

The Prototype Servant

Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-12

- **A church** is the body of Christ, a group of members, assembled by Christ, to continue His ministry.
- **A member** is a committed, functioning body part of that body.
Romans 12:4-5 Members are believers committed to using their spiritual gift within a specific church. This is a biblical term.
1 Cor. 12:13-18 Each member uses their gift to bless others.
- **An Elder/Pastor/Overseer** is called to feed and lead: equipping the members to do ministry (**Ephesians 4:11-12**).
1 Peter 5:1-2 Elder, pastor, overseer describe the same office.

Illus: Prototype: This is the example, the first of many to follow.

1. The Need for deacons (6:1-2)

(6:1) The church was growing, along with its needs.

Some (widows) were being neglected in their distribution of food.

Note: 1 Tim 5:1-16 describes a roll of widows who had no family and served the church. These the church cared for.

(6:2) Those leading and teaching did not have sufficient time to do both this ministry and care adequately for the members.

2. The need for qualifications (6:3-4; 1 Timothy 3:8-12)

(6:3) Those who represent the church need to be qualified.

Deacons are examples of the servants we are all to become.

1 Corinthians 11:1, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”

1 Timothy 3:8-12 Deacon qualifications:

Dignified means honorable...worthy of respect.

Not double-tongued. They speak truth to all.

Not addicted to much wine. Self-controlled, not a drunk.

Not greedy for dishonest gain Not dishonest in business.

They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, they live consistently according to Scripture.

And let them also be tested first. Routinely examined.

Blameless means innocent. Not actively in sin.

(3:11) Does this refer to the qualities of their wife, husband, wife teams, or female servants in the church?

If a qualification of men: Why do elders’ wives not have the same qualification?

If husband/wife team: Can a single not serve in this role?

If an official female servant: She cannot violate 1 Tim 2:12
“Likewise,” seems to set off another category of servant. See Phoebe, a servant (*diakonos*) of the church at Cenchreae (**Rom 16:1-2**). Should a church have officially trusted female servants?

(3:12) “husband of one wife” One-woman man

Q: Marital status or moral qualification?

*If status, rule out divorced (at any time) singles, widowers.

*If moral qualification, ask if their situation is of “good reputation.”

manages his own house well. Kids at home are submissive.

Deacon (*diakonos*) means servant, even translated agent or deputy

Illus: Sous Chefs

Deacons work closely with elders to care for the needs of a church.

3. The need for faithfulness (6:5-7)

We don’t need men with titles, but men who perform a role.

(6:5-6) The church laid hands on these men.

Laying hands originated with the OT sacrificial system. The priest would lay hands on an animal, to represent the people.

(6:7) When deacons perform their role, it catalyzes church growth:

Word of God increasing refers to spiritual depth of the church. When elders have time to invest in study, prayer and training, the church grows deep in God’s Word.

Disciples multiplying refers to evangelism. All believers are disciples of Christ. More of them indicates evangelism.

1 Cor 13:18 God places us in churches to use our spiritual gifts.

Note: Elders and Deacons are not an elite group of Christians.

These are prototypes. They are already living out godly Christian lives. These qualifications should describe us ALL.

Hebrews 13:7 Imitate the faith of the leaders in your church.

Phil 3:17 Paul calls Christians to imitate his example

1 Tim 3:13 Deacons can serve well or poorly. Those that serve well are examples to the entire church: **Prototype Servants.**

