

Qualifications of Deacons

By Mark Mayberry

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1 Timothy 3:13 ... 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. (KJV)

1 Timothy 3:13 ... 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. (NKJV)

1 Timothy 3:13 ... 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (NASB)

For they that have used the office of a deacon well (KJV); For those who have served well as deacons (NKJV & NASB)

The term “office” is used twice in the KJV (1 Tim. 3:10, 13). The deaconship is not simply an honorary position. Like the eldership, the office of a deacon is a place of work, service and responsibility. However, what is the work of deacons? Deacons assist the elders in carrying out the work of the church. By not being bogged down with important but incidental matters, an eldership can focus on the spiritual care of the local congregation (Acts 6:1-7; 20:28-32; Rom. 12:3-8; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Specific responsibilities might include maintenance on the church building, ordering classroom material and tracts, taking care of the Lord’s Table, serving as treasurer, passing out Visitors Cards, arranging for the monthly schedule of services, carrying out benevolent work, providing food/care for the sick and needy, looking after the physical needs of those who are supported by the church, etc.

Purchase to themselves a good degree (KJV); Obtain for themselves a good standing (NKJV); Obtain for themselves a high standing (NASB)

The Greek adverb *kalōs*, occurring 37x in the NT, refers to that which is done “well.” BDAG say it (1) pertains to meeting relatively high standards of excellence or expectation, fitly, appropriately, in the right way, splendidly; (2) pertains to meeting expectations of personal excellence, commendably, in a manner free from objection; (3) pertains to being of advantage, in a manner that is beneficial/acceptable, well; (4) pertains to being in accord w. a standard, rightly, correctly...”

Jesus Christ does all things well (Mark 7:37), including His actions (Matt. 12:12), His answers (Mark 12:28, 32; Luke 20:39; John 4:17; 18:23), and His assertions (John 13:13).

In like manner, disciples must do good (Luke 6:27), in conduct (Acts 25:10; Heb. 13:18), in decisions (1 Cor. 7:37, 38), in service (3 John 6), in sharing (Phil. 4:14), in submission (Luke

6:47-48), and in the giving and receiving of instruction (Acts 10:33; 2 Pet. 1:19). This term is similarly descriptive of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:4, 12, 13, 17).

The Greek word *bathmos*, translated “degree” (KJV) or “standing” (NASB), occurs only here. Thomas defines it as “a step, degree” [898]. BDAG say it refers to “(1) a structured rest for the foot marking a stage in ascending or descending, step; (2) a stage in intellectual or spiritual progress.”

The Christian life should be one of development, growth and progress (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 16:10-13; 19:11-27; Phil. 3:13-16; Heb. 6:1-3).

And great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (KJV & NKJV); and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus (NASB).

The Greek adjective *polus*, translated “great,” occurs frequently, and is quantitative, signifying “much, many” [Thomas 4183].

The Greek word *parrēsia*, translated “boldness” (KJV) or “confidence” (NASB), occurs 31x in the NT. Thomas defines it as “freedom of speech, confidence” [3954]. BDAG say it describes “(1) a use of speech that conceals nothing and passes over nothing, outspokenness, frankness, plainness; (2) ‘Openness’ sometimes develops into openness to the public, before whom speaking and actions take place; (3) a state of boldness and confidence, courage, confidence, boldness, fearlessness, esp. in the presence of persons of high rank; (a) in association with humans; (b) in relation to God.”

This word occurs 31x in the NT (Mark 8:32; John 7:4, 13, 26; 10:24; 11:14, 54; 16:25, 29; 18:20; Acts 2:29; 4:13, 29, 31; 28:31; 2 Cor. 3:12; 7:4; Eph. 3:12; 6:19; Phil. 1:20; Col. 2:15; 1 Tim. 3:13; Phile. 8; Heb. 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35; 1 John 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14).

This word may refer to plainness of speech (Mark 8:32; John 10:24; 11:14; 16:25, 29). It may also identify that which is done in public (John 7:4, 13, 26; 11:54; 18:20; Acts 28:31; Col. 2:15).

We must have confidence in preaching (Acts 2:29-33; 4:8-13, 29-31; 2 Cor. 3:12; Eph. 6:18-20). We must have confidence in Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:11-13; Heb. 4:16). We must have confidence in prayer (1 John 3:21-22; 5:14-15). We should have confidence in fellow-Christians (2 Cor. 7:2-4; Phile. 8-16; 1 Tim. 3:13). Influence is a by-product of character. Fidelity to their office, however humble may be their duties, will secure for deacons high respect and admiration in the church. This is their reward.

Nonetheless, let us recognize the conditional nature of such confidence (Heb. 3:5-6; 10:19-25, 35-39). Do you have confidence in living and dying (Phil. 1:19-26; 1 John 2:28; 4:17)?