

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

THE OFFICE OF DEACON (cont'd)

IV. Qualifications

A. Character (counts!)

1. “Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of *good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom*, whom we will appoint to this duty.” (Acts 6:3)
2. “Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.” (1 Tim. 3:8-9)
3. PCA sums it up in this way, “To the office of deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.” (BCO 9-3)
4. Notice it says nothing about age or popularity!

B. Family Life

1. “Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.” (1 Tim. 3:12)

C. Can women be deacons?¹ *At LFC, we believe so.*

1. “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant (διακονον) of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.” (Rom. 16:1-2)
 - a. The word servant (διακονον) appears to be used in *an official sense*.
 - i. Paul describes how she fulfilled her diaconal office. She was a “helper/patron” to many including Paul.
 - ii. Paul formally requests recognition for Phoebe, and full support of her activities. To function as a church officer requires public recognition.
 - iii. The present participle of the verb “to be” is regularly used to identify an office (John 11:49; Acts 18:12; 24:10)
 - iv. The fact that Paul adds the church’s name in which she comes from suggests she held an office. Otherwise, we might read “servant of Christ.”

¹ Edmund Clowney. *The Church*, 232-233.

2. “Their wives/women (Γυναικαη) likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.” (1 Tim. 3:8)
 - a. Γυναικαη appears to suggest “women” (or deaconesses) as opposed to “deacons’ wives.”
 - i. Why would Paul address the wives of deacons but not the wives of bishops/elders?
 - ii. There is no possessive pronoun in the Greek text.
 - iii. The word “likewise”...
 - a) Signals that these women were under the same requirements as male deacons.
 - b) Suggests Paul had three distinct categories of servants in mind: bishop-elder, male deacon, and female deacon.

D. Although the office of deacon and elder are different in nature, is it possible for a deacon to become an elder? *Yes!*

1. According to Acts 6-8, Stephen and Philip were both appointed as deacons, but later exhibited extraordinary gifts of preaching, a ministry associated with the office of elder.