

Deacons and Their Wives



Leo R. LaVinka

DEACONS
And
THEIR WIVES

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Printed in the United States of America

May 2021

REL067030: Religion: Christian Theology – Apologetics.

ISBN 978-1-7351454-1-9

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all deacons who have served and who are serving as members of this unique group of God's faithful servants. May God grant that none will let up in his responsibilities as a servant to the people under the authority of his pastor. May all understand and remember their prime purpose and responsibility is to be a SERVANT, to assist in the growth of the church of our Holy God. I also dedicate this book to all men who desire to seek this office. May they prove themselves worthy to be a SERVANT.

Also, I thank my wife and H.D. and Patricia Williams, Directors of The Old Paths Publications for helping to make this book possible.

(Holy God forgive our shortcomings and help us in performing our duties and responsibilities as YOUR servants.)

Leo LaVinka
May 2021

PREFACE

Thank you Brother LaVinka! This is a much-needed book in Bible believing churches today. I have been involved in the ministry for 50 years and have seen far too many churches that have deacons who do not have a clue concerning what their ministry is to be. One church where I was the Director of Christian Education brought men on as deacons because they were successful in business. However, they were far from biblically qualified. In another church, they functioned as a board of directors, trying to give their Pastor instructions as to how I was to do things. One of the men told the Pastor, "I control the money in this church and if you think differently I will do a Mexican Hat Dance on your head!"

When I was called to be Pastor where I have ministered for 42 years, I would not accept the call unless they changed their constitution. Why? Because the Deacon's Chairman was the moderator of the Church. They DID change their constitution and I accepted the call. However, it was an arduous task getting the Deacons to "deac" biblically. Their entire "board mentality" needed to be overhauled and replaced with the biblical role of deacons. It started by me taking charge of the Deacons meetings instead of the "board" chairman.

If only I would have had Brother Leo's book "*Deacons and Their Wives*" back then it would have made the task much easier. He does a Yeoman's

DEACONS AND THEIR WIVES

job of defining and explaining the work and ministry of Deacons. The book is saturated with Scripture!

I plan on purchasing copies for all my Deacons and plan to make it a part of our devotionals at the beginning of each Deacons meeting. I urge every Pastor, every Deacon, every Deacon's wife and every man who aspires to be a Deacon to get this book and read it.

Pastor David L Brown, Ph.D.
May, 2021

Brother Leo LaVinka has been a very close friend of mine for many years. We have cried together, laughed together, prayed together, and spent time praising the Lord together. My wife, Patricia, and I love his wife and his outstanding family.

Brother Leo has been the "image" of what a biblical deacon should be at our local IFB church. His 50+ years as a church leader, deacon, and many years in the role of head deacon, have always been examples of iron "sharpeneth" iron.

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." **Proverbs 27:17**

He is a soul winner beyond a measure. I have witnessed him weep over the lost as he has knocked on doors and attested to his unshakable faith for many years.

DEACONS AND THEIR WIVES

The Old Paths Publications (TOP Publications) could not be more pleased that he has chosen our service company to publish this work. We know it will be a blessing to many pastors as they share what a Biblical deacon should be, and to deacons as they learn their true responsibilities before a holy God.

At present, Brother Leo is fighting cancer. His lovely wife, Elsie, is an outstanding deacon's wife. They are going through the "fire," so to speak, but they are both unwavering in their trust in God.

H. D. Williams, M.D., Ph.D.,
President of the "The Old Paths Publications."
May, 2021

FORWARD

The experiences I've had by serving as a deacon for the past fifty plus years in both large and small churches has led me to the conclusion that deacons need to be reminded of what God teaches in His Holy Word concerning their qualifications, selection, and responsibilities. Using the office of a deacon supported by his wife will assist the pastor in growing God's church. Not for the sake of numbers but for the saving of souls and grounding new converts in the Word of God. Deacons are SERVANTS and should SERVE. I'm very much aware that we all sin and fall short of the glory of God. That is especially applicable to me. But none of us have any excuse not to strive for perfection.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Leo LaVinka

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	3
FORWARD	7
TABLE OF CONTENTS	8
INTRODUCTION.....	10
DEACON DEFINED	11
FINAL WORD	12
THE BEGINNING	13
JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS	15
POWER FROM GOD.....	17
THE UNBROKEN CHAIN	18
WHO CHANGED?	20
THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY	21
SOUL WINNING	22
SEVEN CHOSEN	25
DEACONS ARE SERVANTS	28
DEACONS WORK.....	28
PROVEN FIRST	29
WHAT DEACONS ARE AND ARE NOT	31
PASTORS RESPONSIBILITY TO DEACONS.....	32
QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON	33
STEPS IN CHOOSING DEACONS.....	36
PASTOR'S CHOICE.....	37
QUESTIONING DEACONS	37
DEACONS WIVES	41
CHURCH APPROVAL.....	47
FINDING NEW CANDIDATES	48
UNDERSTANDING	49
PASTORS NEEDS.....	50
TRUST	51
DEACONS OFFICES	52
ROTATION.....	53
HIGH WATER MARK	53
DEACON STEPHEN.....	54
DEACON PHILIP	56
INSPIRATION.....	57
FOLLOW THE LEADER	58
OTHER DUTIES	59
NEGLECTED DUTIES	60

DEACONS AND THEIR WIVES

DEMONSTRATE FAITH.....	62
PASTOR/DEACONS MEETINGS	63
STAND.....	65
CONCLUSION	67
SALVATION	68
INDEX.....	72
SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.....	76
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	83

INTRODUCTION

My experience and limited Bible knowledge has demonstrated to me that deacons are sometimes not chosen wisely and many do not understand what the Bible requires from those holding this office. This book is written for the purpose of assisting pastors, deacons, their wives, and those desiring the position as deacon in their understanding of Bible requirements and responsibilities, and how to use this office well. I believe many churches will not grow because pastors are expected to perform many tasks which are clearly the responsibility of all church members, especially deacons. Pastors become overwhelmed in the workload required to pastor and run the many other tasks which others should be performing. One should keep in mind that deacons are not perfect but our goal should be to continue to grow and serve in order to seek perfection.

