



2017.6.18



Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. *—Psalm 145:11*
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. *—Joshua 22:5*

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Read Acts 6:1-7. Notice the tinder-box that **could have** exploded in the church: for one reason or another there was a cultural/linguistic correlation regarding **which** widows were being overlooked (v. 1). (It could have been as innocent as the signs telling widows where to get food were written in Hebrew.) How do you see godly, wise church leadership evident in the solution they arrived at? How do you see loving, humble church "followership" evident in this event? According to v. 7, what result came from this harmonious combination of leadership and followership?
- Review the chart of character traits for elders and deacons (found in the Sermon Summary). Which of those traits do you think were most necessary for achieving the harmonious solution of Acts 6?
Which of those traits do you see most evident in the Ministry Team Leaders (deacons) you know?
- Review the three descriptors of the church Paul uses in 1 Timothy 3:15 (see the Sermon Summary). Which one is dearest to you—and why?

Which one do you think TCC **best** reflects?

In which one do we **need to grow more**?

Need to develop a Servant-Heart?

For free biblical hope and help, write to

Counseling@tcc.org

Application-Challenge

- What needs do you observe at TCC that are going unmet? How can you be part of the solution?
- Remember that your church is your spiritual family. Act in love and service towards one another.
- We are the church of the Living God. Choose to live and worship, aware of God's presence.
- The church is the pillar and support of the truth. Courageously and lovingly stand for truth.
- If you would like to know God personally, contact us at <connect.tcc.org>. Scroll down to the Ministry Information Request section and mark the first or second checkbox. We look forward to helping!

Sermon Summary

Paul identifies two primary leadership roles in the church in 1 Timothy Chapter 3: elders and deacons. Last week, our focus was on elders. Today, we will be focusing on the office of deacons. We first see the role of deacon emerge in Acts Chapter 6. At this point, the church was still in its infancy, but its influence was spreading rapidly. One of the ministries of the church at Jerusalem involved the care of poor widows. Apparently, the Hellenistic or Greek-speaking widows in the church were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. To address this issue, the apostles selected seven men to handle the practical matters such as the distribution of food, so they could continue to focus exclusively on their calling as apostles. This is where the ministry of deacons began. At TCC, we call those who are serving in deacon-like roles “ministry heads.” They give leadership to ministries like the café, parking team, host team, men’s ministry, women’s ministry, community outreach, and our AWANA program. This text makes it clear that those who wish to serve as deacons must be men and women of high character. In fact, Paul laid down various criteria that potential deacons should meet. We see those criteria in chapter 3, beginning in verse 8: “Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued...” They must not be “two faced,” stating one thing to one person and something else to another. In other words, deacons must be honest and straightforward in their dealings with others. He goes on to say they must not be addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain. Please note that in these verses Paul doesn’t say anything about the duties of deacons. Deacons have no predefined set of tasks which apply to every church body. Deacons are servants, who faithfully and gratefully do whatever needs to be done. Paul’s focus here is not on the duties of deacons, but rather on their character. What is required is a combination of correct doctrine (right beliefs) and a pure life. In all, there are 15 requirements listed for elders and 12 for deacons. Both are to be people of high character. A point of interest is that whereas the office of elder is limited to men, it seems that the office of deacon is open to both men and women (v.11, Romans 16:1). Here at TCC, we have many women who serve in that role. Those who serve in this capacity—both men and women—should be honored because of the great impact they are having.

Elder / Overseer	Deacon / Servant
Above reproach	Above reproach
	Not double-tongued
Husband of one wife	Husband of one wife
Temperate	Temperate
Prudent	
Respectable	Person of dignity
Hospitable	
Able to teach	
Not addicted to wine	Not addicted to wine
Not pugnacious	
Gentle	
Peaceable	
Free from the love of money	Not fond of sordid gain
Manages his household well	Good manager of his children and household
Not a new convert	Tested
A good reputation with those outside the church	
	Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
	Not malicious gossips
	Faithful in all things

Notice the familial terms Paul uses to describe the church (v. 15):

[1] The Household of God This first description depicts the church as a family. At its essence, the church is not a business. At its heart, the local church is a family, and we should view one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have a common faith, common goals, common morality, and a common destiny. We are a family.

[2] The Church of the Living God Paul says that we are the church of the Living God. God is not dead...he is very much alive, and He is with us. In fact, one of the titles given to Jesus is ‘Immanuel’, which means “God with us.” The same God who raised Jesus from the dead is at work to redeem us from sin’s penalty and to transform us into the image of his Son. We serve a Living God who is active, powerful, and on the move.

