

**LIVING FAITH CHAPEL OF SPC**  
Doctrine of the Church: Church Officers

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

- I. Jesus, the Great Deacon
  - A. “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but *to serve*, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45; cf. Rom. 15:8).
  - B. “When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick” (Matt. 14:14).
  - C. To be a deacon is to be like Jesus.
- II. Scriptural Basis for the Office of Deacon
  - A. Admittedly, there are only a few passages that refer to the office of deacon.
  - B. The word “deacon” is a transliteration of the Greek word *διακονος*, which means “servant/minister.”
  - C. General sense
    1. Jesus said, “But whoever would be great among you must be your *servant* (*διακονος*)” (Matt. 20:26).
    2. “As each has received a gift, use it to *serve* (*διακονουντες*) one another” (1 Pet. 4:10).
  - D. Specific sense
    1. Prominent church leaders (2 Cor. 6:4; Eph. 3:7; 1 Cor. 3:5; 1 Tim. 4:6; Col. 1:7)
    2. The Office of Deacon (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13; 1 Pet. 4:11)
- III. Duties
  - A. Scripture
    1. Helps the weak – e.g. widows, orphans, poor (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 16:1-2)
    2. Gives generously to those in need (Acts 11:29; 12:25; Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13)
    3. Acts of mercy and compassion (Rom. 12:8)
    4. Ministers to physical needs – e.g. hunger, sickness, clothing (Matt. 25:44; Luke 8:3; Acts 6:1-5)
    5. Collects and distributes resources for the needy (Acts 6:1-5)
    6. Welcomes strangers (Matt. 25:44)
    7. Visits prisoners (Matt. 25:44)
    8. Serves the saints (Acts 11:29; 12:25; 1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13)

B. The Post-Apostolic Age<sup>1</sup>

1. In *The Shepherd of Hermas* a warning was made to deacons who were robbing widows and orphans of their due and embezzling the funds which they had collected. This proves that the first deacons were assigned to the task of providing for the poor from the contributions of the church.
2. In Polycarp's *Epistle to the Philippians* he spoke of a deacon who had stolen money which belonged to the poor.
3. In the *Book of Clement*, deacons were to care for the sick, strangers, widows, and orphans.

C. PCA Book of Church Order (Chap. 9)

1. "The office is one of *sympathy* and *service*, after the example of the Lord Jesus." (9-1)
2. "It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation." (9-2)

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<sup>1</sup> Peter DeJong. *The Ministry of Mercy Today*, 45-47.