

Installation of deacons

1 Tim 3:8-13

8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

NASU

This morning we have the privilege of witnessing the public recognition of two gentlemen for the office of deacon.

They are Lee Zimmerman and Joshua Ward.

In a little while, we will formally install them as deacons for our congregation.

They will join the leadership team with our elders: Marc Pomeroy, Jac Bovinet, and me.

/Deacons are similar to elders because they serve as leaders for the congregation.\

But they serve in different roles. Elders make the major decisions and supervise the activities in the congregation. They appoint deacons to lead areas of service.

/In fact, the word deacon comes from a Greek word that means to render service.\

The Bible is exact in its description of the necessary qualifications for this office of deacon. They are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

/This passage does not describe the duties of the deacon. Rather, it gives the character and observable behavior that would qualify or disqualify a man for this office. To put it simply: virtues and vices.\

One note: verse 11 states the qualifications for women who would serve. These are not the deacons' wives necessarily, nor are they women deacons. This is a separate category for women who serve the congregation but are not in leadership roles.

But this morning we will be examining the qualifications for the office of deacon, which is for men only.

We will now consider these qualifications. There are nine of them. We begin in verse 8.

8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

/A man of dignity is a man who is worthy of respect. He is honorable, noble in character, and serious about his duties.\

/Now the Greek word "double-tongued" means speaking in two directions at once. In other words, they say one thing and mean another. \

It refers to the tendency to deceive others with one's words in order to make people believe something that is not true.

No one can be an effective leader if he is a liar, a hypocrite, or a phony.

/"addicted to much wine" is another disqualifying behavior. This refers to someone who regularly drinks to excess, to the point where one is addicted to alcohol.\

It does not mean that deacons are forbidden to drink alcohol.

But you cannot serve in leadership under the influence of alcohol.

A leader cannot be a slave to anything except his responsibility. It requires self-discipline and concentration. Drunkenness destroys self-discipline and the ability to concentrate.

/“fond of sordid gain”. This is another form of slavery. It’s what Jesus meant when He said that you cannot serve God and money. The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil.\

Notice the expression “sordid gain”. / Sordid gain means ill-gotten gain, secured by illegal or immoral acts. \

It refers to taking for personal use money that has been entrusted to you.

/In context, this refers specifically to the embezzlement of church finances.\ Then as now, some men look to make Christian leadership into a means of financial gain.

, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

The mystery of the faith is a profound subject in Paul’s epistles.

/A mystery is formerly hidden knowledge that has now been revealed.\

“the faith” here refers to the content of what is believed – the truths that have now been revealed.

It refers first of all to the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19). This is the knowledge of God's plan to reconcile the world to Himself through the blood of Christ.

/Now you can't hold to the mystery of the faith if you haven't learned what it's all about!\

Deacons need to be in attendance when the word of God is being taught.

/A clear conscience is one that has been cleansed from evil false doctrines and worldly norms and standards. \ The cleaning agent is the combination of the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

This doesn't mean that a person never commits a sin or does penance when he does sin.

/It means that your values and priorities now conform to God's thinking.\

10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

Let's start with the meaning of "beyond reproach", since that is the point of the test. It has to do with a man's conduct.

/To be beyond reproach is to be free of any valid charge of impropriety.\

He should have a good reputation both inside and outside the church. Remember - the church has adversaries who would like nothing better than to destroy her reputation.

The testing is not a formal examination. The congregation and the elders observe the behavior of candidates.

/The Greek word means to be tested through trial and pressure. It means to regard something as genuine or worthy on the basis of that testing. \

It means to be tested and found approved. The real deal; tried and true.

12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

We have skipped verse 11 because it does not speak to the qualifications for a deacon.

/The expression “husband of only one wife” literally means a one-woman man. \

Traditionally, this has been used to exclude the unmarried, the divorced, the remarried. But that’s not accurate.

But the interpretation that’s has the most in favor of it is also the simplest.

/The phrase refers to being devoted exclusively to one’s current wife.\

The New Testament condemns extra-marital activity, including adultery, homosexuality, and consorting with prostitutes.

So a man who engages in such activities would be an embarrassment to the church and would undermine its mission.

Leaders should model what Christian marriage is all about.

And current, observable behavior fits well with the rest of the criteria in the list.

and good managers of their children and their own households.

This one's fairly obvious. If a man cannot manage his own household, how is he going to manage the affairs of the church?

/Family life is the best proving ground for leadership in the church.\

13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Serving well produces its own rewards: high standing and confidence in the faith.

His high standing comes from his dignity and reputation.

/His confidence in the faith comes from continuing to learn the word of God and submit to it - to put it into practice. \

Lee, Josh: you have demonstrated these qualities. You did so without knowing you would be a candidate for the office of deacon. You have passed the test.

Congratulations.

Now, as you assume the responsibilities of the office of deacon, we will all be praying for you and for your family – especially your wives: Joyce and Nicole.