

Deacon Ordination Service

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you'll be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Well, this evening we're dedicating to our deacons and to our new deacons coming along.

And many times in our society we hear a lot of people who are, if you're ordained in the ministry, they'll look to somebody and they'll say, he's a minister. We're looking for a minister, someone who preaches, somebody who is in the ministry.

And that word minister actually sounds very respectful, very honorable, but that word actually comes from the word serve. All it means is somebody who serves, a servant. Well, when we served in Argentina, we would go into the jail system and we'd preach to many different people and they used to look at me and they would say, they would call me siervo.

And they would say, siervo. And I would, at first for a long time I thought, what? You know, there's a siervo with a C, which is a deer, an animal. And there's a siervo with an S, which means servant.

They would look and they would say, hey, servant. And I thought, you know, all these guys, you don't want to talk bad to a guy in jail. You know, he's liable to kill you, you know? And so I mean, he's already there for some reason. So anyway, I would look at him and I would say, yeah.

[1 : 04] And I found out that that word servant was a very respectful term that they would give you, a very endearment that you are a servant of the Most High God. When we open the Word of God and we come to it, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, now addressing the subject of, and He looks to His disciples in Mark chapter number 10, and He says, you want to know who the greatest is?

You want to know who the chiefest and the best is? He that's the best is the servant, the one who's ready to bow down. And then the Lord gives the command. And throughout the Word of God, He shows us.

And then He goes on to John chapter number 13, when He got all His disciples, and they're all standing around, and He stands up from His table, and He puts the towel over His hand, and He walks around, and He begins to wash your disciples' feet.

Now think about it. During that time, they had no vehicles, right? And so the only way to get around was walking. And they had their feet very dirty and very nasty, and the Lord Jesus Christ stands up from the table, the one who's head of everything, the one who's the big man, the one in charge, the big captain, the chief, and He stands up, and He begins to wash their feet.

And after He gets done washing their feet in John 13, He looks in verse number 14, verse number 15, and He said, what I just did, I want you to go out and do the same thing. And as a church in 1 Corinthians 12, we're many members but one body.

[2 : 21] And when all the members began to serve together, many great things happened. And the Lord over and over gives a command in Galatians 5, verse number 13, and He says, you know what? Go serve one another.

And that's our responsibility. That's our job, to serve one another. Now our deacons, our brothers are coming, and as they stand before our church, this is the greatest position of all, a position that can serve.

And you and I as Christians, we have a great example from our Lord, and a great command from our Lord, that we are to go out, and we are to serve one another. That's the greatest ability. That's the greatest challenge.

That's the greatest ranking that He could give us, that He would give us. And so now I tell you, my dear brethren, Brother Brett, Brother John, as we move up into this position of deacons, this is a great thing.

A lot of times we think about serving in the church, and it's an exterior thing. We've got to use our hands, and we've got to use our time, we've got to use our abilities and everything, and that's true. But even more so, even than an exterior thing, it's an interior thing.

[3 : 21] And right when Moses stands on the bank of Jordan, before crossing over, he looks to the children of Israel, in Deuteronomy 28, and he says, serve the Lord with joyfulness, and gladness of heart.

So I challenge you, all of you, let's serve. Let's be servants of God. But don't just serve in the exterior, serve in the interior. Be happy when you serve God. I close by one man said this, in the kingdom of God, service is not a stepping stone to nobility.

It is nobility. The only kind of nobility that is recognized by God. Please turn to Acts chapter number six. Thank you, Brother Jeff. It's a real honor to serve a brother John and Brother Brett.

And I'm not starting serving tonight, but we'll continue serving together. And Acts chapter number six, you know the common story of the first deacons being appointed. And I'd like to look at what was the result of them being appointed to their positions and to their offices of the deacon.

But as you're turning there, I'd like to tell you about my neighbor. His electricity has been out the same as ours, but he decided that he would spend the nights in his car, not because he didn't have a place to go, but because he had some fish in an aquarium that he wanted to keep alive.

[4 : 30] And so I would check on him and I would say, don't you want to leave your fish and go do something else? Because he works at what I consider to be the greatest institution in the county outside of the church. He works at Costco and he's a, he's a manager there and he's a hard worker and he does a good job at the Costco, but he is now the last three days.

He has given his life to keeping a fish alive in the aquarium. And so as I was seeing Sonny EMC get the power lines ready, I thought, I really hope they get it because I'd like to have electricity in my house.

