

The Duties of a Deacon, 2

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, July 7, 2019

We are in the book of First Timothy. And as you're turning there, the attribute of God that I want to talk to you about this morning is the attribute of love. I want to talk to you about the attribute of love, or we might say service because the two go together. God serves people because He loves them. You see the connection there. He helps them because He cares. If you think about it, God doesn't have to do that, He doesn't have to help anybody. He would be perfectly content to spend eternity all alone with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, never needing anyone. But He helps us because He loves us. He doesn't spend eternity all alone because He cares. It was His love that drove Him to be with us, it was His love that brought Him down from heaven.

It's for this reason that God's love has been called “the queen of the graces” because all the other graces flow from this, they all start right here. We know about God's sovereignty and His mercy and His righteousness all through His love for us. Love has also been called the Lord's most endearing attribute because it endears us to Him. Nothing attracts us to God like His love.

In fact, the word “love” appears more than a thousand times in the Bible. It appears more than a thousand times more than truth, more than holiness, because the Bible is a love story from beginning to end. From start to finish, the Bible is all about how much God loved us. The theme of the Bible is simple. If you want to make it really down to earth, the theme is this, God created a people, the people rejected Him and in love, He pursued them. That's what the Bible is all about. That is the Bible in a nutshell. God didn't punish them, God didn't destroy us when we sinned. (He could have, He certainly had the right to.) But instead, He chased after us for thousands of years. There's no other God like that. Read the Quran and tell me where Allah did that for the Muslims. That's not the God in the Quran. Read the Hindu religion and tell me what the Hindu gods, all the multitude and panoply of gods in the Hindu religion, tell me where they chased after their creation. This is the kind of God we have. We have a God who chases after people, we have a God of second chances.

Because of this, Jesus said, there are two great commandments in the Bible. And what are they? Love God and love your neighbour. Why? Because that's what God does. Why are those commandments important? Because that is what God is all about - loving others. Jesus also said, “The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.” Jesus was all about service.

I mentioned a moment ago that we all like to find God in nature. We all like to go out in the woods and experience His presence there. But the best place to experience the presence of God is with other people. We've all known people that say, “Well, I'm not coming to church Sunday morning because I'm going to go worship God out by the lake.” Well, you can worship God out by the lake, absolutely, but not like you can here. You need to be with others because that is what God does. God is with others.

When the evangelist D. L. Moody died, his son told the story of a man called Old Paul who worked for his family. He was from a French background and he barely spoke English and he was a drunk. For years, Old Paul had spent his life giving in to alcohol. But D. L. Moody befriended him and paid him to work in his garden. And over time, through his influence, through Moody's influence, Old Paul became sober. He won his battle with alcohol. And Moody's son said this about him. He said,

For years Old Paul would not give up the church of his ancestors [or the Roman Catholic Church], but he always came to our church. For whatever reason, you couldn't keep him away. And when someone asked him "Why?", Old Paul's answer was always the same, he would say in broken English, "Moody, he a good man. He loved me." I don't know if Old Paul ever became a Protestant or not, but if he did, it was not on account of my father's preaching to him, it was on account of his loving him. If he ever became a believer, it was not because he was talked into the kingdom, but because he was loved into it.

My friends, that's what God does. That's the way He operates. He loves people into the kingdom. He loves them into heaven, which is what I want to talk to you about this morning.

This morning I want to talk to you about an office in the church that was created simply to love people. That's what it does. That's all this office is about. I want to talk to you about an office that was created simply to serve - the office of deacon. If you're joining us for the first time this morning, we just finished a series on the book of Titus called the "How to Plant a Church" series because that's what the book of Titus is about. It tells us how to plant a church, how to get it started and off the ground. But for whatever reason, Titus did not mention the deacons in that book. He talked about the elders but he left the deacons out. So, I thought it would be good before we finish this series, to go back and say a few words about them so we could get our mind around this office as well.

