

"Deacons In Like Manner" #2

"... must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a good conscience. And let these first be proved, then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless ... let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have served well as deacons, gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12).

Deacons are to be grave, sober, and serious. They are not to be *"double-tongued."* This tells us that deacons must be truthful in speech, not speaking one thing to one party, another to another person. Those who present "one face" to one person and a different face to another are called "two-faced." This the deacon is not to be.

Deacons must not be given *"to much wine."* Some see an implication there which was not intended. Some say, "The deacons may drink a little, but not much." The apostle condemns drunkenness; he does not condone "social drinking." In character deacons are to be no different than elders who are not to be given to wine.

Further, deacons are not to be greedy of *"filthy lucre."* *"Filthy lucre"* is ill-gotten gain. Because he was likely to be entrusted with funds not his own, he must have shown he was honest and trustworthy that he might deal properly with the funds of others.

Deacons are to hold the mystery of the faith in a good conscious. He must be thoroughly persuaded that Jesus is the Son of God; a firm believer in His death for man's sins; convicted that He was raised from the dead the third day.

Like elders, deacons must not be polygamists but he must have a wife. He is to rule his house well, just as elders must. Unlike elders, however, no qualification is given that his children are to be "believing," implying that the deacon is younger in age than elders are.

Deacons are to be proven. This means that he is subject to examination before he is appointed, just as elders must be. How the chosen of the seven proceeded, we are not told, but that they were *"chosen," "looked out from among the congregation"* indicates that decisions were made of the status of life of those seven servants.

By serving well deacons gain to themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith of Christ. Perhaps Paul means by this that by serving well as a deacons, one prepares himself to serve ultimately as an elder. On the other hand, it is possible that he simply means that by serving well, deacons gain honor, credibility and respect. The office of a deacon allows one to be stronger and bolder in the gospel of Christ.

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