DEACON DEFINED

The word deacon as defined in “Strong’s Concordance” means attendant, host, friend, teacher, minister, to serve, run errands, waiter, or other menial duties. In other words it means SERVANT. They are servants of the people under the direct authority of the pastor. They assist him in any and all ways in which he desires for the purpose of building the body of Christ, the church. It is an honor to serve God as one of His servants.

Matthew 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

Luke 4:8 *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

John 12:26 *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

Hebrews 9:14 *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

FINAL WORD

The Bible (KJV) is clear on what deacons are and what they are not. What I present here is what I've learned from the Bible and in serving as a deacon for the past fifty plus years under several great pastors such as Curtis Hutson, William Pennell, Don Richards, and others. They used the office of deacons in accordance with God's Holy Word. I need to pause here to say that all Christians are commanded to do the work of the ministry, especially deacons having been proved. For example, Paul addresses the Book of Philippians to all saints with the bishops and deacons.

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

What follows in this book are requirements which I believe God expects from all deacons. Do I believe that as deacons we perform all these responsibilities to the very best of our abilities? The answer is NO! But if we are not striving to do them, and if we are not attempting to improve, then we are failures. It would be hard to find another Philip or Stephen just like it would be hard to find another Peter, John, or Paul. As Curtis

Hutson used to say "Shoot for the moon, you may not hit it, but if you don't try you will never get off the ground." Keep in mind that God would not have given us these responsibilities if he didn't expect us to do them. God will help if we try.

Ephesians 4:12-15 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

THE BEGINNING

The position of deacons had its beginning in the Day of Pentecost with the start of the New Testament Church. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost and multitudes came together and many were saved. First three thousand, then five thousand. Then they taught and preached in every house in Jerusalem. These disciples were soul winners. They were not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the church grew so did the needs of the people and the church. The apostles could

DEACONS AND THEIR WIVES

no longer do everything. They needed help. The needs of the people began to be neglected. They started to murmur. The apostles solved that problem with DEACONS. The apostles also began to ordain pastors to serve in ministering to local bodies of believers. It followed that they too would need deacons to assist in the work.

Acts 2:41 *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Acts 4:4 *Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.*

Acts 5:42 *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

Hebrews 6:9-10 *But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS

Drop back in time between the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension into heaven. After Jesus had risen from the tomb he continued to teach his disciples. The things he taught must have been of the utmost importance. He commanded them to go and teach all nations all his commandments. To get them saved, baptized, and grounded in the faith so that they would continue to do the same for others. The purpose was to start an unending unbroken chain in building his church.

Matthew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Luke 10:2 *Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*

Jesus said Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. I often wondered why Jesus used the word creature. I believe he knew

DEACONS AND THEIR WIVES

that if he didn't we would be culling out many groups of lost people who we would judge unworthy. In Luke Jesus in the parable of the man making a feast said "Call the poor, the maimed and the blind." "Go into the highways, the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." The apostles went and in turn you and I became part of this unending and unbroken chain. We should observe this commandment as well as all others. Pastors teach, deacons help, and WE ALL GO!

1 Timothy 3:10 *And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 1*

Timothy 3:13 *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.*

Mark 16:15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

1 John 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

1 John 1:6 *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

POWER FROM GOD

The last commandment Jesus told his disciples was not to depart from Jerusalem until they received power after receiving the Holy Ghost to witness to the whole earth. Power to do what? Witness! A person filled with the Holy Ghost will be a witness. There are no exceptions. One of the qualifications for deacons is that they be filled with the Holy Ghost – TO WITNESS.

Paul said he was a debtor to preach to all people. We are also debtors. We have been bought and redeemed with the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Lost people have a God given right to hear a clear salvation message from all of us who are saved, especially deacons.

Ephesians 1:19 *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*

Acts 1:4-5 *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

Acts 1:8-9 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon*

you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Acts 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:11* *Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*

Romans 1:14 *I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.*

Philippians 1:27 *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*

THE UNBROKEN CHAIN

As Jesus had promised at Pentecost, they all received the Holy Ghost and began to witness. I wonder how Jesus feels when He did so much for us and we do so little for Him? Are we as members of God's church really a part of the unending and unbroken chain that God established to build his

church? I stand guilty of my own short comings in fulfilling this commandment. I confess I am a very weak length.

Luke 9:23 *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

1 Timothy 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

Luke 24:45-47 *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Romans 2:5-6 *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds:*

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

WHO CHANGED?

Jesus' desire and command has not changed from the Day of Pentecost. We have! We make all kinds of excuses as to why we can't serve God like he commands. We have grown complacent in absorbing God's word taught and preached by our pastors and teachers. Some of us are far from being a doer of His word.. We are hearers only. For example, I have heard some say they used to go door to door soul winning, but quit because they could not see any results. Our command is to be prepared and to go. We cannot save anyone. The Holy Spirit must convict, people must repent, and Jesus saves. Many times people only need a friendly voice, encouragement, and/or prayer. I personally believe these types of visits are like giving them a cup of cold water. If so, we will not lose our reward. There is no greater feeling than to be able to help someone, be they family, friends or strangers. To be able to lead them to Christ is joy unspeakable.

Acts 4:10-12 *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other*