

## THE NEED FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL WITHIN CHRIST'S CHURCH (i.e., "Deacons")

In conjunction with His ascension, Christ imparted certain types of spiritual leaders (Ephesians 4:1-16).

- Apostles & Prophets – Founders of the First Century (Ephesians 2:20)
- Evangelists (a.k.a. "Missionaries") – Some are trail blazers, like Philip "The Evangelist (Acts 8 & 21) & others are trouble shooters, like Timothy
- Shepherd/Teachers (a.k.a. Elders, Overseers) – These are the long-term local leaders needed for the spiritual health & protection of each congregation.

Individual leaders can't do their job efficiently without the devoted assistance of many more support personnel.

- Examples from our modern life
  - Military - Behind every fighter pilot or tank crew or Special Forces unit is a myriad of other personnel.
  - Health care – No surgeon can perform his/her job without many others doing their support jobs.
- Old Testament
  - Priests did the spiritual work.
  - Levites did the support work.
- New Testament
  - Spiritual leaders in the Church (at first the Apostle, then later the Elders) did the spiritual work.
  - Deacons provided the necessary support work to permit the spiritual leaders to do their jobs.

The term "Deacon" comes to English directly from the Greek language - *διάκονος*. It's built upon an ancient Greek word for running errands on behalf of someone else. We have an American idiom that comes very close to the meaning of "Deacon" – it's being someone's "go-fer."

The "Deacon" of the secular, 1<sup>st</sup> Century world was often a food waiter or a personal valet, someone who functioned in the background so that the person in the foreground could focus upon something else.

Acts 6 tells the story of the first batch of "Deacons," needed to oversee the distribution of emergency food rations to widows, orphans & other needy members of the huge Jerusalem Church. Other examples of "Deacons" included transporting funds & letters from one location to another.

**TRAITS OF GODLY DEACONS**

*(As translated by Thomas J. Short)*

<p align="center"><b>1 Timothy 3</b> <i>The verb for “deacon work” is specifically used about “The Seven” men selected in Acts 6:1-7.</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>1 Timothy 3</b> <i>The term “Deaconess” is specifically used about Phoebe of Cenchrea in Romans 16:1-2.</i></p>	<p align="center"><b>Compare to Elder Traits In Titus &amp; 1 Timothy</b></p>
3:8a Deacons, likewise, <i>should be</i> dignified,	3:11a Women, likewise, <i>should be</i> dignified,	
3:8b not double-tongued,	3:11b not slanderous,	
3:8c not being focused on much wine,	3:11c sober,	not a wino; (Titus 1:7c; 1 Timothy 3:3a)
3:8d nor disgracefully devoted to gain;	3:11d trustworthy in everything.	not disgracefully devoted to gain; (Titus 1:7e)
3:9 having the mystery of the Faith in clean conscience.		holding tight to the trustworthy Word, in accordance with the teaching, (Titus 1:9a)
3:10 Let the genuineness of these be tested first; then, put them into service, being un-inditable.		un-inditable (Titus 1:6a; 1 Timothy 3:2a)
3:12a Let Deacons be one woman men,		a one woman man; (Titus 1:6b; 1 Timothy 3:2b)
3:12b leading <i>their</i> children well, in addition to their own households,		having faithful children - not chargeable with excessive living or un-submissive behavior - 1:7a for it is necessary for the Overseer to be un-inditable as God’s household manager; (Titus 1:6b-7a)  leading his own household well, having children in submission with all dignity (3:5 but if he doesn’t know how to lead his own household, how can he take care of God’s assembly?) (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
3:13 for those who serve as Deacons preserve for themselves a good height and much confidence in the Faith <i>that is</i> in Christ Jesus.		