

# The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

**A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.**  
The Messenger is published weekly by the South Florida Ave. Church of Christ meeting at 1807 South Florida Ave - Lakeland, FL 33803 Vol. 70 No. 23 06-27-17

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## SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.  
Worship.....10:30 a.m.  
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.  
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

## HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

## MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia  
Don Iverson.....India  
Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa  
Graham McDonald..Scotland  
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.  
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands  
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

## *The Qualifications and Work of Deacons (part 1)*

By Brian R. Kenyon

The work of deacons is one of the most misunderstood works in the local church. It has been observed that in some local churches the preacher does the work of the elders, the elders do the work of the deacons, and the deacons are not doing any work. While this may be an overstatement, there is truth in the fact that some in the church do not know the Scriptural roles of the elders and deacons. Since the church here is in the process of appointing another deacon, it is relevant for us to study what the Bible teaches about deacons.

### *What Is a Deacon?*

The word “deacon” comes from a Greek word (*diakonos*), which occurs thirty times in the New Testament. The word is usually translated by a form of the word “servant” or “minister.” The basic meaning is “whoever renders service of whatever kind” (Ferguson 83). Thayer defines it as “one who executes the commands of another; esp. of a master; a servant, attendant, minister” (138). *Diakonos* is used of a king’s servants (Mt. 22:13), servants at a wedding feast (Jn. 2:5), civil government (Rom. 13:4), Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:8), Phoebe (Rom. 16:1), Apollos (1 Cor. 3:5), the apostles (2 Cor. 3:6), servants of Satan (2 Cor. 11:15), Paul (Col. 1:23), Tychicus (Eph. 6:21), and Timothy (1 Thes. 3:2). In fact, according to the general meaning of the word, all Christians are to fulfill the idea of *diakonos*!

In the local church, however, there is also a “special” kind of servant, appropriately translated “deacon.” *Diakonos* is translated “deacon” in only three New Testament verses. The first is: “Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). In this context, “saints” (which refers to all Christians) are distinct from “bishops” and “deacons.” While it is true that all bishops and deacons are saints, all saints are not bishops or deacons. This verse also shows that deacons work with bishops, who are the same as elders. The other two verses, where the English word “deacon” is translated are in First Timothy 3:8, 12.

### *Qualifications of a Deacon*

For the most part, the qualifications for a deacon are character traits that all Christians should have. The qualifications for these special servants of the church are given as follows: “Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith

with a pure conscience. <sup>10</sup>But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. ... <sup>12</sup>Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim. 3:8-12).

It should be noted that no man whose name is submitted to serve as a deacon will be perfect. There was only one perfect human being, Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:15). However, men who would serve as deacons should be examples in these qualification traits. Men who would serve as deacons should also look within themselves to be sure they meet these qualifications and that they take serious the work of serving as a deacon.

***Reverent*** The Greek word translated “reverent [grave, KJV; dignified, ESV]” means “inspiring respect, high-principled, honourable” (Zerwick 630). In addition to First Timothy 3:8, 11, this Greek word occurs in only two other places, where it is translated “noble [honest, KJV; honorable, ESV]” (Phil. 4:8), and again “reverent” (Tit. 2:2). This word indicates that one’s character is worthy of respect and honor.

***Not Double-Tongued*** This Greek word combines a word for “two” with a word that means “word,” or “saying.” The meaning is literally “twice speaking,” and from that, the idea of insincerity evolved. Thayer defines the word, “double-tongued, double in speech, saying one thing with one person, another with another (with intent to deceive)” (152). Obviously, no Christian is to be like this (cf. Jas. 5:12), but especially those men who would serve in the capacity of deacon.

***Not Given to Much Wine*** The word translated “given” comes from a Greek word that basically means to “turn one’s mind to,” and, as it is in this verse, to “occupy oneself with, devote or apply oneself to” (Bauer 714). The man who would serve as deacon must not have his mind occupied with wine (i.e., alcoholic beverages). Thinking that first century Christians had no choice but to drink intoxicating wine is a misconception. Fermented does not necessarily mean intoxicating! All Christians are to “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11). The intentional non-medicinal consumption of alcohol definitely “wars against the soul.” Not only that, it impairs one’s judgment of right and wrong (Pr. 23:29-35; 31:4-5). Therefore, a deacon, or any other Christian, must not be “given to much wine”!