I told you last time as well the Lord gave the church two offices in the New Testament, or three depending on how you look at it. He gave us three positions: the office of elder, the office of deacon and the office of deaconess. There's a little discrepancy as to whether there are deaconesses or not, and we're going to talk about that next week. We'll spend an entire sermon on that. But the Lord gave us three offices, which is different from the way He did things in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, they had multitude of offices, they had offices everywhere. But in the New Testament, the Lord gave us three.

And as we saw last time, deacons are the servants of the church. That is what they do. They put the love of God into practice. It says a lot about the nature of God that He would create an office just to do this, just to love people. The word "deacon" actually comes from the Greek word *diákonos* which means "servant" because that is their job description. Deacons serve people. They help to meet their needs. To say it another way, deacons are the lovers of the church. They love people into the kingdom. I told you last time about the man who had just become a deacon. He had just been placed in office, so he asked his pastor, "What do I do now?" And the pastor said, "Well, you're a deacon, go deak." He said, "You're a servant, go serve. Don't stand here

talking to me. Go find a need and meet it.” And that's what these guys do. And we saw this in our sermon last week on the book of Acts. We saw how they did this in the early church.

But this week, we want to look at another book that talks about this office, and that is the book of First Timothy. And if you want to look in First Timothy 3, we're going to read verses 8 through 13 together. It's our passage for this morning. If you want to look in first Timothy 3, we're going to read verses 8 through 13. But here's where we read again about this particular position in the church. Verse 8 says,

8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 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.

Just a little background on that passage. First Timothy is a book that we haven't looked at before, but it's one of the pastoral Epistles. It's one of the letters in the New Testament that were written to pastors along with Second Timothy and Titus, instead of to the church as a whole. Most of the books were written to churches - plural. They were written to whole congregations. But these books were written to the leaders. And as such, they tell us a lot about how to run the church. They tell us how to set it up.

And so, for instance, in First Timothy chapter 1 (if you want to look over there) this is what Paul tells him what to teach in the church. He starts it off by telling him what to tell people. If you look in verses 3 through 5, this is one of the instructions he gives him. He says,

As I urged you upon my departure from Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies...but the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

Paul says, “That is what you should teach people, that is what you should instruct them - to have love from a pure heart.” There you see the word “love” again. Have a good conscience and a sincere faith. That's how he starts off the book.

Then in First Timothy 2, he gives him some instructions for the women of the church. If you look in First Timothy 2:9-10, Paul starts off chapter 2 talking about instruction. In chapter 2, he narrows in on the ladies of the church. And in verse 9, he says, “Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.” Just maybe to ease your conscience there, that phrase “braided hair” doesn't mean you can't have braided hair this morning. Just to encourage you, the ancient ladies used to braid gold and costly pearls into their hair. And as they would do that and come to the church in

the first century with all these poor people, they would almost shame everybody. And so, Paul said, “Don't focus on that. Focus on your godliness, focus on your good works and those kinds of things.” That's what that passage is all about.

And then after giving instructions for the ladies, in chapter 3, Paul talks about the elders and deacons of the church. And specifically, he tells us how to identify people in that position, which is what I want to talk to you about this morning. So, if you're taking notes this morning, in First Timothy 3:8-13, we're going to look at two qualifications for a deacon in the church. That's our outline for today. That's what this is all about. Paul gives us two qualifications for a deacon in the church.

Which is important because as I told you last time, if there's only three offices in the church, you had better pick the right people, right? You had better not make a mistake. There's not room for error. And Paul tells us how to do that here with two qualifications for the deacons in the church.

And this is also important because we would like to create this office here at Grace Fellowship. I'm going to talk about that a little bit later. But tonight, we're installing elders, but we don't want to stop there. We would like to install deacons as well, but first, we need to know what to look for, the kind of men to put into office. And here's the kind of guys Paul tells us to look for here. These are the kind of men he wants us to look for.

