

Ephesians 4:11-13

Introduction

- God has an incredible plan for His church to “become mature, attaining to the **whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**” Individuals, and the corporate gatherings, walking like Jesus on the earth to demonstrate the love, power and righteousness of God to a broken world.
- The picture becomes reality as each of us are disciplined and mature to become what God has made available to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- This is what we long for here at The Gathering. We are not satisfied with status quo or religious mediocrity. By His grace, we will effectively advance God’s kingdom.

Introduction

- To steward and advance God's kingdom, we have to care for the people God invests in us as a church; and help each of them mature to become fully equipped disciple of Jesus.
- We have come to a place in the life of The Gathering where the needs of the people have exceeded the capabilities of the leadership. Your needs have not been properly met and some of you have been hurt or neglected. For that we sincerely apologize. This is why we have begun this journey to allow God to raise up deacons to help serve this wonderful group of Christ followers.

Introduction

- Over the next weeks, we will continue searching the Scriptures to learn the purpose and qualifications of deacons in the Bible.
- At the end of this teaching series, the church will nominate men or women (Romans 16:1, 1 Timothy 3:11) that meet the Biblical qualifications **and** that they feel led by the Lord to suggest for this ministry. (Acts 6:3)
- The elders will then seek the Lord concerning the nominations and be in contact with the individuals.
- Then the deacons will be presented to the church with the laying on of hands and prayer by church leaders. (Acts 6:6)

What are the Biblical
qualifications to serve as a
deacon?

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Introduction

- First of all, let us be clear; the standards of holiness and obedience to Christ are the same for every disciple of Jesus. The qualifications of elders and deacons are part of the design and intention of God for every Christian. We are all on a journey to become like Christ, but the standard and end goal is the same for every one of us.
- The apostle Paul lists these qualifications because as individuals rise as leaders in the church, they must set the example for the body of Christ. Therefore, these characteristics, which are the standard for all Christians, must be in place before they take a place of service, ministry or leadership.

Introduction

- In addition, deacons and deaconesses are not perfect people. If we are searching for people who meet these qualifications 24 hours of every day and have no faults or weaknesses, then we will be searching till Jesus comes back.
- These qualifications must characterize the lives of deacons, but the blood of Jesus was shed for them as well. If they stumble and fail to maintain the standard set before them, they will be quick to confess, repent, and return to faithful service. Great leaders are those who model humility in failure and the honest pursuit of the righteousness that Jesus has provided for them.

Review

1. Worthy of respect - honorable, honest, respectable. A person who doesn't demand respect but lives in such a way that we desire to honor and respect them.
2. Sincere - not double-tongued or living two lives. A person who is the same in the church and in the secular world.
3. Not indulging in much wine. A person who is not overly concerned with alcohol and it doesn't hold their mind's attention. To be drunk is not acceptable for them.
4. Not pursuing dishonest gain. A person who honors God in every area of life including business and finances.

5. Keep Hold of Deep Truths

- “They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.” 1 Timothy 3:9
- This qualification has two basic parts. One, is that deacons must know the deep truths of the faith. Secondly, they must “keep” them or obey them with a clear conscience before God.
- This is crucial for all believers and specifically for those who minister and serve in the church. How can we know how to minister if we don’t know the truths of Scripture and are living a righteous life according to those truths? Then we can be a pure vessel in His hand to be used.

5. Keep Hold of Deep Truths

- The Word of God has practical answers for every situation in life. How can we minister those truths to others in need if we don't know them ourselves?
- How can we know the deep truths of the faith? By being in daily fellowship with the Spirit of Truth and faithfully consuming the Word of Truth.
- How can we “keep hold” of these truths with a clear conscience? Commit our lives in obedience to Jesus’ commands. And if we fail, we are quick to repentance and determined to walk in His righteousness.
- How about you? Does this characterize your life?

6. They Must be Tested

- “They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.” 1 Timothy 3:9-10
- Tested on what? Deacons must be tested to see if they can keep hold to the truths of Scripture with a clear conscience.
- How are they tested? **Life**. Servants of the church, and every follower of Jesus, are tested by the everyday struggles, trials, hardships, and mundane routines of real life in a broken and sinful world.

6. They Must be Tested

- James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:6-9, John 16:33
- Life is full of tests and trials. Will we hold fast to the “life preserver” - the never-fading, never-changing truth of God’s Word? Or will we let go to find temporary comfort for our flesh in the popular bandaids of the culture?
- Do we despise trials? Or do we see them as blessed opportunities to gain battle-field experience on our journey to become warriors for Christ? *True spiritual warriors don’t ask, “Why?” They ask, “How can I honor you in this situation? and “What can I learn from this to become a better warrior?”* (G. Cooke) How about you?

7. Let Them Serve

- “They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.” 1 Tim 3:10
- The word “serve” and “deacon” come from the same Greek word that means, “to be an attendant, to wait upon menially as a host or a friend, to minister, to serve.” (Strong’s)
- The men and women in the Scripture that served the church with humility were not interested in a title or position. A deacon has the heart of a servant motivated by love, and genuinely concerned with the needs of others. They are not in it for themselves.

7. Let Them Serve

- “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:43-45
- “You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” Galatians 5:13
- “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who...made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.” Philippians 2:5,7

7. Let Them Serve

- In our culture of busyness and self-centeredness; service has become a lost spiritual discipline. We want to be known as a Christian by our church attendance, Christianese, and social media blurbs. But Jesus said that the world will know that we are disciples by our **love**. And love is expressed through service because faith without action is dead.
- Does the man or woman that you have in mind to nominate have a heart of service? Is their life characterized by a willingness to put themselves last in order to serve others? How about you? Is Jesus pleased with you life of service? How long has it been since you have served someone **with no strings attached**?

Opportunities to Respond

- Are you in God's family? If Jesus came back today, would you enter heaven? Have you received the blood of Jesus as payment for your sin and have you committed your whole life to be obedient to Jesus?
- Maybe you need to reevaluate the priorities of your life. What are you living for today? Will your life have any eternal value when you stand before Jesus?
- Is God calling you to step up and serve as a deacon? Would you be willing to ask Him right now? Are willing to ask God to bring someone to your mind to nominate? Will you take time to listen for an answer?

Opportunities to Respond

- Do you know the deep truths of the faith? Are you ingesting the Word of God and asking the Spirit to teach you what it means and to empower you to obey?
- Are you obeying these truths with a clear conscience? Would you be willing to confess any failures and turn back to a lifestyle of obedience and freedom?
- How are your tests coming? Are you bitter and frustrated? Or are you using them to advance God's kingdom? Are you a spiritual warrior or a spiritual sissy?
- Are you willing to be a servant? Do your family and friends consider you a servant today? Does Jesus?