when they wander. That's the call of a deacon who has children.
4. Application Question

- a. Take time to consider who your children are and who God is calling them to be. Now consider your habits, time usage, and things you elevate as important to them. What has the scent of eternity and what doesn't? Talk about this with your wife if you can. What can you do to help manage them well? What are you already doing? What mentors or resources could you contact as you continue this journey?
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Managing their own households well

1. Greek- own in every language means, not your neighbors! It means those whom God has given you the calling and position to care for in your home.
 2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. Heb. 3:5-6
 - b. 1 Tim. 5:8
 - c. Eph. 5:25-32
 3. Further Consideration
 - a. It isn't a father's job to do everything in the home, but to oversee it well. Like a shepherd. This includes caring for them as Christ cares for His church. Emotionally, spiritually, physically, and mentally. A deacon is one who serves and in that service cares for others in need. He cannot neglect the need at home to go and care for others. He also can't neglect his home and be a commentator on the failings of others in order to defend his own neglect. A deacon must lead his home well and have space to care for those in need.
 4. Application Question
 - a. This is a time for honesty with yourself. How are things going at home? Are you ensuring a healthy rhythm is occurring emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually? Do you see one of these areas being neglected and needing strengthening? If so, what steps do you need to take? Who might you reach out to? If you're married, ask your wife how you are leading in these areas, and don't be afraid to ask for examples of how you are doing it well and what would make your home an even more beautiful offering to the Lord.
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The Blessing

For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus

A good standing for themselves

1. Greek – to be respected among others. It means elevate among others, on a higher step.
2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. Heb. 11
 - b. James 4:10

- c. 1 Peter 5:6-10
- d. The Story of Joseph (Gen. 37-48)

3. Further Consideration

- a. By faith...the Lord elevated faithful men before others. He invites others to join the group and the blessing. Specifically, those who are called to serve and sacrifice in the role of a deacon. In the same way, to serve in a way that isn't faithful to the Lord's invitation steals this blessing. Strive. Strive for the Lord to elevate you, to bless you. Turn it all over to Him and be faithful.

4. Application Question

- a. What is the difference between seeking elevation and submitting to God's plan for your standing? How does your spirit receive the promise of this blessing?

Great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus

- 1. Greek- means a willingness to take activities that involve risk or danger!
- 2. Supportive Scripture
 - a. Ps. 118:6-7
 - b. Heb. 13:6
 - c. Daniel 3:15-18
- 3. Further Consideration
 - a. To live a life unafraid because of your confidence in the way of Christ! In following Him! What an indescribable gift! There is nothing to lose because in Jesus it is already secured. For the deacon who serves well, this is a promise and it should make your heart start racing!
- 4. Application Question
 - a. When you think of this boldness as a promise from the Lord, what stirs in you? Do you long for it? Want it? What testimony for the Lord's goodness could come from such a testimony?