And there's two qualifications. The first one is the character qualifications. So, if you're taking notes, Paul starts off with the character qualifications for the deacons. He tells us the kind of character they should have because after all, love is a character issue, isn't it? If you're looking for someone that's going to serve the church and love them, where do you start? You start with their character. You start with the kind of person they are on the inside. Paul doesn't tell us here that the guy has to be six foot three. Thank the Lord because I would never make that. I always want to be taller than my dad. That was my only goal in life. And my dad is taller than I am. But he doesn't focus on that, he doesn't say, “These guys have to have a certain amount of money.” He doesn't say, “These guys have to have a certain amount of business skills.” He says they have to have character because love is a character issue. Who you are on the inside will spill out on the outside, onto people. And before you put a guy in the office of deacon, Paul says, “Look at what he's like on the inside to see what's going to spill out.” And it gives us four character qualifications to look for.

The first one is this, a deacon must be a man of dignity. That's the first character qualification he gives us. A deacon must be a man of dignity. If you look in verse 8, it says this, very briefly that first part of the verse there. It says, “Deacons likewise, must be men of dignity.” Just to point out a few things to you here, but Paul starts off by saying “Deacons likewise,” which is a reference back to all he has said so far about the elders. If you look in verses 1 through 7, which Lourens just read to us, Paul talks about the qualifications for the elders in the first part of this chapter. That's what the bulk of the chapter is about. And after saying that, Paul says, “Deacons likewise should be the same kind of men.” In other words, deacons have the same qualifications that the elders do. They have a different job description, they have a different role to play, but it's the same kind of thing.

The only exception is that deacons don't have to be able to teach. That's the only difference between the two offices. A deacon doesn't have to be able to open up the Word of God and explain it to people. He can do that, that definitely could be part of what he does, but he does not have to. But other than that, all the qualifications for elders and deacons are the same. Tonight, when we install Kevin and Quinten for office, I want you to kind of keep that in your mind. Because when we look for deacons, we're going to look for the same kind of quality people.

And Paul goes on to say in verse 8, he says, "Deacons likewise must be." If you notice that phrase "must be" there, it says, this is not optional for these guys. This is not just a matter of preference. The deacons have to be these things before you put them into office. We heard Dr. Beakley speak several weeks ago and he said, "When you're looking for a missionary, you should look for the kind of man he is right now." He said, "You don't send them to Africa and hope he'll become somebody different." I think it was H. A. Ironside who said, "A ship voyage never made a missionary out of anybody." You look for the person they are here today and it's the same way with the office of elder and deacon. You look for guys and see what they're doing now. They must be these things before you put them into office. There's an imperative, there's a command behind this for the church.

As a matter of fact, this is so important to Paul, these two offices that in six chapters, he spends 13 verses talking about them. Very important to him. And the first qualification they must be here that he mentions is dignified, which is a very nice word. The first qualification, a deacon must be dignified. It's the word *semnos* in Greek, which means "reverend" or "honourable." The King James Version has "grave" or "serious" because this man has to be serious about the things of God. One of the titles that some people throw around for a pastor is a title "Reverend." I've wanted to put that on my license plate, but I haven't figured out how to get that on there. Or "Holy Roller," I've always wanted to put Holy Roller on my license plate. You don't even have to put the vowels in there, just the consonants for Holy Roller would be great. But "reverend" is not necessarily a bad word. It just means this person is serious about the things of God, and that's the first qualification for a deacon. They've got to be earnest about it. There's a certain drive that motivates this man. He's submitting to a voluntary office in the church, he's signing up for something that will require his sweat and tears and trouble, maybe long nights, and there's got to be some earnestness about him. Lazy men make horrible deacons, horrible deacons. There's nothing lazy about this guy.