But I thought, I really hope they get the power lines going so that my neighbor would stop living out of his car and he could get back to his daily routine and what he's supposed to be doing.

And they're going to solve a problem that gives electricity, but they're also going to solve a problem that allows a man to get back to his dignity and back to the work and functioning the way that he's supposed to. And we find in the Bible in Ephesians 4, 12, that God gives us gifted men for the purpose of us multiplying disciples for the perfecting of the saints.

And that's what's happening here in Acts. It's also what's happening in our church tonight. So that God is giving a gift into the church that these men will use this tool of being a deacon so that as a church, we can fulfill our purpose of what we are supposed to be doing.

[5 : 45] And there's been challenges in the church. Acts chapter number five, Ananias and Sapphira, you know that couple, they both lied and there's a lack of integrity there. We know in Acts chapter number eight, we're going to find that the church of Jerusalem was gathering together and they weren't going out.

And then here we find there's a neglect of the widows. And instead of worrying about the great commission, they were worrying about the great commotion in the kitchen. And because of all that was going on there, they had lost sight of their real purpose.

And so in Acts chapter number six, um, and then actually have their number five with Ananias and Sapphira, God, um, shows his power through the death of both of them.

And then in Acts chapter number one, he scatters the church. And then Acts chapter number six, he appoints deacons. And every one of these situations inside of the early church, things that were keeping them from growing and staying focused, God steps in and he does something.

And Acts chapter number six, verse number one, it says in those days when the number of the disciples were multiplied in verse number one, we find that there is a multiplication of disciples. But then for the next five verses, we find a problem going on where a group of people are being neglected, not intentionally just because the, the apostles there didn't have enough help to do their job.

[7 : 00] But then in verse number seven, it starts again and it says, and the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly. And so there was a multiplication going on. Then it stops. God appoints deacons by using the church.

And then they get back to what they're doing. And so I'd like for all of you to think tonight, as we come to have a two new deacons, that the purpose of deacons is decided by the purpose of the church. We only know what these men do because we know what we do as a church.

And this is about more than food or people being fed, that the deacons serve by creating an environment where the word of God and its teaching was protected and made a priority.

And also that widows were being provided for and that we were functioning as the Christians we're supposed to be. And this is a disciple making organism as a church. And there are things that would try to prevent us from doing that.

We can become inward focus. We can desire to be entertained, but God appointed men of God to address those needs. So as you think about these men that God gave us and you look at the qualification, which Brother Robert's going to talk about, about the type of men that we have, you would say these qualifications seem to be way too big just for serving tables.

[8 : 09] Well, that wasn't what they were appointed for. They were appointed of God to solve a problem inside of the church that make much of the word of God and the result where disciples were made. And so what will be the result of the night?

Not that two men will get a Bible and a certificate and that we'll be able to say we have new deacons is that more disciples will be in this community. These are men that are serious minded, that are qualified for the task, and they know how important it is.

So God is providing us deacons so that we can reach more people in our community. These men are not golf caddies. They're not here to provide for our entertainment and to help us take more in for ourselves, to build buildings for our enjoyment.

But everything that they do is for the purpose of multiplying disciples. There are men of God who are going to help us live out the mission. God has given us in making disciples. By helping solve issues that may arise that would cause division in the congregation.

By helping us stay focused on having a ministry of the word. So as I said, these men know the task that is before them. But I'd ask everybody in here, do you know the importance of what they're going to do?

[9 : 09] You can only if you remember what is the purpose of the church. They're not giving us help to make things more comfortable. They're working to help us make sure we continue to be a disciple-making church. And when you appreciate them is when you're going to really know what the purpose of the church is, which we are supposed to produce disciples.

So I'm thankful tonight that we already have two disciple-making pastors, but we get two more people that are committed to not only making disciples, but making things, an environment inside of our church possible so we can see disciples multiplied.

If you would, take your Bibles, turn with me to the book of Acts in chapter 6. We'll be back there. You know what's a great thing that the Bible does? He leaves, God always leaves us with an example. For the Christian, he leaves us Jesus Christ to live our life like.

For a missionary, it might be the Apostle Paul that we might focus our life and focus on what he did and live our life like that. For a pastor, he's given us some books in the New Testament that we can live our life like, or for the pastors.

