

***Redeemer Church's
Position Statement on Deacons***

[The following section has been excerpted from Redeemer Church's Constitution & Bylaws]

Section 5: DEACONS:

(a) Composition and Calling. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of individuals in the church.

(b) Qualifications. Deacons and nominees for deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible [see 1 Timothy 3:8-12].

(c) Responsibilities. The deacons shall inform and be ready to assist the elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include items such as the following:

- (1) administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;
- (2) the greeting and welcoming ministries of the church;
- (3) assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel;
- (4) assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church;
- (5) caring for and maintaining the church properties;
- (6) administering the business affairs of the church that pertain to its material assets.

(d) Organization. The elders shall organize the deacons however it is determined to best achieve the mission of the church. The elders may designate any specific deacon or group of deacons to specialize in some particular diaconal function.

[The following "Deacon Ministry Philosophy" is a synopsis of Mark Dever's treatment on deacons in his book, *A Display of God's Glory*—taken from the website of Capital Hill Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.]:

Deacons are to care for the physical needs of the church. Read Acts 6:1. Some of the Christians "were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food." The root of the word deacon means minister or servant, and particularly was used of table-waiters at the time, or of various types of service, usually either physical or financial. In Acts

6:2, the Apostles characterized this service as “waiting on tables,” or literally “deaconing tables.” This is the first aspect of deacon ministry – meeting physical needs. It is important to note that the deacons in Acts 6 likely didn’t do all the deaconing themselves; rather these few deacons probably organized many other Christians in the church to ensure that the work would be done.

Deacon ministry...is centered on the unity of the body. Really, this is the goal for all the gifts that God’s Spirit gives to His church—to build one another up and encourage each other (e.g., Rom. 1:11-12). Paul says to the Corinthians that God’s gifts are “for the common good,” (1 Cor. 12:4-7, 12) He exhorts these early Christians, “Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church,” (1 Cor. 12:12). Edifying and uniting the church is especially the ministry of the deacons as we see it in Acts 6. Therefore, deacons are not set apart to advocate their cause, or argue for their corners like representatives or lobbyists. Instead, they are to come on behalf of the whole—to serve particular needs, yes—but with a sense of the whole, a sense that their work contributes to the health of the whole.

In Acts 6:3, the Apostles seem to acknowledge that caring for physical needs was a responsibility that the church, and therefore in some sense they themselves, had. But they said in 6:3 that they would turn this responsibility over to another group within the church. In that sense, these deacons were not only helping the body as a whole, but in so doing, they were helping to support these apostles/elders, whose main obligations lay elsewhere.

So the deacons were not a separate power block in the church. They were servants who served the church as a whole by helping with the responsibilities that the main teachers could not perform. Deacons supported the teachers of the Word in their ministry. They were fundamentally encouragers and supporters of the ministry of the elders. If this is the case, then it is the most supportive people in the church who should serve the church as the deacons. We should look for gifts of encouragement, so that more, not fewer, people will be blessed by their service.

– Mark Dever, *A Display of God’s Glory*, pp.9-12

The fact that deacons must meet certain requirements and be publicly examined before they serve as deacons (1 Tim. 3:10) reveals that they do exercise official responsibilities of public trust. Therefore, the qualifications for deacons include integrity in personal character, spiritual life, and family living (1 Tim. 3:8-13). The diaconate is not a teaching office, nor is it a oversight or governing office. Instead, it is an office or work of service.

Elders serve in the office of pastoral oversight, while deacons serve in the office of physical ministry to the needy. Though both are servants, their primary areas of responsibility are distinct. While the primary responsibility of elders is the spiritual care of the congregation through the ministry of the Word and prayer, the primary responsibility of deacons is to provide care for the practical, material needs of the people.