***Not Greedy for Money*** The Greek word translated “greedy for money [greedy of filthy lucre, KJV; greedy for dishonest gain, ESV]” combines a word for “base” and a word for “gain,” meaning to be “fond of dishonest gain, greedy for money” (Bauer 25). This Greek word occurs again in reference to the qualifications of elders (Titus 1:7). A verb form of this noun is found in First Peter 5:2, where elders are told not to “shepherd the flock ... for dishonest gain [filthy lucre, KJV].” Money hungry individuals are not fit to be special servants in the church of Christ. In fact, greediness for money is something that all Christians must avoid (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9-10). We cannot serve “God and mammon [wealth, NAS]” (Mt. 6:24).

***Holding the Mystery of the Faith*** The term “mystery” does not refer to something that cannot be known, but refers to “God’s plan of providing salvation through Christ, which was once hidden but now is revealed” (Thayer 420). This indicates that men who would serve as deacons must be knowledgeable in the revealed will of God. This qualification would be the equivalent to the elder’s qualification of “holding fast the faithful word” (Titus 1:9). Like elders, deacons are to be men who are sound in the faith. The word “pure” in the phrase, “with a pure conscience,” comes from a word that means “clean.” For a man to meet this qualification, he must act in complete harmony with the “mystery of the faith,” which he so dearly holds. Of course, all Christians are to live this way (1 Tim. 1:19 cf. Eph. 4:1-6).

***First Be Tested*** The Greek word translated “tested [proved, KJV]” is found twenty-three times in the New Testament. It has the basic definition of to “put to the test, examine.” It may be translated “discern” (Lk. 12:56), “did [not] like” (Rom. 1:28), and “approves” (Rom. 14:22). When it refers to a person being “tested,” as it does in connection with this qualification, it says that others must “be convinced of someone’s faithfulness ... of examination of candidates” who would serve as deacon (Bauer 202). This is not suggesting that would-be-deacons must serve in some sort of probationary period before they are officially recognized as deacons. Rather, it says that the character qualifications must already have been shown in their lives before they should even be considered as potential deacons.

Although Acts 6:3-6 is not referring to deacons as per First Timothy 3:8-12, the process of selecting the special servants in Acts 6 is parallel in many ways to the selection of deacons. Note that it was the *congregation* who chose the men who met the qualifications given by the apostles (Acts 6:3). The congregation knew the character of the men among them better than the apostles. The congregation in Acts 6 selected men who were already proven (i.e., “tested”) to have met the qualifications.

(continued on page 4)

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Beverly Jakelsky has been admitted into the hospital this last week. Continue prayers for Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Margaret Coone, Sharon Mathis Washington, Josephine Bowman and Nadia Kemp.

**Relatives:** Benny Martin, Allan Cooper, son of Bob & June Cooper and Dorothy Trice.

**Shut In Members:** Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Sharon Edler and Duane Nelson.

**Others:** Joyce Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner, Connie Hyer, Jack Pinckert, Maurice Davis, Jr., and Sam & Judy Crow.

## Upcoming Events

**July 1st-9th:** Our young people and chaperones will be traveling to Penonome, Panama, on a mission trip.

**Sunday, July 2nd:** Fellowship in Service following evening services. Please bring finger-foods.

**Saturday July 15th:** Men's breakfast at Medulla Church of Christ at 8:00 a.m.

**July 24th-28th:** VBS will be hosted by the Orange Street church of Christ. The theme is "Fix Your Eyes on Jesus!"

**Saturday, July 29th: Don't forget our VBS** here at SFA. Classes for all ages. Terrance Brownlow-Dindy from 6th Street church of Christ will be teaching the adult class.

## Sympathy

Emel Holtzel, nephew of Bill & Carlene Long, passed away from a heart attack on Sunday June 25th in North Carolina. Please keep the Long family in your prayers.

## Hither, Thither and Yon

bettye bolding is in the process of moving to Azalea Park. Her new address will be 1325 Grasslands Blvd. Apt #239, Lakeland, FL 33803. Also we are happy that Gene Patterson is back worshipping with us here at South Florida.

## Visitors

Jennie Wallace and Debbie Lester.



## Keep the Lord in Your Summer Travel Plans



Tune into AM 1330 (station WWAB) with your friends and neighbors every Monday from 5:00-5:30 p.m. for the "Way of Truth" program. This is a joint effort to evangelize involving Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (6th Street) and Hiram Kemp. Let's point our community to the Bible!

