



# Power From on High

**Series:** Power From On High.

**Title:** The Organized Church, Part 3

**Lesson:** 44

**Text:** Acts 6:3-7

**Date:** May 28, 2023

**Acts is a transitional book.**

Jesus → Apostles

Old Covenant → New Covenant

Nation of Israel → Gentiles

Apostolic Age → Church Age

Apostles → Elders (Pastors)

Seven men → Deacons

**The office of deacon appears 4 times - 1 Tim. 3:8, 12, 13**

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the OVERSEERS and DEACONS.

Acts 6:1–7 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.

2 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.

Restated for emphasis

4 *“But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*

“**tables**” [trapeza]

### **Used for food**

Acts 16:34 And he brought them into his house and set **FOOD [trapeza]** before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

### **Used for finances**

Luke 19:23 ‘Then why did you not put my money in the **BANK [trapeza]**, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?’

So the apostles refused to distribute money so the needy could buy food.

3 “Therefore, 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.

### **Why did the apostles act without the congregation?**

1. They needed to treat the congregation as brothers and sisters who were also indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
2. The apostles knew that the money collected belonged to the people so it was wise to share in the responsibility of planning and administering its charitable business.
3. They needed to protect themselves from any accusation of greed or overreach of power
4. They established the model for choosing deacons that would be adopted later in the epistles.

### **Why did the apostles choose “seven”?**

- It’s possible that there may be a symbolic significance.

“seven” shows up in Scripture about 700 times

It might suggest that the the seven men present God’s perfect plan for church polity.

- It’s more likely that the seven followed the pattern explained in the Mishnah.

The Mishnah is an authoritative collection of exegetical material embodying the oral tradition of Jewish law

In Jewish towns, anybody conducting business would have to have seven men.

### Five requirements

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ (filled with the Holy Spirit).

Galatians 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation;

**“approval”** [areskō]

This is not democratic rule by majority vote.

A more accurate translation is

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

ANT, NIV, HCSB, ESV, NIV, KJV translates [aresko]  
as “pleased.”

### **A similar example**

Acts 15:22 Then it **SEEMED GOOD** to the apostles and the elders, with the **WHOLE CHURCH** to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren,

and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

Significantly all seven were Greek names.

6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

The apostles were in authority.

(6) **“put in charge”** [kathistemi]

Often used to express appointment to an official position such as a judge or governor (Acts 7:10)

**“prayed”**

**“laid their hands hands on them”**

The general use was to pronounce a blessing and to transfer authority

It is not a normative regulation or a prescribed practice.

7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

## 1 Timothy 3 - Overseers & Deacons

Timothy had to address the need for qualified leaders.

(1-7) - Qualifications for Overseers (Elders / Pastors)

(8-13) - Qualifications for deacons

### Two observations:

1. The elders are listed \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Both are given \_\_\_\_\_ space.

### Qualifications for elders:

1 Timothy 3:1–7 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

“man” - some versions don’t translate the word “man” because it’s not in the original.

#### 1. Moral Character

2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

“the husband of one wife”

*1 Timothy 5:9 A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been **the wife of one man**,*

The key difference between elders and deacons.

**“able to teach”**

## **2. Home life**

4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

## **3. Spiritual maturity**

6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

## **4. Good reputation**

7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.



## Qualifications for deacons:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

**“men of dignity**

**“not double tongued”**

**“not addicted to much wine”**

**“fond of sordid gain” -**

2. \_\_\_\_\_

9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

4. \_\_\_\_\_

11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

**“women” or “wives”** - [gyne]

HCSB, ESV, NIV, KJV - translates [gyne] a **“wives”**

**Paul’s flow of thought**

**Male deacons (8-10)**

**Female deacons (11)**

**Male deacons (12-13)**

**Husbands,**

**Fathers**

**Households**

It seems strange that Paul would insert a new office of female deacon in the middle of male deacons.

It would make the most sense to list them as a third office under the leadership of men.

**Male deacons (8-10)**

**Deacon wives (11)**

**Husbands (12)**

**Fathers**

**Households**

This flow of thought makes more sense that Paul is describing the deacon’s family. That would include his fidelity to his wife, his ability to manage his children, and

his management of his home.

**It becomes clearer when we read (11-12) together.**

11 **WIVES** 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.

5. \_\_\_\_\_

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.

### **Implication**

The elders serve the \_\_\_\_\_ needs  
of the body and the deacons meet  
\_\_\_\_\_ needs.

## Discussion guide

1. Based on our passage, describe what a healthy, biblical relationship looks like between the elders (pastors) and the congregation.

How can elders maintain their authority without abusing their power?

2. Describe the process we see in our passage for choosing deacons.

3. Why does our passage describe elder rule and not congregational rule?

4. Revisit verse 11-12 and discuss why it seems more plausible to see [gyne] as wives and not female deacons.

**ANSWERS:** Men, Good reputation, Believers, Spiritual, Wise, pleased, first, equal, Moral character, Doctrinally sound, Tested, Family, Reward, spiritual, physical