Tying this into the previous passage, if you look up in verse 7, as Paul is talking about the elders, he says, "And he, the elder, must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Deacons likewise must be men of dignity." So that kind of explains what the word "dignity" means here. Paul says, "Whether you're an elder or not, whether you're a deacon or not, if you want to serve the Lord in whatever capacity, you have to have a good reputation with those outside the church as well as those inside the church." That's what dignified means. When people see you at work, they see that you're serious about the things of God. You don't laugh at dirty jokes, you don't sin in various ways, gossip and lie and swear. And when you're at church, it's the same way.

He says in verse 7, "So that you will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." Which brings us to the second qualification in this list - this is a negative one. But verse 8 says a deacon

must not be “double-tongued.” You see that in verse 8 right next to the men of dignity. A deacon must not be double-tongued. Which goes right along with what we just said. You could also translate this word “two-faced.” And this guy can't be one way in the world and another way at church. He can't be one way at Sunday and another way throughout the week. I heard one pastor came to a church and he said he had a deacon who every Sunday morning he thought he was under the influence of some kind of substance. He was hung over or he was on some kind of drug, but something was wrong with him every Sunday. And they came to find out there was some serious enslavement to substances in his life. You can't have that kind of guy in this office.

And verse 8 says the same thing, it says, “You should not be addicted to much wine.” It says, “Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine.” In Greek, that means his head is not turned by much wine. He doesn't have a strong interest or desire for it.

And the last thing goes along with that, if you look in verse 8: “He should not be fond of sordid gain.” Which means he doesn't have a strong desire for that either. He's not a lover of money. Deacons often have access to the church funds sometimes with a whole lot of accountability. We always want to have accountability in our church. But sometimes, maybe they don't have as much. They have access to money, and if they're a lover of money that could spell disaster. It could be trouble.

And Paul goes on to tell us why these qualifications are important. He just doesn't just give us this list and just leave it there. But he tells us why this is such a big deal. If you read verses 8 through 9, it says, “Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.” Paul says, “Deacons should be all these things so they can serve in the church with a clear conscience.” That phrase “the mystery of the faith” is another way of saying the Christian faith or the Biblical faith. Deacons should be all of these things so they can hold on to that with a purity of heart. One commentator said, “This means that the deacon's adherence to the faith, his holding onto it is to be unquestioned and his conduct needs to match his profession.”

And here's the point at the end of the day, this is what this is all about. You can't love people if your life is a mess. Amen? You guys get that. That make sense? You can't serve people if you're constantly serving yourself and dealing with your own issues. If you're living in sin, if you are constantly caught up in, “Me, me, me,” you can't do this office. To say it another way, people don't want help from a man whose life is a wreck. Does anybody do that? When you're at work, if you're struggling with something, do you look for the guy whose life is the messiest and most messed up and you go to him and say, “Can you help me?” That guy needs help himself, right? You want to go to someone whose life is in order, who's doing well at the things you fail a.? Paul says, “That's what you look for when choosing a deacon. Look for a man whose life is in order.”

When I first graduated seminary, my first job was not at a church, but at a window cleaning company. I think I've told you this before. But after I finished seminary, Katie and I were going to get married, start life together, and then look for ministry. So, in the meantime, I washed windows at a company in Georgia. And I told my boss on the first day at work, I said, “Look, I'm not very good with my hands. I can play with the ball, but I can't play with a wrench. I've never

been able to figure that out. And I don't like heights. So am I the right guy for this? Do you want to hire me for this job? I'm willing, but is that what you want?" And without skipping a beat, he said this, he said, "Yes, because I'm hiring you for your conversation." Well, I can talk. Kind of encouraged me. But it was an interesting thing that he said. He said, "My family needs help. They all work for this company, it's just me and my brothers and I'm hiring you to talk to them and help." And he meant it.

For the next two years, I became the family chaplain for this window cleaning company. I did Bible studies for the guys on Wednesday mornings. We went through the Fundamentals of the Faith book, prayed with them, counselled them. A couple of times when they were out on a ... we had one guy out on a drug binge, we didn't know where he was. I went with them to find him. Counsellled another one of the guys through a rehab situation.

