

The Ministry of Deacons Around the Church

Deacon ministry is underrated in its significance to the effectiveness of the operation of local churches. Everything rises and falls on leadership in the local church, and deacons are instrumental in God's plan.

1. Deacon ministry arose in the context of _____ (v.1).

A. There were problems caused by _____.

- ***Growth-related problems*** –
- ***Leadership problems*** – 2 Timothy 2:2.
- ***Maturity problems*** – Learners, _____ to Jesus.

B. The problems were manifest as _____ - nothing new under the sun. How do you respond to people's complaints?

- God can use you to _____ when people are upset.
- Importance of _____. Sometimes people just need to be heard.
- Importance of _____ understanding and application. Leaders can make things better by acting Scripturally (Matthew 7:24ff; discourage "triangulation," Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 18:15).
- Importance of _____ so that conflict doesn't escalate (Philippians 4:3).
- Importance of developing _____ to meet needs equitably and efficiently. Deacon family ministry plans are helpful. Deacons can be assigned families for whose care they become responsible (along with small group care leaders and pastors for critical issues).
- Importance of identifying *issues* and understanding problems.

C. There will always be problems when there is _____.

- Change is a seedbed of conflict.
- Seismic, discontinuous, frenetic change such as the church was experiencing in the First Century, and the church is experiencing now, provides the _____ for conflict to occur.
- Change is a constant reality in _____ congregations. "*If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance a lot less*"--Tom Feltenstein (*Change is Good ... You go First*). Leaders can help by encouraging a culture of flexibility and problem solving.
- Change is uncomfortable, and leaders can help by:
 - Avoiding _____, murmuring and tale bearing themselves (Proverbs 26:20).
 - Recognizing the differences between _____ and _____.

- Not " _____ ", but instead communicating dissent in a way that conveys support and friendship.
- Change is uncomfortable, and leaders can help by:
 - _____ to God and the local church (Hebrews 10:24-25).
 - Accepting the _____ function of their ministry (John 3:30).
There are basically two types of leadership seen in Scripture:
 - _____ based (3 John vv.9-10)
 - _____ based (Mark 9:33-35, Matthew 20:20-28) *diakonai*
 - _____ - συνεργῆ ω (2 Corinthians 6:1, Philippians 4:3).

2. Deacons, choose wisely (v.2-3).

- Calling, practical:
 - _____
 - No specific process described, but best practices might include:
 - Avoiding _____
 - Avoiding _____
 - Avoiding _____ (reaching)
 - Employing spiritual _____ (prayer, Scriptural truth)
 - Equipping through a _____ process
 - _____ proposed candidates. Provide a filter between well-meaning congregants and unqualified candidates.
- Men of good reputation, not perfect, but "blameless" (1 Timothy 3:8-13).
 - Regarding their _____ (v.8)
 - Regarding _____ (v.8b)
 - Regarding _____ (v.8c)
 - Regarding _____ (v.8d)
 - Regarding _____ (v.9)
 - Regarding their observable _____ (v.10)
 - Regarding their _____ (v.11-12a)
 - Regarding their _____ (v.12b)
 - Resulting in _____ (v.13)
- Full of the _____ (Ephesians 5:17-18), and
- Full of wisdom. Wisdom is the understanding and application of Biblical truth out of a sincere reverence for God (Job 28:28, Psalm 110:10, Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, 15:33).

3. Deacons make better preachers (vv.2, 4).

When pastors neglect study and prayer:

- They can't offer a _____.
- They will depend on _____ sources.
- They will attempt to "refresh others from a _____," (Howard Hendricks).
- They will subtly contribute to congregational _____.
- They will risk being _____ and trite, and
- They will experience personal _____ (because they can not fully express their calling).