

ESSENTIALS

WORSHIP • DISCIPLESHIP • EVANGELISM • PRAYER

Growing Pains at Clements
Acts 6:1-8; I Timothy 3:8-13
August 14, 2022

The character and effectiveness of any church are directly related to the quality of its leadership. There are many facets that contribute to the spiritual growth at Clements, but one significant reason is the godly deacons we have had since day one.

The English word *deacon* is a transliteration of the Greek word *diakonos*, which simply means “servant.”

Deacon Purpose Statement at Clements:

To serve the Lord in such a way that the Pastor can give himself to prayer and ministry of the Word and people become faithful, devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

- I. Deacons are selected servants of the church

Acts 6:1 (NASB) Now, at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

Acts 6:2-4 (NASB) So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, it is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. ³Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. ⁴But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

Leaders Must be Determined and Developed:

Good leadership responds effectively to the need for more leaders and workers. In the early church, no one took a vote to determine the identity of these people.

Takeaway:

The best way to find your new deacons is to look around and see who is already serving as if he were already a deacon. Our new and incoming deacons are needed to serve the congregation; likewise, our existing deacons will continue to serve the congregation. One of the most humbling questions a deacon can ask themselves is this; would my church family nominate me today because of how I am presently serving?

What sort of qualifications must church leaders possess?

1. Blameless (v. 2) - Question: Are you quick to improve those areas that can damage your integrity?
2. Husband of one wife (v. 2) - Question: Are you loving your wife as Christ loved the church?
3. Temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior (v. 2) - Question: Do you possess self-control that you may be a servant to many?

4. Hospitable (v. 2) - Question: Do you possess a warm and welcoming spirit?
 5. Able to teach (v. 2) - Question: Do you consistently help others learn and teach them to become better disciples?
 6. Not given to wine (v. 3) - Question: Are you sober, watchful, and diligent so that you do not give a black eye to those who watch your ways?
 7. Not violent, not quarrelsome (v. 3) - Question: Do you have an approachable disposition that brings peace and healing?
 8. Not greedy, not covetous (v. 3) - Question: Are you allowing your leadership to be controlled by money?
 9. Rules his own house well (v. 4–5) - Question: Can you manage your own family before you try to manage the church?
 10. Not a novice (v. 6) - Question: Are you a seasoned, solid example for both insiders and outsiders?
- II. Deacons are to be Spirit-filled servants of the church

Acts 6:3 (ESV) 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.

Takeaway:

I don't believe that any of us can do anything of eternal value unless we are Spirit-filled.

Acts 6:5–7 (ESV) And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch (These were all Grecian names...except for Nicolaus - He was the only Gentile in the group – he converted to Judaism before he became a Christian). ⁶These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Kent Hughes:

“Being in touch with the Holy Spirit, Philip was open to the Spirit’s direction. This sensitivity to divine guidance was a major factor in his becoming the touch of God to others. We must all beware of rigid suppositions as to how the Holy Spirit works or leads. Philip had enough spiritual understanding not to resist the unfolding guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit first directed Philip through persecution to leave his ministry in Jerusalem and go to Samaria for a much wider ministry. Philip knew by experience that God directs by *difficulties*, but he did not believe that is the *only* way God leads.”