[3] The Pillar and Support of the Truth Paul also describes the church as the pillar and support of the truth. Church, it is critical that we perceive ourselves this way. The church’s role is to hold up Scripture as a reference point and standard of God’s revealed truths. These truths are collectively referred to as “the Gospel.” The word gospel literally means good news. The good news is that there is a loving God out there who has created all of this, and he wants to have a relationship with us. As the church, we are stewards of this message and much more. In the Scriptures, God has revealed his nature and will for mankind. He has revealed who mankind is. We are creatures created in his image, both male and female.

Church, we are stewards of these gospel truths. We are to proclaim them and protect them (2 Timothy 4:2-4). Unfortunately, our culture has rejected Biblical truth and Biblical morality. Now is not the time for us to be silent. We are the pillar and support of the truth. We must not abandon our God-given role in the world.

What help does the Bible give us regarding motives for service? Let's see...

Monday—Motivated by **Obedience**: Read Deuteronomy 13:4

- In this verse, God is called “The LORD _____ God.” He **already is** our God; we don’t do these things **in order to become** his people. What is the significance of this truth?
- List the six things this passage teaches us to do; “You shall...” Which of those are easier for you to do? Which ones are harder? What role does obedience play in doing those things that we find more difficult—or even distasteful?
- God commands angels to do a variety of things—some of them delightful (as in announcing Christ’s birth; see Luke 2:8-14), some of them repulsive (such as investigating the depth of Sodom’s sin; see Genesis 18:20-21; 19:1-5). Can you imagine one of those angels refusing to serve? It’s unthinkable! (That’s what Satan did.)
- How then do you think that Christians can ever think that it’s OK to refuse to serve? How often do you decline to serve when asked or needed?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him **obediently**.

Tuesday—Motivated by **Gratitude**: Read 1 Samuel 12:24

- The word “for” at the mid-point of this verse means “because”—therefore the second half of this verse gives us our motive for serving. What is it?
- List the two things we are to do **because** of the great things he has done for us.
- What do you think it means to “serve him **in truth**”?
- What do you think it means to “serve him **with all your heart**”?
- What is the **greatest** thing God has ever done for you? **In what ways** is that greater than everything else he’s done for you? Have you ever consciously kept that great blessing in mind as a motivation for your service? Why or why not?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him **gratefully**.

Wednesday—Motivated by **Gladness**: Read Psalm 100:1-3

- What emotion permeates this passage?
- Are you surprised that serving is an out-flow of that emotion? Why or why not?
- When was a time you were tempted to serve resentfully? Did it occur to you to correct your motive? Why or why not? Did you succeed in correcting your motive? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Emotions are not under our **direct** control—but we can change our emotions by choosing to dwell on certain things (and not others). What does the psalmist choose to think about, in order to produce genuine joy and gladness within himself?
- Are you serving the Lord with gladness? Why or why not? What will you do now?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him **gladly**.

Thursday—Motivated by **Forgiveness**, not Guilt: Read Isaiah 6:1-8

- Put yourself in Isaiah’s sandals; what was he likely feeling in v. 1?
- It’s pretty clear what he was feeling in v. 5, as a result of what he observed the events of v. 2-4. What was it?
- Besides fear, Isaiah also clearly was feeling guilty (v. 5). Then, with the pronouncement of v. 7, what was he feeling?
- As Isaiah was feeling the relief and hopefulness of forgiveness, God asked a question (v. 8a). What was it?
- What was Isaiah’s immediate response (v. 8b) to God’s question?
- Why do you think that the relief of absolute forgiveness before a holy God motivated him for service?
- Do you **more often** serve out of a sense of guilt (“Others are serving—I guess I need to, too.”) or out of forgiveness?
- Has your forgiveness ever motivated you to serve in a difficult, demanding, or distasteful role?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him, **mindful of your forgiven status**.

Friday—Motivated by **Humility**: Read John 13:13-16

- Have you ever been asked to do something, but thought, “That’s below my dignity!” ?
- Is **anything** actually below your dignity? Why or why not? Defend your answer biblically.
- How does Jesus’ example and exhortation in John 13 correct our pride?
- In what areas of service are you currently chafing? Choose now to humble yourself in that area.
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve him **humbly**.

Saturday—Motivated by **Love**: Read 2 Corinthians 5:15 and Galatians 5:13

- What would you be willing to do out of love for Christ that you would **not** be willing to do for mere money?
- What would it take for love to turn an otherwise repugnant task into a delight for you?
- Is your love for Christ sufficient to motivate you to distasteful or unappreciated service? Why or why not?
- Write a brief prayer of repentance and faith, telling God that you wish to serve **as a love response to him**.