

*In these days, when spiritual authority is not only questioned but viciously attacked, it is good to define some principles.*

## **Deacons — Biblically Defined**

**Introduction:** While it is easy to mix metaphors and to transpose worldly values and appraisals into spiritual characteristics, we, however, must be careful that we do not allow natural logic to outweigh spiritual logistics.

While in the natural sense of things, men become skilled in their occupations through experience, their trade is the result of making a choice among many options. Men, for example, become mechanics by mechanic-ing. However, we must realize that men become pastors not due to experience but rather through a calling and that calling is and must be a calling from God.

**I.** Does this mean that experience is of no consequence in the life of a pastor? Of course not, but it is not the experience that makes a

pastor; it is the call of God that makes a man a pastor (or evangelist, etc.). A person becomes a member of the body of Christ by the grace of God when obeying Acts 2:38—that new convert has little or no experience to qualify themselves as a saint-of-God—but they are one nevertheless. In like manner, a man “becomes” a part of the five-fold ministry by the grace of God’s calling. “And who He calls He also equips”—as the saying goes.

Experience is a valuable commodity in the life of a man of God when its teachings are God-ordained and are received by a humble heart and an obedient spirit. Experience stimulates the ministerial calling of a man of God—it becomes the sunlight that energizes the already planted seed—it is the rainfall that helps facilitate the growth of the roots of the fledging plant. Experience aids in the adorning of a preacher’s life and ministry that otherwise might exhibit a degree of plainness.

Experience is both the coarse file and also the polishing cloth, which with sure strokes either abrasively cuts away imperfections or shines the dull spots into a glimmer of glory in the ministry

of a man called of God to preach the gospel. First comes the call—then comes the experience.

**II.** The spiritual ministerial flow, in this dispensation anyway, is that all pastors spring forth from pastors. In other words, God calls men while under the authority of a pastor (much like how God makes chicks from eggs under a hen—no egg leaves the nest under its own power—a transformation is required).

This transforming time under a pastor for a man called of God is “deaconship.” A man called of God to the ministry is not first called as a part of the five-fold ministry, but rather he serves as a deacon under the authority and guidance of a pastor.

**III.** It is this deaconship interval where certain qualifications and requirements are to be met, according to 1Tim 3:10-13, “And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. Even so *must their* wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used

the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” It would seem only natural that since men are birthed under the authority and guidance of a pastor that that pastor would remain a vital influence in the life of “his son(s)” in the gospel.

**IV.** We cannot help but notice that the qualifications of a deacon closely parallel that of a bishop, with the exception of “how shall he take care of the church of God?” This noted exception says so very much concerning the position of the deacon—mainly that he is not yet in a position of authority over a church because he is still under the authority of his pastor.

**V.** Notice also that these men are to “first be proved.” “Proved” here according to Barnes; “the meaning is, that they should have had an opportunity of making their character known, and should have gained such respect for their piety, and their other qualifications, that there would be a reason to believe that they would perform the functions of the office well.” “Proved” contains the ideal of the testing of metal (See 1 Tim 3:10).

**VI.** These men, as is also pointed out in 1 Tim. 3, which are under the authority of their pastors, must have used “the office of a deacon” well.” The word “used” signifies a time element—a temporary position—a time where the deacon is receiving training under the guidance of his pastor. When God calls men into His ministry, it will be from this deacon pool, and it will be from these men who have “a good report” from those within (the church) and those without (the secular world)—it will be from these men who have made themselves accountable to God and their pastors.

There is no such thing as a preacher w/o a call — that is, at least in God's kingdom.

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