But it took a little while for them to trust me, I remember that. Wash windows and we're all around each other and our mouths would just run, and we would talk endlessly about whatever. And it took a little while for them to warm up. But when they did, they said it was because my life was different from theirs. I mean, it wasn't a lot of rocket science. They said it was because I wasn't enslaved to the things that they were. I mean, I had my own sins, but the alcohol and the drugs and the anger problems. And they said, "We just want to know what makes you different."

I think that's what Paul is saying here about the deacons. I think that's what he's telling us in First Timothy. You want to find a guy who's different. You want to find a guy whose life is doing well at the things that others fail at, spiritually. You want to find a guy whose life is not a mess.

And I think this is a lesson for all of us. This is something we all can take away from this. This is not just for the deacons, this is for anyone in the church. But if you want to love people, your life is going to have to be in order. Amen? You're going to have to be different. Your conduct and profession have to match. Your life and your words need to be the same, otherwise people will not trust you. Robert Murray M'Cheyne once said that, "The greatest thing a pastor can give to his people is a holy life." "The greatest thing a pastor can give to his people is a holy life."

And I think that's the greatest thing we all can give to each other, because it frees you up for ministry. If you're constantly enslaved in your sin, if you're constantly focused on pride or lust or gossip or jealousy or whatever the sin is, and that's all you think about, you are not free to serve others. Your hands are chained. And the greatest thing you can do is to take your eyes off your sin, look to Christ and look to others. That's what Paul is talking about here. We should all commit to living a holy life before the Lord. Paul even says it this way (it's this serious to him), if you look in verse 10, he says, "These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach." That word "beyond reproach" if you look back up in verse 2 for the elders, it says, "An overseer then must be above reproach". It's the same kind of high calling for both offices. And the reason these men need to be above reproach is because their life need to be spent in serving others and not themselves. Some of my mentors have told me that one of the most important callings for an elder or a deacon is that he's low maintenance because he needs to spend himself for other people. If it's, "Me, me, me, me, me" all the time, you can't do this. And it's the same way for all of us in the church.

Which leads to a second point Paul makes here, it leads to a second qualification for a deacon. First, he gives us the character qualifications for the deacons. He tells us the kind of character they should have and be on the inside. But second, he tells us about the family qualifications for this guy. So, the next qualification or set of qualifications Paul gives us here is the family qualifications for the deacons. Because this is where you see a man's character displayed. This is where you see what he's really like, is with his family. I think it was Robert Murray M'Cheyne who said, "A hypocrite is a man who is a Christian everywhere but in the home." I mean, you can fake a lot of things, but you can't fake family. Your home is a window to the soul. And so Paul says this - if you look in in this passage, again, I want to read the whole thing to you in verse 8. He says,

8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 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.

Just to walk you through this with me, the word "women" in verse 11 is *gynē* in Greek, which can be translated "woman" or "wife" depending on the context. It can refer to several different things. So, there's different views on what this is. But this is important to the discussion of deacons because one of the views that I share is that it relates to the office of deaconess. That's my view on this. We'll talk about this more next time. But just quickly, let me just say, it just seems strange for Paul to talk about all the women in the church right after talking about them in First Timothy 2. It's kind of a hard way to interpret this. And it also seems strange to talk about the wives of the deacons when Paul never did that for the elders. (That's one view, is that this refers to the wives of the deacons. But he's never done that for the elders. So, that seems kind of odd, he would do that here.) So, one of the views that I share is that this relates to the office of deaconess or female deacon, but we'll talk about that some more next week. So, if you want to put that on hold, we'll discuss that and get into that next time. That's not a dividing issue in the church just so you know. I want to hear your feedback on that. That's something for us to discuss together.

