



What is a Deacon?

In the New Testament Scriptures, there are two offices in the local church: pastors (or elders) and deacons. The deacon is a "servant" office (this is what the Greek word "deacon" means, and what we see in Acts 6 with the first deacons). However, it is also a managerial office: deacons lead others in an area of service. In Acts 6:3 "the seven" (deacons) were put "in charge" of a task. The seven of Acts 6:3 may have helped to manage around three thousand in the church at that time.

In Acts 6 we see areas that require some form of leadership, such as problem-solving and peace-making, related to an area that starts in the material realm (in this case, taking care of the needs of widows). Again, deacons give attention to more practical needs of the body, while working together to preserve unity. This frees up elders for the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). Though the needs that deacons respond to often start in the material realm, the ministry often mingles physical and spiritual needs. For example, "complaints" are handled (Acts 6:1), Stephen preaches (Acts 7), Philip preaches (Acts 8), and deacons "hold fast the mystery of the faith" (1 Timothy 3:9).

"He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it."

TITUS 1:9 (ESV)