And for the church, he's given us several epistles that he's given. Well, today I'd like to talk about the example of the first deacons, if we could. In Acts chapter 6 verse 3, the Bible says this, the Apostle says this, Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

[10 : 28] The first thing that we see for the first deacons is they had to be godly men. They had to be godly men. Actually, the Apostle Paul, when he goes on to 1 Timothy chapter 3, and he's exhorting Timothy, and he's giving him instruction, he tells them what to look for in a deacon.

He says in 1 Timothy chapter 3 verse 8, he says, Likewise must a deacon be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.

And let these things first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

Let the deacons be a husband of one wife. And he goes on, he lists all these different things that a deacon's supposed to do. You see, when God has a job to do, no matter if it's preaching the gospel, no matter if it's shepherding a church, even if it is waiting tables like we see in Acts chapter 6, God is looking for men of character.

He's looking for men of godly character. So Vision Baptist Church, when we go out and we look for the next deacon in our church, let's find men that have good godly character.

[11 : 33] But these first deacons, they weren't only good godly characters, but they also were ministers, they were servants. In Acts chapter 6, the apostles were faced with a problem. And that problem started out with women. That's where you're supposed to laugh.

Anyways. But these widow women, they were bickering and they were fighting back and forth. And God set up a position where he could have men that would serve and wait these tables so that the apostles, like Trent said, could go out and multiply the disciples and give their lives over to the ministry of the word and prayer.

And that's where we have the deacon's position created. Vision. When we're looking for deacons, we must look for those who serve. Those who aid the pastor. Those who aid all the people in the church so the gospel may go forth.

But not only were they good godly men and men that were servants, but they were also gospel proclaimers. Because you see in Acts chapter 7, there's a man, one of the deacons that was elected in Acts chapter 6.

His name was Stephen. And he was out in the synagogues and he was preaching Jesus Christ. In Acts chapter 7, it's all about him preaching about Jesus Christ. To the point he ends up becoming, he's becoming the first martyr of the church.

[12 : 44] And in Acts chapter 8, the second deacon, Philip, he goes to Samaria and he preaches the gospel there in Samaria and people get saved. At the end of Acts chapter 8, he's taken the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch.

God's getting the gospel down to Africa through these deacons. These men were godly men. These men were ministers. They were servants. And these men were gospel proclaimers.

But not only were they gospel proclaimers, these men were world changers. These men were world changers. Think about this. It was Stephen at the time of his death in Acts chapter 7 in verse 56.

At the time of his death, he looked up into heaven. And he saw the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord Jesus Christ wasn't sitting down at the right hand of the Father.

He was standing up and saying, that's my man. You're preaching the gospel to those people. You're preaching the gospel. And it was Stephen that was out there that was proclaiming the gospel that would eventually change the life of a man named Saul that would go out and preach the gospel and get the gospel to the known world at that time.

[13 : 55] It was Philip that God used to take the gospel to Samaria when the gospel was there centralized in Jerusalem. It was Philip that God used to give the gospel to a man from Africa.

Vision. When we look for deacons, when we're out there looking for deacons, we have to look for men whose heart and their desire is to reach the world with the gospel.

I want to end with this. We've been blessed. Our deacons are men of godly character. We have men that serve and do things and they often go unnoticed.

We have men that take time out of their busy schedule to go out and do foundations, go out, get the gospel out during community outreach, go out and impact their co-workers and try to give the gospel wherever they are.

We are a blessed church. Not only that, I believe we have men that are world changers. We have men that give sacrificially to get the gospel around the world.

[15 : 00] We have men not only that give time to the training center to teach in the training center. We have men that not only give of their own money, but we have men that give of their own children to get the gospel to the world. Vision Baptist Church, we are a blessed church because we've got some great deacons.

But even more important than that, we have a great God. Let's praise Him for what He's doing in our church. Take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Timothy chapter 3. And I'm going to try to give you in about 20 minutes or less here the message for Brother Brett and for all of us.

And I would like to tell all of the young people of our church, I believe all four of these men are worthy of being imitated. I believe all four of them are worthy of being imitated.

And it's a large honor and privilege to be named a deacon. And God has done that in these men's lives. And the Bible says in 1 Timothy 3.8, Likewise, like preachers, like the bishops, like the men that came before in the story, must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre.

That means not looking for money, and it's a greedy desire of money. Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, soul winners. Let these also first be proved.

[16 : 19] Let them use the office of deacon being found blameless. In verse 10, you ought to maybe underline that word proved. I'll let you know that Brett Johnson often shows up here at the church, and you'd have no idea of this.