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### July

David Anderson ..... **Table** ..... Ken Walker  
John McShane..... **Assist** ..... Kenny French

### Sunday, July 2, 2017

**9:30 A.M.**  
Song at Bible Class ..... David Williams  
Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

### 10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Fred Strickland  
Song Leader ..... Jason Hendrix  
Opening Prayer ..... C.J. Grimes  
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp  
Closing Prayer ..... Kenny French

### 6:00 P.M.

Song Leader ..... Stacey Paulin  
Opening Prayer ..... Charles Paulin  
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp  
Closing Prayer ..... Kyle Williams

Greeters ..... The Fifes  
Att. Cards..... Quadarius/Ian  
Open & Close Building..... Phil Flfe

### Wed. July 5, 2017

Song Leader ..... Jason Hendrix  
Opening Prayer ..... Jeff Bingle  
Closing Prayer ..... David Deal

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - (863) 602-9005*

### Sunday, July 9, 2017

**9:30 A.M.**  
Song at Bible Class ..... Stacey Paulin  
Prayer..... Bobby Sheumaker

### 10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Fred Strickland  
Song Leader ..... Jason Hendrix  
Opening Prayer ..... Frank Hamby  
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp  
Closing Prayer ..... Josh Estridge

### 6:00 P.M.

Song Leader ..... Stacey Paulin  
Opening Prayer ..... Steve Hunley  
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp  
Closing Prayer ..... Jeff Bingle

Greeters ..... Debra / Melissa  
Att. Cards..... Paul and Sebastian  
Open & Close Building..... Phil Fife

### Wed. July 12, 2017

Song Leader ..... Ken Walker  
Opening Prayer ..... David Williams  
Closing Prayer ..... Paul Romine

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

June 04 .....	\$7,164.00
June 11.....	\$4,986.00
June 18.....	\$5,474.00
June 25.....	\$4,994.45
Contribution Average.....	\$5,390.28
2017 Weekly Budget.....	\$4,716.51

*Qualifications and Work of Deacons (continued from page 2)*

**Being Found Blameless** The Greek word translated “blameless” means “that cannot be called to account, unprovable, unaccused, blameless” (Thayer 44). It is found only four other times in the New Testament. It is translated “blameless,” in reference to Christians generally (1 Cor. 1:8), and in reference to elders (Tit. 1:6-7). It is also translated “unreprovable” (KJV) in reference to Christians in general (Col. 1:22). Obviously, this qualification is not requiring a man to be sinlessly perfect (cf. 1 Jn. 1:8-10), but when he sins, he must take care of his sins according to God’s plan so that he stands forgiven, irrefragable, and blameless. Of course, all Christians must be found “blameless” (1 Cor. 1:8), especially those who would serve as deacons.

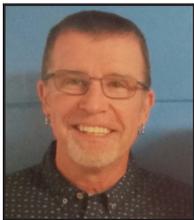
**The Husband of One Wife** This qualification is not difficult to determine. These men must be Scripturally married. This, obviously, rules out women serving as deacons, although women may fulfill the general meaning of *diakonos* (cf. Phoebe, Rom. 16:1). The work of a deacon necessitates that he have a stable home life, not only to serve more effectively, but also to keep him from certain temptations that may arise in his area of service. The question sometimes arises: Is a man still eligible if he is remarried following the death of his wife or if he is Scripturally divorced and remarried? The answer is simple. A married man is either Scripturally *(continued below)*



*South Florida Avenue*  
**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
*1807 South Florida Avenue*  
*Lakeland, FL 33803-2653*

Return Service Requested

The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .



The elders would like to appoint **Stacey Paulin** as a deacon. Please let them know if you have a Scriptural objection. God, through the apostle Paul, described the qualifications for a man to serve as deacon (1 Tim. 3:8-12).

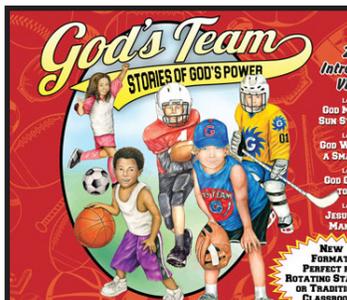
*(continued from above)* married to one wife or he is a polygamist. If God does not consider him a polygamist, then why should His church? It should be noted, however, that just because he meets this qualification does not necessarily mean it would be expedient for him to serve as a deacon. If his marital status was the center of attention and discussion instead of the Lord’s work, or if in the minds of some spiritually mature members, there was doubt, he may better serve the Lord in other capacities (cf. Rom. 14:16).

In next week’s bulletin we will examine the remaining qualification and consider what the Bible teaches concerning the work of deacons. ❤️ *Brian*

**“Super Saturday”**

**VBS July 29**

**Classes for all ages including adults!**



**Terrance Brownlow-Dindy, preacher from the 6th Street church of Christ, will teach the adult class!**

**We are thankful for the safe return of Jason from Honduras! Pray for the group leaving Saturday for Panama!**

