



## Deacon Ordination Service

Sermon Title: Deacon Ordination Service for Bill Huttinga and Jack Horsford

Date: October 10, 2010

We all have the privilege this morning to participate in an important event in the life of this church. One of the two offices or positions that Scripture provides for the local church is that of deacon. The first church, in Jerusalem, appointed the first seven men who were the precursors to the office of deacon. Since that time in the first few years of the Christian church, deacons have filled a vital role in the administration and progress of the church. This morning we're going to be ordaining two of our deacons, Bill Huttinga and Jack Horsford. The importance of this event, both in the lives of these men and in the life of the church cannot be overstated.

I'll ask that Jack & Bill and their wives Jane Horsford & Bekki Huttinga come forward at this time. I've asked each man to also say a few words this morning.

This service today in large part will serve as a charge to these men, but is also a charge to you, their brothers and sisters in Christ. In order for them to serve the Lord effectively as deacons, and for you to know how to pray for them, we need to understand the Biblical requirements for the office of deacon.

But first let me read Acts 6: 1- 4, this gives us a look at those first deacon's.

In 1 Timothy 3: 8-13 you'll see the qualifications of being a Deacon.

You'll notice from these verses that God is far more interested in the spiritual maturity and moral character of the deacon than He is in the exact role a deacon fills within the local body of believers.

With that in mind, let's examine what God expects from these deacons.

1. The first requirement is that deacons be reverent.
  - a. This is an older word that we have lost a sense of in this generation.
  - b. It speaks to a life that is marked by personal dignity, a seriousness of purpose and self-respect in conduct.
  - c. The reverent person is one who carries himself in such a way that they earn the respect of other people.
2. The second requirement is to not be double-tongued.
  - a. To be double-tongued is to talk out both sides of your mouth. You tell one person one thing, and the next person something else.
  - b. But Jesus says in Matthew 5:37, "But let your Yes be Yes, and your No, No."

- c. It's bad enough when Christians don't speak straight, but it can be disastrous when deacons are caught being deceptive.
    - d. It can lead to dissension, accusations and worse. Proverbs 6:19 says "The Lord hates a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren." The deacon who spreads innuendo, gossip and lies through an insincere tongue can do major damage to the church – of course this is true for all of us.
3. Third, the deacon is not to be given too much wine.
  - a. The man called to be a deacon must be self-controlled. This is part of the reverence we saw earlier.
  - b. He is also a model for not only those in the church, but for those outside.
  - c. Romans 14:21 says, "it is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak."
  - d. This goes for all believers, but the deacons are called specifically to mind how they think and act toward wine
  - e. To be "given" toward wine means that it has a hold on one's mind...that it draws away one's attention. It's the same word that Paul uses in the next chapter of 1st Timothy, 4:13, when he says, "Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."
4. The fourth directive concerns a deacon's attitude toward money.
  - a. Paul writes that the deacon should not be "greedy for money"
  - b. It should never be the case that a deacon has such a love for money that it negatively impacts his integrity.
  - c. And this isn't just in the church, this is in all aspects of his life
  - d. Jesus says in Luke 16:13, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."
  - e. It's an impossibility to be an effective deacon, called to a high level of spiritual service, and also has divided loyalties because of materialism and the love of money.
5. The fifth requirement for deacons is a real faith.
  - a. Verse 9 of the text states that the life of the deacon is characterized by, "holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience."
  - b. Paul uses the word "mystery" often in his epistles. But the mystery he speaks of is not like being in some cult or secret society where only a few know the true beliefs of the group.
  - c. For Paul, the mystery is the revealed revelation of Jesus Christ in the form of the gospel. The deacon is to hold this mystery of the faith, the gospel of Jesus Christ with a pure conscience. Its purity lay in the Deacon's knowledge of his standing in Christ.
  - d. Having a pure conscience has two practical applications:
    - i. First the qualified deacon must be a believer in Jesus Christ, who has followed in believer's baptism.

