

The Character of Deacons (*and every other saint of God!*)

Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13

April 28, 2024

The intro before the Intro...

The Perilous Practice of Listless Listening

Familiarity can dull the senses of our capacity to full attentiveness on Sunday mornings, creating a habit of “half listening”. Events, our attitudes about others and/or situations surrounding us can do that as well. We must not give way to them. As soldiers in a war for the souls of God’s image bearers we must fight the good fight by being totally “where we are” and fully focused on what we are being fed each and every time we are here. Is it possible that we at times give ourselves over, unaware even, to such a listless listening that we believe we are actually fully attentive when in fact we may be absorbing only a fraction of the Sunday meals our spirits are being fed? That’s a good question that we have to ask ourselves.

All Called Out Ones are Called Out to Serve...

Diakonos: *one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master, a servant, attendant, minister; a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use.
Translated as Deacon 3 times; as minister, 7 times; as servant, 19 times (NASB)*

Ephesians 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Rms. 12:9-13 *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*

2 Cor. 5:14 *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, BUT FOR HIM who for their sake died and was raised.*

Matt.25: 31-40 *see screen*

Instant Character is an Oxymoron!

Adversity does not build character, it reveals it.

John Lane Allen

*According to Scripture, Christian character is a collection of personality traits that include truth, godliness, righteousness, love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, patience, perseverance, meekness, humility, self-control, compassion, thankfulness, forgiveness, contentment, and unity. It is based on faith in Christ, and is shaped by one's relationship with Him, and can be built and learned by following Him.... While all Christians are called by God to pursue the formation of Christian character, it is an essential qualification for leaders in Christ's church. The Apostle Paul set out numerous Christian characteristics as marks of men who are qualified to hold office in the local church. **Ligonier Ministries, Ligonier Editorial, Christian Character 8/2/2021***

Hebrews 12:11 *For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

Romans 5:1-5 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

**The greatest character trait of a diakoneo of God is Love. Love is the greatest of all! And love forgives all things, hopes all things, bears all things.
If I'm Long to forgive; I'm Short on character!**

Let us look on every brother or sister who tries or vexes us as a means of God's grace. Let us look on him or her as God's instrument for our purification, for our exercise of the humility of Jesus, our life, breathes within us. And let us have such faith in the all of God and the nothing of self, that we may, in God's power seek only to serve one another in love. **Andrew Murray, Humility, page 50**

All in Christ Serve; Some in Christ "Deacon"

From Acts 6:1-6

- These 7 did not nominate themselves. Their gifts were recognized.
- These 7 were all Hellenists/Greek converts to Judaism, now to Christ.
- These 7 coordinated the feeding program of well over 7,000 men
- These 7 had to choose others to serve with them in the feeding programs to all in need.
- The choosing of these 7 and the anointing they possessed for the office of deacon brought unity to the new believers so the elders could fulfill their calling

Acts 6:1-6 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith & of the Holy Spirit, & Philip, & Prochorus, and Nicanor, & Timon, and Parmenas, & Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, & they prayed & laid their hands on them.

1 Timothy 3:8-12 see screen

A compilation of Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3

- **A** Of good repute
- **A** Full of the Holy Spirit
- **A** Full of wisdom
- **I** Dignified
- **I** Not double-tongued
- **I** Not addicted to much wine
- **I** Not greedy for dishonest gain
- **I** Hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
- **I** Tested first to prove themselves blameless
- **I** Have a godly wife
- **I** Be married to one wife
- **I** Manage his/her children well
- **I** Manage his/her household well

King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Deacon of Deacons

Matthew 20:28 ...even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Philippians 2:5-8 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant¹ being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

John 13:1-5 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

We Only Go Around Once in Life, and Then...

No redo's, no reincarnations, no going back in time; it is appointed to man to die once (Heb.9:27)

2 Corinthians 5: 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

1 Cor. 3: 10-15 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as thru fire.

It is all by God's doing that we are saved and privileged to make His Name known in our serving. As the apostle Paul recognized he was who was by the grace of God, a deacon/deaconess recognizes that as well (but don't expect to be knocked to the ground and blinded as he was!)

It is all by God's doing as well that anyone is called to the office of deacon or elder. God is the One who calls and He is the One who qualifies. But we must listen attentively, submissively, to the voice of the One who is calling! God forbid we dismiss or actively reject His will for our calling.

CLOSING

Let us do as they did in Acts 6! Let us seek the Lord together and ask him to reveal when He will whom He has chosen at LCC who have the character and qualifications of a deacon or deaconess.