

Intro.

- A. Paul sets for the qualifications & reasons for special servants of the church.
  - 1. Elders need all the help they can get f/ everyone, esp. f/ deacons.
  - 2. The purpose of this lesson: encourage those who have & are now rising to the challenge to serve.
  - 3. Also, I hope we will all come to appreciate the work our deacons are doing every week.
- B. Let us keep in mind that it is God's design to have dependable deacons
  - 1. In N. T. we read of particular role of special servants of the church, **Phil. 1:1**;
  - 2. **(text)** In like manner...*a good work*

Discuss.**I. THE MEANING OF THE WORD => DEACON:**

- A. (used about 30 X's) meaning: a *minister* or a *aservant*.
  - 1. **Mt. 8:15** After Peter's mother-in-law was healed by Christ, Bible says she *arose & ministered unto them*
  - 2. **Ac. 6:2** Not appropriate that we should leave & **serve** tables.
  - 3. **Jn. 12:26** *If any man will come after me and be my servant, my Father will honor him.*
  - 4. **1 Tim. 4:6** *If you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, you will be a good minister.*
- B. While all should be *servants / ministers*, text indicates that some individuals should serve in a special capacity as deacons (e.g., *special servants*).
  - 1. For this reason, God gave certain characteristics for these men who would serve.
  - 2. In **vs. 13**, He gave a good reason why these men should so serve.

**II. THE DUTIES OF DEACONS:**

- A. Role is not simply spelled out, but their role is certainly implied.
  - 1. Sometimes will hear that elders = over the spiritual & deacons = over material aspects, but not so.
  - 2. Elders have the oversight of the church, period.
    - a. Close correlation between material & sp. is seen in **Jas. 1:27**
    - b. Still, deacons can serve & serve well in the areas they are supposed to serve.
- B. For years we have understood that the work of the church is in Evangelism, Edification & Benevolence
  - 1. In **benevolence**, deacons can serve under the oversight of the elders.....
    - a. This congregations presently has 53 widows, 1 widower, 24 shut-ins - including 10 = nursing homes
    - b. On an almost daily basis, we have numerous request
  - 2. In **edification** (area of strengthening & building up the church) deacons have gt. opportunity.
    - a. Includes opportunities to teach Bible classes.
    - b. They can work to encourage new members, or weak members, those just restored, or the unfaithful.
  - 3. Our deacons can be involved in the area of **evangelism**:
    - a. inviting folks to worship with us
    - b. in helping to set up & conduct Bible studies
  - 4. In other areas, the deacons can help to lighten the load of the elders...
    - a. in gathering in information & viewpoints of a cross-section of the congregation.
    - b. in planning the administration of the financial respon. of this congregation
    - c. We all need to give graciously & generously, but deacons can also assist in being responsible in the disbursement of these funds & accounting of them (Bill McCallon spends hours @ month w/ ck. bk.

**III. Also want us to consider the MOTIVATION MEN HAVE TO SERVE AS DEACONS.**

- A. Vs. 13 of our text tells speaks of the motivational aspect.
  - 1. The reward motivation is important to all servants of God.
    - a. Jesus used the reward motivation when he called His disciples, **Mk. 10:28-30**
    - b. **2 Tim. 4:7-8**, Paul was motivated to serve God faithfully, anticipating a crown of life!
    - c. The **Heb.** writer in **12:1-2** reminds us of the reward of staying on course & finishing race.

2. There is great reward to those who would function effectively as deacons:
  - a. The emphasis should always be put on service, not position -- & serving well!
  - b. Serving well *gains a good serving* in God's sight, as well as man's.
  - c. *If any man serve me, him will the Father honor, Jn. 12:26*
  - d. God's people should also honor those whom God honors, including well-serving deacons.
  - e. The sense of accomplishment as a good servant in the greatest cause on earth gives meaning & value!
  - f. The confidence (in God & in self) one gains in successfully serving God & His church will spill over and positively affect other areas of your life!
  - g. It seems that growth thru service & faithfulness helps us overcome the timidity that Satan wants us to experience that can prevent us from serving effectively. (c. **1 Tim. 1:7**)
- B. What Paul writes in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 is about these *s-p-e-c-i-a-l s-e-r-v-a-n-t-s*.
  1. These men have met some specific spiritual characteristics, as described by Paul as...
    - a. men of *sobriety (grave)* – know their relationship to things that could control them (alcohol)
    - d. men who have tremendous influence for good within their own families
    - e. men who have wives who are respectful of God's work, His worship & His church
    - f. these = men who are not double-tongued (not saying 1 thing to you, and another thing to the elders)
    - g. truthful & honest, & would never abuse or misrepresent the church for selfish purposes
  5. These = men who aggressively look out for way to serve God & bring glory to Him while serving church

Concl.

- A. Who is looking for dependable deacons?
  1. Elders are. If elders have a good core of dependable men who carry out assignments responsibly, then can perform their time-consuming responsibility of shepherding (elaborate).
  2. The church has 15 deacons presently, & will add 3 more momentarily. There is much to do!!!
  3. God is certainly looking for dependable deacons.
- B. Who is looking to serve the Lord faithfully in God's kingdom?
  1. God puts the idea of being a servant into real perspective in **2 Tim. 2:24-26**.
  2. With Joshua we say, **Josh. 24:15** *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*