You could come to church, and it's like his office here. He's studying his Bible. He's doing discipleship, or he's fixing things. And so he has already proven that. He's proven that in the kind of husband he is and the kind of dad, which I think is very evident, and that his kids are serving the Lord.

Even so, must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchased to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. Father, I pray that you would bless Brett Johnson tonight and his family.

I pray you'd make this a very special night for him as we love him and honor him tonight and just simply recognize your work of grace in his life and how he's been serving you.

[17 : 19] I also pray, dear God, that you'd help our church look to these men and find in them people that imitate you and follow you so they can follow them. And I pray, dear God, you'd help our deacons to always rise to the occasion to honor the office of a deacon to make it as important as you did and for them to live in such a way that others can follow them.

And I'll give you praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, there's a possibility that you might not understand deacons, and so I'd like to explain a little bit about that if I can.

The biblical word servant and the word deacon are basically interchangeable. In Acts chapter 6, that's like the first picture we see of a deacon. But that word deacon, it isn't some kind of weird servant like has been made in some churches where a deacon is like almost a second-class guy.

In 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 8, likewise with the deacons, that word deacon there is actually the word servant. And it's the same word used in Matthew 22, 13.

Look at that verse with me if you would. The Bible talks about a servant there. It said, Then said the king, To the servants, deacons, bind him hand and foot. Use the exact same word.

[18 : 31] When it spoke about Jesus Christ in Romans chapter 15 and verse 8, it uses the same word for minister. It says, Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God.

A deacon, a servant, a helper of the circumcision for the truth of God. In Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 7, the apostle Paul basically called himself a deacon.

He said, Whereof I was made a minister. The word for minister that's translated there is the word deacon, by the effectual working of his power. So in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 8, when it says, Likewise must the deacons be grave.

We know exactly who we're talking about. We're talking about servants like Jesus, servants like Paul, servants that make Jesus big and serve him. The first mentions Acts chapter 6.

In Acts chapter 6, you've already heard a little bit about it. They were arguing about the Greek widows and the Hebrew widows were arguing about the food. And the apostles were being called away from doing their job.

[19 : 36] These deacons were probably full-time because it would have been a full-time job to take care of so many nagging women. And solve all that problem. And in verse 2, it says, It's not reason we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

So they found those seven men and they were full of the Holy Ghost. If you ever read, look at verse 3. If you look at verse 3, you just realize what kind of man God picked.

It says, Seven men of honest report. Let's get guys who have a testimony of being honest. You can trust these guys. Full of the Holy Ghost. That's how you talk about a preacher.

That's how you talk about a preacher. Here they're talking about a deacon that way. Full of wisdom. These were not dumb bunnies. These were wise men. Wisdom starts with the fear of the Lord. They feared God.

They were honest men. They're full of Holy Ghost. And you can trust them to take care of business that we may appoint over this business. When they found Stephen, in verse 5, he was a man full of faith and full of the Holy Ghost.

[20 : 34] And so it's a great thing. They're servants. So, Brother Brent, you already are a church. I want you to know that's who they are. But I also want you to know that no pastor ought to ever think he was more than a deacon.

Because a deacon is a servant. And a servant is a deacon. And a minister is a deacon. And a minister is a servant. And we're all in this servant Jesus. There's only one big shot in every church.

And his name is Jesus. And everybody else is a bunch of little shots. There's only one great one in every church. And his name is Jesus. The Bible says, and the next thing I'd like to just give you some ideas about serving.

For all of us, I think this is worth. By the way, let me just say real quickly that in the Bible, there's never the idea that preachers are supposed to be really great men of God. And then after that, there's these deacons.

They're not quite as good a men of God as deacons. And then the rest of us get to come in on the third rung. That's just not in the Bible anywhere. In the Bible, everybody's supposed to be serving Jesus. The pastor, basically the only difference between a pastor or a bishop in 1 Timothy 3 and a deacon was apt to teach.

[21 : 38] The truth is we're all supposed to be godly men of God. We're all supposed to be servants. Amen. Don't that be something like a weird thing like, boy, preachers, they're really spiritual. Actually, we all ought to be that way.

The Bible talks about serving, and I just picked out some verses I thought might bless us as we talk about serving. First, we serve with the right attitude. We serve the Lord with gladness.

Psalms 100 and verse 2. We serve Him sincerely. We serve Him sincerely. In Matthew 6, 24, we have chosen to serve God and not money.

