

## **SELECTING DEACONS** **(2 Timothy 3:10; Acts 6:2-3)**

### **I. Qualified men must be sought.**

- A. Paul stated, "Let these first be proved."
- B. The office of a deacon is not a training ground.
  - 1. It is not the case that a man is to be appointed and then become qualified.
  - 2. Listen to this statement from the Seventh-Day Adventist commentary: "Paul here specifically condemns the proposal sometimes made that assignment to church office be made as an encouragement to those who have been careless, or weak in the faith, in the hope that such recognition may stimulate zeal and piety."
- C. People do need to have something to do.
  - 1. Working in the church allows us to have an interest in the church as well as grow spiritually.
  - 2. It is not wrong for the elders to ask individual members to do work for the church, with deacons or without.
  - 3. Sometimes we get involved in things outside of the church because we have time on our hands.
  - 4. If you have time, I know our elders would love to be able to help you fill that time with things of a spiritual nature.
- D. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write these qualifications so God most assuredly wants them followed.
  - 1. Some think that since deacons don't have oversight powers that you don't have to be as picky in selecting.
  - 2. There is no probationary period where you serve and see if your good and then you stick on.
- E. By them being proved or tested first, some things are indicated:
  - 1. Deacon is not to be a new convert because you don't know yet if he has all the qualities needed.
  - 2. He isn't to be new to the brethren for the same reason.
  - 3. A man not possessing each quality is unqualified.
  - 4. Deacon isn't to be appointed on hearsay because he is to be known well enough to know he has these qualities.

### **II. The testing of men.**

- A. How is the testing to be done?
  - 1. Paul does not specifically say.
  - 2. It does not seem right that it would be an oral questioning of a man because he may believe he possesses these qualities while others know he does not.
  - 3. The only way that makes good sense is that this man's life has been seen over a period of time.
  - 4. It also makes sense that the one in consideration be asked certain things if a charge has been brought against him as well as ask

- others who may know.
5. Simply, they are evaluated by the congregation by their knowledge of the man's life he has lived among them.
- B. Who is to do the testing?
1. Again, Paul doesn't specifically say.
  2. In Acts 6, the apostles left it to the congregation to choose men who fit the bill.
  3. No doubt, if the men the congregation had selected did not fit the bill the apostles would have stepped in.
  4. The same holds true with elders who would know each man being considered.

**III. The men under consideration are to be blameless.**

- A. The men selected must be men who are unaccused of lacking in these qualities or being involved in something sinful.
- B. This doesn't mean that at sometime a prospective deacon was not worthy of blame.
1. We know all have sinned.
  2. However, a person could have been blameworthy at one point, repented and then become blameless.
- C. A great example of this is Peter.
1. Peter became an elder (1 Peter 5:1-3).
  2. However, we know at one time, he was not blameless because Paul withstood him to the face.
  3. It was after this that Peter became an elder.
- D. In like manner, there may be someone who, in the past, was involved in something that kept him from being qualified.
1. As time past, he repented and changed his life.
  2. He removed whatever kept him from having the necessary qualities and became qualified.
  3. It may be that it was of such a nature that his appointment, even now, may cause problems in the community and that has to be considered.
- E. This does not mean someone won't have something against the prospective deacon.
1. Jesus warned us to beware when all men speak well of us (Luke 6:26).
  2. Jesus said we will be evil spoken of (Matthew 5:10-12).
  3. So it doesn't mean everyone gives him a good report.
- F. It does not, as we've mentioned mean sinless perfection as all Christians are to be blameless (1 Corinthians 1:2, 8; 1 Th 5:23).

**IV. Selecting deacons.**

- A. There is no hard and fast rule stated for us.
- B. However, there is biblical precedent for appointing men to a special office found in Acts 6.
1. The brethren of the congregation were to look out from among them men who met the qualifications.

2. This was wise because these men were to serve them.
  3. Also, there were problems already so these had to be men who would be trusted to do right.
- C. It is not wise for the elders to do the selecting with no input from the congregation.
1. Again, the apostles were far more qualified to choose men than elders are.
  2. They chose to allow the congregation to have a say, so it is fitting and right for elders to do the same.
- D. It must be kept in mind that this is not a political race or a popularity contest.
1. The men chosen are going to be filling a divinely appointed office.
  2. It is extremely serious in nature in which much time should be spent in prayer and thought as to which men meet these qualifications and possess these qualities.
- E. One eldership gave six directives to the congregation:
1. Consider the scriptures carefully; pray before you come to a conclusion; study the people carefully;
  2. Don't allow "personalities" to cloud the issue; have the good of the cause of Christ in mind; be willing to forget self and personal ambitions."

Much of this material came from James D. Bales book entitled, "The Deacon And His Work."