

DEACONS

1 Timothy 3:8-13

UNDERSTANDING DEACON MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

After reading through the qualifications of Overseers in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, we now have a context for thinking about Deacon ministry. Connecting the two sets of qualifications is the word *likewise*.

“Deacons *likewise* must be...” (1 Tim 3:8a).

Just as Overseers are important and valuable in God’s organization of His Church, Deacons *likewise* are important and valuable for the ministry of God’s Word through *service*.

The word Deacon (*διάκονος*, *diakonos*) is a word that refers to a helper, assistant, and in some cases an intermediary. We understand a Deacon to be a servant.

SECTION 2: DEACONS

WHAT DOES GOD’S WORD SAY?

1 Timothy 3:8–13 (ESV)

Qualifications for Deacons

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

The word “Amen” represents a strong agreement or affirmation to what is said. It is an expression of faith to say: *truly, let it be so!*

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each section and accompanying interpretation. Check the “Amen!” box as a way of affirming the meaning and tracking your progress.

GOD'S WORD SAYS “Deacons likewise” (1 Timothy 3:8a)

- 1.1 THIS MEANS Just as God provides the Church with the office of Overseers to perform a necessary work, God also provides the Church with Deacons. Deacons do not function *independently of* but rather *interdependently with* Overseers to accomplish God's purposes in a local church. Because of this, Deacons must also meet certain qualifications as set forth by God in His Word.

Amen!

GOD'S WORD SAYS “must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.” (1 Timothy 3:8b)

- 2.1 THIS MEANS “**dignified**” - Deacons must be “respectable, honorable, of serious demeanor.”³

Amen!

- 2.2 THIS MEANS “**not double-tongued**” - Deacons must not be insincere, deceitful, two-faced, or hypocritical.

Amen!

- 2.3 THIS MEANS “**not addicted to much wine**” - Deacons must not be devoted to much wine.

Amen!



As with the requirement of Overseers, this particular text does not answer the question of whether or not drinking alcohol is acceptable or prohibited. What is clear in this text is that addiction and drunkenness are *unacceptable*.

2.3 THIS MEANS “not greedy for dishonest gain” - Deacons must not be shamelessly desirous for money or material gain.

Amen!

GOD'S WORD SAYS “⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.” (1 Timothy 3:9)

3.1 THIS MEANS Deacons must avoid false teachings and useless speculations. They must understand and have a confidence in the revealed truths of the faith. Deacons must also be free from hypocrisy (See 1 Timothy 1:3-7).

Amen!

GOD'S WORD SAYS “¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.” (1 Timothy 3:10)

4.1 THIS MEANS A Deacon is a person who proves to be above reproach in service *before* being made a Deacon.

Amen!




This testing for genuineness certainly applies in seasoned churches (as opposed to new church plants) and has the idea of service in a “lower office” before moving to a “higher office.” A person is tested by being “tried out.” In other words, a person does not become a Deacon *and then* begin to serve, but begins to serve *and then* becomes a Deacon when found to be blameless (above reproach) by the congregation or outsiders.⁴

GOD'S WORD SAYS **¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. (1 Timothy 3:11)**

5.1 THIS MEANS A Deacon's wife must be respectable, not a slanderer, temperate (having sober behavior), and faithful in all — just as her Deacon husband.


Amen!

 It is essential for the wife of a Deacon to not only support her husband's service as a Deacon, but *likewise* to help him in every way that requires these qualities to be true of her! By this, the word *likewise* understands that a Deacon's wife *protects* and *reflects* her husband's character, reputation and testimony.

GOD'S WORD SAYS **¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. (1 Timothy 3:12)**

6.1 THIS MEANS A Deacon must be a faithful husband. He is a “one-woman” man, leading and influencing his children and household in a praiseworthy way.

Amen!

 A question is raised, should a Deacon be presently married? The answer is difficult because 1 Timothy 3:12 *assumes* marriage and *assumes* a household to manage as a testimony to his character. This text does not answer whether or not a Deacon *should* be married. A man who is single (even a widower) should carefully consider the demands of his own household on his time and attention, as well as the nature of service that may be required of him as a Deacon. Consider that the first deacons served widows (See Acts 6). It is prudent to assess if such a person intends to remain single or if he is open to marrying (or re-marrying). These circumstances must be weighed carefully and prayerfully.

GOD'S WORD SAYS

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 Timothy 3:13)

7.1

THIS MEANS

A Deacon models the servanthood of Christ by demonstrating that greatness is gained in becoming a servant (Mt 10:26-28). In serving well, a Deacon acquires a great confidence (boldness) to act on the truth and convictions of the faith.

Amen!



It is worth noting that this final note on Deacon qualifications highlights a strengthened faith in Christ. Serving well as a Deacon is a process God uses for spiritual maturity and godliness. In this way serving as a Deacon is to experience a gracious and wonderful gift from God for His Church.