- ii. Second, his theology and his actions must be in line with one another. He can't be living a lie, spouting Scripture on one hand and living like the devil on the other. His walk and his talk must match up.
- 6. Requirement number six is that the deacon must be tested.
  - a. This doesn't mean that Bill and Jack have to study for a year and then appear before some board to be grilled for hours on end.
  - b. In actuality the testing that they've endured and will continue to be subject to is much harder, because it takes place every day of their lives.
  - c. The word we translate as "tested" can also mean "proved" or "scrutinized".
  - d. This is the same word Paul uses in 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Test all things; hold fast what is good."
  - e. The reality is that these men have been in the process of testing for some time. They had to meet the criteria of deacon before they were recommended. We see this same thing in Acts 6:1-6, which gives us the account of the selection of the seven
  - f. Verse 3 is of special note: these were to be men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.
  - g. The people had to already know this about these men. The examination had been going on for some time.
- 7. The result of this testing is the seventh requirement...a blameless life
  - a. This isn't speaking of sinless perfection. None of us can claim that.
  - b. But blamelessness refers to a life that is not burdened by accusations of impropriety.
  - c. The life of the deacon is marked by freedom from charges, both within the church and in the community as a whole.
- 8. Verse 11 extends the requirements to the deacon's wife, and requires four things from her
  - a. She is first called to be reverent, just as her husband is. What sense does it make to have a man who carries himself with dignity, but his wife is not
  - b. Second, she is not to be a slanderer.
  - c. She is also called upon to be temperate.
  - d. Last, she should be faithful in all things, which means that she is trustworthy and reliable.
  - e. These qualities are in contrast to some of the young widows in Timothy's church, as Paul wrote about later in the book, in 5:13: "And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not."
  - f. The deacon's wife is above all his helpmate, joined to him in marriage. She can be very effective ministering with him, especially to women. Her good conduct also is a testimony to his spiritual leadership.
- 9. The effectiveness of this husband/wife team is the ninth requirement for the deacon, which is that he is the husband of one wife.
  - a. He is to be a one woman man. Many have said that this means a divorced man cannot be a deacon.

- b. However, the reality is that the standard is much higher. It calls for total devotion, absolute faithfulness and moral integrity in regards to his wife.
  - c. God requires deacons who love their wives and whose marriages, both publically and privately are exemplary.
10. The last requirement is consistency in their homes.
- a. The qualified deacon who has children still living in his home will bring them up to honor God
  - b. We can see this in the home of Philip, one of the original seven, in Acts 21: 8-9. It mentions that his daughters were pure and that they proclaimed the Word of God.
  - c. Deacons will be entrusted with many responsibilities within the church, and must be counted on to perform well. A man whose home is not in order will not likely do well outside his own home either.
11. Paul offers two promises in verse 13 to those who serve well as deacons:
- a. He first says that they will obtain a good standing. This is how they will be viewed by the members of the church. Don't take good deacons for granted, folks, because they are not that easy to find. When a man is faithful as a deacon, he should receive the honor of the church.
  - b. The faithful deacon will also obtain great boldness in the faith. This means that they will experience a deepening of their faith and a stronger relationship with Christ as they submit to His leadership
  - c. You can see this in the lives of both Philip, who we've already mentioned and Steven. Phillip became a bold evangelist, and was the first to proclaim the gospel to the Samaritans, as well as to a Gentile, in the person of the Ethiopian eunuch. Steven was the first Christian martyr. And the sermon he preached at his stoning was rife with the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - d. So gentlemen, as you serve Christ well in the office of deacon, we look forward to seeing your boldness in the faith.

As I said earlier, Scripture is more interested in the spiritual qualifications of deacons than it is in the details of their ministry. But at the core of their role is service. The word for deacon is servant. They are not called to control the church, but to lead through service. The passage from Acts 6 portrays men who care for the physical and spiritual needs of the church. The constitution of the church bases its requirements for deacons on this model.

Will you gentlemen and your wives please stand? As I ask you each of these questions, please respond with "I Will"

Bill & Jack, will you promise that you will live your life in accordance with the standards I have spoken of today?

Will you strive to manage your home and to lead your family as the spiritual head God has called you to be?

Will you be on the ready to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of this church body?

Will you present yourself as necessary to comfort and counsel those in need?

Will you seek to maintain harmony in the church body?

Will you support the pastor and assist him as you are called upon?

Will you strive to be an example, both in personal integrity and in Christian witness to this congregation?

Now to you, the church. You have selected these men as deacons. We are in agreement that these men have been called to serve as deacons at Heritage Baptist Church. As I ask you these questions please answer "we will":

Will you pray for these men and their families, asking God to protect them and to care for them, both physically and spiritually?

Will you submit to their leadership, knowing that they are called as servant leaders?

Will you observe their lives, both as examples of Christian living and as those who would guard them from stumbling?

Will you encourage them and their families, knowing that the ministry to which they are called may bring trying times and tough situations?

I'll now ask Jack and Bill to come and kneel here in the front of the church. I'll ask also that their wives come and stand beside them.

The Bible tells us in Acts 6:6 that after the congregation of the first church chose the very first deacons that they laid hands on them. As has become tradition I will now ask that all the ordained men of the church if they would now come and lay hands on Jack and Bill. If there any others that at this time would like to come and lay hands on Jack and Bill you may do this at this time.

The Bible also tells us that they prayed for these first deacons, I'll ask now that Gopal Echols our Vice Chairman of Deacons now comes and prays for ALL of our Deacons for this new church year.

Acts 6:7 "Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem..."

**Invitation: I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS.**

Gentlemen, I want to be the first to congratulate you and to present you as the newest ordained deacons here at Heritage Baptist Church. May God bless you as you serve him and this body of believers.