

Biblical Principals Regarding Deacons and the Poor
(Passages from the NIV)

*Deacon - NT:1247
diakoneoo, diakonoo;

to be a servant, attendant, domestic; to serve, to wait upon

- 1. universally: Luke 22:26 to minister to one*
- 2. to wait at table and offer food and drink to the guests, Matt 4:11; 8:15*
- 3. to minister, i. e. supply food and the necessities of life: with the dative of person, Matt 25:44*

to relieve one's necessities (e. g. by collecting alms): Rom 15:25; to provide, take care of, distribute, the things necessary to sustain life, Acts 6:2

Asolutely, i. e. to take care of the poor and the sick, to serve as deacons: 1 Tim 3:10,13; 1 Peter 4:11

- 4. with the accusative of the thing, to minister, i. e. attend to, anything, that may serve another's interests: 2 Cor 8:19*

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The Office of Deacon Instituted

Acts 6:1-7

1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." 5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Qualifications for Deacons

1 Tim 3:8-13

8 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Can a Woman Function in the Role of a Deacon?

Acts 9:36

36 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor.

God's Heart for the Poor

Mark 14:7

7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me.

Luke 18:22

22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Gal 2:10

10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

James 1:27

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

The Responsibilities of the Poor to Help Themselves

1 Tim 5:3-16

3 Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. 5 The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. 6 But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. 7 Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. 8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, 10 and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. 11 As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. 12 Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. 13 Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. 14 So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. 15 Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan. 16 If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

2 Thess 3:10

10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