But skipping over that for now, in verse 12, Paul refers to the family qualifications of a deacon and he gives two of them here. And the first one is that a deacon must be the husband of one wife. If you notice that in verse 12, that's how he starts off this list. A deacon must be the husband of one wife. That doesn't mean he has to be married. Many of the deacons in the first century were not married as far as we know. That's optional. He can be single if he wants to, but the idea here is that he cannot have a lustful heart. That's the point of this. He has to be pure in his sex life. He can't have several women on the brain. He's a one-woman man. It's the same qualification for the elders as well. That's how important this is. He cannot be enslaved to lust.

It brings to the second family qualification we see is that he must be a good manager of his children and his household. Going right along with that, if you read verse 12 again, it says,

“Deacons must be husbands of only one wife and good managers of their children and their own households.” The word manage here is *proistēmi* in Greek, which means “to lead” because deacons have to lead their children well. They need to lead them in a loving manner before they do that with others in the church. Their love starts there. It starts in the home, because whatever you see in the home is going to spill out into the church. So, if this guy doesn't know how to love his wife and kids, the people who are closest to him, he won't love others.

And let me say it like this, I think we've all known men who would do anything for anybody in the church. They would give you the shirt off their back, but the second they come home, they don't lift a finger. You guys know what I'm talking about? They give and give and give outside the home and they come home and become a different person. Paul says, “You don't want that kind of guy as a deacon because he will eventually do that here. The way he is at home will eventually play out in the church.” We've also known men who would never say a cross word to anyone at church. They would only say positive, healthy kind things. And the second they come home, they become some nasty, mean grouch that nobody wants to be around. Paul says, “You don't want that either. You want to choose a guy who is the same person at home as he is at church.” Going back to verse 8, he can't be a double-tongued man. He can't be two-faced. He has to manage his children and his household well before he serves in this office.

And verse 12 closes the passage out this way – or verse 13. If you want to look in verse 13 with me, just to round this off, Paul says, “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.” That might seem like a strange way to end the passage like this. We've been talking about service and love and humbling ourselves and now, Paul talks about a high standing. That seems a little selfish. But the idea here is that as a man does all these things, he grows in his walk with the Lord. As he is a man of dignity and not double-tongued or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain and takes care of his family and does that in the church, God puts him in a high position, in a high standing, so others can follow him. It's been said that love stoops in order to rise. Love lowers itself in order to be lifted up. And you see that in the office of deacon. It's kind of a paradoxical thing here, but we're taking men who do the lowest things in the church, they do the humblest things, they do the things nobody wants to do and we're lifting them up. That's what this is about. I told you last week that I love the deacons because you never know what they're going to be doing. You've seen deacons on lawn mowers, I've seen deacons with rakes in their hands, I've seen deacons on rooftops cleaning gutters. They've never come to my house, but other people's houses. And then you see them weeping with someone in the pew over something going on in their life. You never know what they're going to do. But whatever they do, it's the lowest thing. That's how they get qualified for the office. And as they stoop down for those lower things, the Lord lifts them up and raises them up into this office, which is a beautiful thing. And He gives them a high standing.

That's another lesson for all of us here, that's another way this applies to our lives, is that you grow through serving. I talk to Christians all the time who say, “I want to grow in my walk with the Lord, I want to grow closer to Him, I want to grow as a Christian.” Well, the simple question is who are you serving today? Yes, you read your Bible, yes, you pray. Yes, you do all those things that are essential to be part of the church, but who are you serving? That's where you get assurance of salvation. That's where you get a greater confidence. You take your eyes off

yourself and put them on others. Listen, anybody can be a godly Christian when they're alone in the woods and nobody's bothering them, right? I mean, I prefer the Holiday Inn, personally. I do better there than the woods, but anybody can be a Christian when nobody's around. The question Paul is wrestling with here for deacons and for all of us, really, is what are you like when people are around? How do you behave then? You need to serve people then. That's where you get a confidence in your calling with the Lord.

