

The Body of Christ: Everyone Has a Part

What Deacon's Must Do

Review:

Putting Flesh on the Bones: The Relationships of the Local Church

Members (Spiritual Growth & Discipling relationships)

Deacons: (1) Sharpen Biblical Focus (2) Communicate

Elders (1) Sharpen Biblical Focus (2) Communicate

What Deacon's Must Do ¹

Job description

1. Spotting and Meeting Tangible Needs

"A church without biblically functioning deacons will be perpetually distracted from its central mission of making disciples (Matt. 28:18-20)."

"...diaconal work through the centuries has focus chiefly on tangible needs, particularly caring for the poor and vulnerable."

2. Protecting and Promoting Church Unity

Matthew 5:9; proverbs 12:20; psalm 34:14; proverbs 19:11

Mark Dever "...you don't want people serving as deacons who are unhappy with your church. The deacon should never be the ones who complain the loudest or jar the church with their actions or attitudes. Quite the opposite!... You don't want to nominate deacons who don't recognize the importance of the ministry of preaching and teaching, but people who are anxious to protect it. More broadly, you want the most supportive people in the church to serve as the deacons. So when you're considering who might serve as a deacon, look for people with gifts of encouragement." (Mark Dever, *Understanding Church Leadership, Church Basics*, ed. Jonathan Leeman (Nashville: B&H, 2016), 13, 14.)

3. Serving and Supporting the Ministry of the Elders

"... Godly Deacons in a healthy church will increasingly say, "we serve at the pleasure of the elders." This language is not authoritarian, for... a church's elders are finally accountable to the church's members. (And even more fundamentally, of course, the elders serve at the pleasure of King Jesus.)"

¹ I am again indebted to Matt Smethurst's book "*Deacons*," this lesson from cpt. 4 – "*The Breakdown: What Deacons Must Do*" All quotes are from this book unless otherwise noted.

“Alexander Strauch has argued, I think persuasively, that deacons are best understood as “formal assistance to the elders.”” (Alexander Strauch, Paul’s Vision for the Deacons (Colorado Springs: Lewis & Roth, 2017). See chapter 3 “*Deacons, Assistants to the Elders*” in particular.)

“Strauch notes, “In recent years scholars have shown that there is a wider linguistic range of meaning of the diakon- word group than previously acknowledged.” It is not limited to connotations of menial labor or table service, in other words. “In many contexts,” Strauch writes, “the idea is that of a subordinate carrying out an assignment on a superior’s behalf and having full authority to execute the superior’s delegated task.”” (Strauch, Paul’s Vision for the Deacons, 53–54.)

Two Key Differences between Elders & Deacons

1. Elders must be able to teach. (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
2. Elders are not overseers or rulers.

“...deacons are nowhere in the New Testament described as overseers or rulers.”

“**Jamie Dunlop’s framework is helpful:**

“Elders lead ministry.
Deacons facilitate ministry.
The congregation does ministry.””

Healthy models today

1. Mercy Ministers
2. A Team of Leading Servants (Our Model)
3. Roll-Specific Ministry Mobilizers (e.g. Third Avenue Baptist Church)

What tasks here at RBC need “Deacon/Deaconess” help?

(Next Lesson: Our Deacon/Deaconess Board)