What Is A Deacon?

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. To get this series started, let’s first focus on the meaning of the word deacon, and what that indicates about not only their **work** but also their **qualifications**.

**BODY:**

1. Definition of the Word Deacon
   1. The English word *deacon* is translated from the Greek word *diakonos* (30x).
      1. Vine: “primarily denotes a servant, whether doing servile work, or as an attendant rendering free service, without particular reference to its character.”
      2. Thayer: “one who executes the commands of another; a servant, an attendant, a minister.”
   2. *Diakonos* has both a general usage and a specific usage.
      1. When used generally, it is translated servant or minister. It is used to describe…
         1. Jesus (“a **servant** to the circumcision”—Rom. 15:8).
         2. The apostles (“**ministers** of the new covenant”--2 Cor. 3:6)
         3. Timothy, an evangelist (“a good **minister** of Jesus Christ”--1 Tim. 4:6).
         4. Civil authorities (“God’s **minister** to you for good”—Rom. 13:4).
         5. Phoebe, a godly woman (“**servant** of the church in Cenchrea”—Rom. 16:1).
         6. All faithful followers of Christ (“if anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My **servant** will be also”--John 12:26).
      2. When used in a specific or special sense, it is translated deacon.
         1. Read Philippians 1:1—obviously talking about a distinct group of servants.
         2. All Christians are ministers or servants, but deacons are specially appointed servants. They have to meet specific qualifications (**1 Tim. 3:8-13**).
2. So a deacon is a servant, but what makes a good servant?
   1. Here are some of the good **qualities** a servant possesses.
      1. He is humble, and so he will “look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4). He is not here “to be served, but to serve” (Mark 10:45). In other words, he has the mind of a servant, which is really the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5-11).
         1. “Make me a servant, take all my pride, for I would be lowly, humble inside. Giving to others with all that I do, in love for my brother, make me like You” (*Servant’s Song*).
      2. He is willing to take orders (“obey those who rule over you, and be submissive”—Hebrews 13:17). Remember Thayer’s definition: “one who executes the commands of another…” When assigned tasks by the elders, deacons should be eager and willing to perform these tasks.
      3. He will promptly and faithfully carry out all his duties (Acts 12:25; Col. 4:17), even those that *seem* unimportant (“he who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much”—Luke 16:10). A good servant can be trusted to get the job done and done right (notice the kind of men appointed to duties in Nehemiah 7:1-2; 13:13). Some people are good at getting a job started, but they have a hard time finishing it. A faithful servant will complete his work   
         (2 Corinthians 8:11), even if it involves personal sacrifice (example of Epaphroditus—Philippians 2:25-30; example of Paul—Romans 15:25;   
         Acts 24:17; Acts 20:22-24; 21:10-14).
      4. He is not “wise in his own opinion” (Rom. 12:16), which enables him to work well with others. He understands and applies the command, “be submissive to one another” (1 Pet. 5:5).
      5. He is thankful for the ability God gives him, and he uses it (“if anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies”—1 Pet. 4:11).
   2. A good servant will be **motivated** by…
      1. A desire to please God, not men (Matt. 6:1-18—Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for doing their good deeds to be seen by men).
      2. The good he can do his brethren, not only in the specific things he does, but also in the example he sets. His zeal can stir up others to be more zealous (“your zeal has stirred up the majority”—2 Cor. 9:1-2).
      3. The knowledge that when he ministers to his brethren, he is ministering to Christ (“inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me”—Matt. 25:34-46).
      4. By the good he can do for himself (“for those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith…”—  
         1 Tim. 3:13).
      5. By the reward he will receive from the Lord for faithful service (“God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister”—Heb. 6:10).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. May the Lord say to all who serve as deacons (and really, to all of us), “Well done, good and faithful **servant**…” (Matthew 25:21).