The famous businessman, John Wanamaker was once asked, "How do you find time to serve the church and teach the Sunday school class and meet with people and pray with them while running all of your stores?" (He had a bunch of department stores.) And he said this, "Well, the church is my business. It's my number one priority. My stores are just things." And he said, "Years ago, I vowed to take the promise of Matthew 6:33 seriously, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added to you.'" That's the principal here. You seek His kingdom first, you seek God's glory first and God will take care of the rest. Everything else is just things.

And to help our church with that, to help us grow in this department, we're going to create the office of deacon in the church. Over the next couple of months, we're going to create this brand new position. And to do that, we're going to be looking for men who meet these qualifications. That's why I walked through this with you. I appreciate your patience in letting me take you through this passage. But our elders are going to be looking for men who have this kind of character that's described in First Timothy 3, to see who would like to serve in this office. We're going to look for men who "deak" and let them "deak", right? We're going to look for men who serve and let them serve if they're willing, and we need your help in that. We need you to be part of this process with us because you see things that we don't. You see the kind of service that goes on here in the church and we would like your feedback with that.

So, the way this will work is in the next couple of months, as you see men who are meeting these qualifications and serving as deacon, come see myself or Kevin Laser or Quentin Smith. And then we're going to have a congregational meeting to discuss this together. Probably in the fall, I'll send you an email, kind of give you a timetable here. But when we find the men who we are looking for and talk with them and see their interest in this office, we'll have a congregational meeting. Section seven in the new Bylaws says, "The deacons shall be elected annually by a two thirds majority of the eligible votes cast by members present at a duly called congregational business meeting. The elders will compile and confirm the nominations and submit the names to the members for election at the annual meeting." So this is a two-pronged process. The way this works, we will recognize the deacons at a duly called meeting potentially in the fall, and then affirm them at the AGM next year. We will vote again to affirm them into that office, and we'll keep everybody informed in this process. We'll keep you posted as to what's going on in the next couple of months.

But please, one of the things you can do is pray for the Lord's help as we identify men like this. Pray for His guidance as we look for men who meet these qualifications. As I was going through this and thinking about the men of our church, I don't think these guys are going to be hard to find, honestly. Amen? I think you're a very service-minded church. You love to serve people. I see servants everywhere. So I think the hardest part is going to be not that we don't have enough,

but we have so many. Our problem is not that we only have a few servants, we have a multitude of them. There's servants all over the place. But I would say that's a wonderful problem to have, wouldn't you? I would say that's a great problem to have as a church. You guys are wonderful servants.

There was an article done about a church in California years ago called the "Church of 900 Ministers", they just said, "This church is just full of ministers, people that minister to one another," and Grace Fellowship Church is like that. You guys do a fantastic job of serving one another, and keep it up. And as you see servants like this, please bring them to our attention. And we want to be talking to them about the office of deacon in the weeks to come. And let's pray for the Lord's help as we do that. Let's pray for His guidance and kindness to us as we search for men in this office. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank you Lord for Your clear instructions for Your church, and just how You have laid out certain positions for us to pursue together, elders and deacons. And Lord, we pray as we're considering this together for Your guidance in seeking the first deacons of our church. We saw in the book of Acts, the high calling that these men have. Men like Stephen and Philip who died for the faith and were the first to share Christ with the Gentiles. These are the kind of men we want in our church as deacons. And we pray for Your help in searching for them and having a clear process to bring them into office.

Lord, we thank you for the servants that are here at Grace Fellowship. I mean, everything from the hospitality to the music, to just the stuff that goes on just on a Sunday morning, let alone all throughout the week. Father, we thank you for the way our people serve. It's Your grace and mercy in their lives that they love one another the way they do.

But even saying that Father, we all need to grow in this. We all need to be better at loving others, and we pray for Your help in doing that. Thank you for loving us. Thank you that anytime we think of serving, we think of You first and foremost because You have served us first. Thank you for Christ and the price that He paid. Thank you that He did not come to be served, but to serve. May we go out and imitate Him today. We pray this in Christ's name, amen.