

## “A Call to Build”

<sup>10</sup> By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. <sup>11</sup> For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

**1Corinthians 3:10-13**

## “A Call to Study”

<sup>11</sup> Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

**Acts 17:11**

## “A Call to Serve”

<sup>25</sup> Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— <sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**Matthew 20:25-28**

Tonight, we will discuss the word Diakonos in three locations:

### **Philippians 1:1 - 1 Timothy 3:8-12 - Romans 16:1**

My main resource for this discussion comes from Alexander Strauch book “Paul’s Vision for the Deacons”

Diakonos appears 21 times in Paul’s letter. ESV transliterates Diakonos (3) times as Deacons.

### **Philippians 1:1 - 1 Timothy 3:8 & 12**

Diákonoi is what is used, which is the plural form in reference to certain church officials which is associated with the overseers.

"diakonos" (διάκονος) Literally translates “servant”

Deacons are chosen from among those with the spiritual gifts of service, helps, or administration.

However,

The word “Deacon” is a transliteration not a translation of this word (diakonos).

When you go from one language to another... With very different alphabets it can be challenging to make that shift. So, what we typically see in biblical translations, it is it’s either one of two ways.

**Transliteration** focuses on the sound

**Translation** focuses on the meaning

### For example:

We take the Hebrew word הַנּוֹקְחָה or הַנּוֹקְחָה (Hănuḱā): and transliterate it to hanukkah

And then we use English letters so we can pronounce and spell in our English language. Hanukkah means "dedication". It's named after the rededication of the Second Temple in the second century BCE.

The actual translation is "Festival of Lights". Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish festival of light that takes place in November or December. It's celebrated with nightly menorah lighting, special prayers, and fried foods.

This is common in the cross-over of these two languages. Also happens in the New Testament when we go from Greek to English.

### Why, is this important?

When we transliterate, we could lose some accuracy in terms of meaning in the word in the church.

The greek word for "baptize" is baptizo (βαπτίζω).

The English word baptize is the transliteration of Baptizo

The translation is to immerse or to plunge.... In order to wash and purify.

It's not sprinkle or pour water. The actual Greek words in New Testament for sprinkle or pour is a totally different word.

**To sprinkle : paspalizo** or **To pour:** The Greek word for "pour" is cheo. Other Greek words for "pour" include katacheó, pros-cheo, and spendó

Dr. Clarence D. Agan III completed a lexical study (Diakono, Diakonoι, Diakonos)

700 word uses from secular, Jewish, and Christian sources dating from 6 century BC to early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. He proposes 4 uses:

1. **Table Attendants** – waiter, server, attendant with the duties of serving food and drink, waiting on tables, meal service, or preparation of a meal. **Luke 17:8, John 2:9**
2. **Domestic Attendants**- domestic servant, one who tends to the needs of the master **Matthew 25:44, John 12:26**
3. **Communication or Delivery** - officially commissioned messenger. Send message or item on behalf of another. **Romans 16:1, 2 Corinthians 3:3, Ephesians 3:7-9**
4. **Agency or Instrumentality** – one who carries out the will of another or task on behalf of another. **Acts 19:20, Romans 13:4, 2 Corinthians 11:15**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> addition of the A Greek lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature, list one entry for the word Diakonos- one who gets something done at the behest of a superior, assistant to someone.

The entry for the abovementioned verses is attendant, assistant or aid.

There are multiple forms of this word in the text that are later translated in some of these following texts that we will mention.

More than 100 times when we see some form of (diakonos) it's translated as servant or service.

We have (3) notable exceptions:

**Philippians 1:1** diakonos singled out with the elders ... most likely from a specific group or office in the church. Not just a servant but an official servant

**1 Timothy 3:8-13** used 4 times

**Romans 16:1** (Phoebe a deacon?) I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae.

**1 Timothy 3:11** In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

Paul is the only one to appoint deacons and only found in 1 Timothy  
What is the requirement of character to make these official appointments to this office in the church.

The Bible mentions deacons in **1 Timothy 3:8-13** and **Philippians 1:1**. These passages describe the qualifications and responsibilities of deacons as church officers.

Here is the list of qualifications:

- Deacons must have a high moral character and hold fast to the faith
- They must be dignified, not double-tongued, and not addicted to much wine ( speech is important. We want less drama no more.
- They must not be greedy for dishonest gain
- They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
- Manage their own family well... don't want them to be over serving
- They must be tested first and prove themselves blameless

**Some common examples:**

**Luke 4:39** Peter's mother in-law serves

**John 2:5** waiters serve wine at wedding

**Acts 6** serving and waiting on tables for widows

**1 Timothy 4:6** a good servant (will obey Paul)

**1 Corinthians 12:5** varieties of service

**2 Corinthians 9:1** service ministry of the saints

**2 Corinthians 5:18** service (ministry of reconciliation)

**So what can we conclude?**

There is clearly more than one school of thought when it comes to this word Deacon or Diakanos. Most scholars will agree that there is more than one meaning as seen in the above text. Given the context at which the word Diakonos is used, one can deduce which one of the 4 commonly held meanings by today's biblical scholars.

Bottom line, in Jesus own words from the book of Matthew, he came to serve, and we are to do likewise. How do we serve, that is what is open for debate.

In reference to **1 Timothy 3** scripture, we need to keep in mind what the overall message was with regards to this letter. Paul wrote to Timothy to discuss the crisis that was happening at the time in the church in Ephesus.

### **1 Timothy 1:1- 6**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, To Timothy my true son in faith:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk.

The Elders and Deacons had apparently failed to lead effectively. To which Paul told Timothy here are the qualifications for these two offices in the church. So, one can infer that there weren't just simply servants who waited on tables that were, called "Deacons". This text would lend the word meaning to an agency of some sort.

And some will go as far as saying, we already have plenty of people serving now in their respective ministries, such, worship, children's ministry, security, benevolence, CR, care & compassion, etc, etc, etc. We just didn't give it a official recognition.

### **Romans 12:4- 8**

<sup>4</sup>For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup>We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; <sup>7</sup>if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup>if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Regardless of how a word Diakonos is translated, the work of the ministry has many needs and requires many hearts, minds, and hands. The body of Christ is large indeed. When Paul encourages Timothy at the beginning of Chapter 3 he states plainly. "Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. And he then closes out his discussion regarding Elders and deacons in verse 13, those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

The body need of believers needs help. We have almost 400 members in our fellowship. The needs are many both in and outside our fellowship. Please pray, fast, meditate, search your heart, ask God to make it clear to how you can use your God given gifts to help edify his church in this region.