We've chosen to serve God and not ourselves. There's only one master in our life, Luke 4 and verse 8. Jesus said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan. Before it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

Only one. We serve Jesus. We serve each other and Him in a spirit of love. That's what the Bible says in Galatians 5 and verse 13.

[22 : 38] By love, serve one another. And I say to you, deacons and all of us that are in any kind of position of leadership here, we serve others as though we were serving Jesus Christ Himself.

In Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 7, the Bible says, With goodwill doing service as to the Lord and not to men. So every deacon in the church and every pastor in the church and every Sunday school, in fact, there's everybody in the church that knows Jesus.

We're supposed to go around and say, I'm going to treat you real good. I'm going to treat you like I would if you were Jesus. I'm going to treat you like I would if you were Jesus. If you were Jesus, I'd show great respect. If you were Jesus, I'd be very kind to you.

That's how I'm going to serve you. Then we all serve according to our ability. In 1 Peter chapter 4 and verse 10, Every man, as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards, as good administrators of the manifold, the diverse, the wildly colored grace of God, make sure you do it the best way you can with what God has given you.

The last one about how we serve, if I could, the last one I'd like to show you is in 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 16. I preached this a lot when I was on deputation and furlough.

[23 : 54] 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 16, we all ought to serve voluntarily. I had a message I used to preach called Both and Willing. It became quite a well-known message, actually. I actually pulled up to churches and had preachers say to me, if you could preach, if I could, if I, I know the Holy Spirit's going to tell you what to preach, but if you listen, I'd sure like you to preach that message you got on willingness.

This was the key verse. This is the verse about all of us as we serve God. We're going to read verses 16 and 17, if you would. The Bible says, For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me.

Yea, woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. Let's go back to 16 just a second there, but watch this. You know, if I do the ministry God's called me to do, big deal. God told me to do it.

If I preach the gospel, I don't need to brag about that. God put the need on me. God put the woe on me. If I don't preach the gospel, it's like I'm supposed to be doing something with my life that counts.

But verse 17 jumped off the page at me years ago. For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward. But if against my will, God gives me a dispensation of the gospel, and I do it, I won't get a reward.

[25 : 06] So the idea would be that as I work in the sound booth or run a camera, as I take up the offer to play a song, or as I take care of the babies in the nursery, whatever I'm doing, God is going to bless me according to how I want to do it.

Not because I have to, but I want to. And so it ought to be voluntary service. So here's a few things about deacons before we pray over Brother Brett.

What we learn about biblical deacons, deacons have high spiritual qualifications. High spiritual qualifications. But really nothing that every man in our church shouldn't be trying to live out.

A deacon ought not be. Everybody in this room ought to back up in a second and just realize, every man in this church ought to want to be a deacon. Every man in this church ought to want to.

You don't need the job. Forget the job. You don't need the title. That's not the point. The holiness. The walking with God. The being that kind of man. And it ought to be the way we are.

[26 : 08] I want you to look at 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 10. And I think this is very true of both John and Brett. John's being installed tonight, but Brett's being ordained. The Bible says in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 10, Let these also first be proved.

Let's test them. Isn't that testing really a doctrinal thing where you set them in front of the church and make sure they got the right doctrine, though you want to make sure they do have the right doctrine. That's definitely a part of it.

But it's about them knowing how to serve. It's not a title. It's not a position. It's an attitude. It's an action.

It's a way of living. And that's what's going on. First be proved. And I believe with all my heart, Brett's been proven. I believe he has shown his heart, his desire.

I believe the fact that God's given him two kids that are on their way to the mission field, one's already on the mission field, is a great evidence. I think the fact that he comes to this church and you didn't even know that is a good example of just that.

[27 : 11] There are other men in this church. There are lots of people doing stuff like that, which I'm extremely proud of. Look at 1 Timothy 3.13. They're to use the office well. In 1 Timothy 3.13, the Bible said, For they that have used the office of a deacon well.

You know, it's a privilege. You get to be a deacon. It's like, hey, I'm a deacon. It's expected I'm supposed to be doing this. People in our church are automatically going to know Brett.

I can call Brett. He's one of the deacons at that church. I can call Brett and find out what's going on. He's one of the deacons at that church. It's an office. It's a position. It's a privilege. But the truth is you're going to determine how well you use it.

You ought to give honor to the position that God's allowing you to have as he's allowing you to be made a deacon at Vision Baptist Church tonight. Then I love what it says in 1 Corinthians 3.13.

It says, For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchased to themselves a good degree. That's pretty good, isn't it? Because I'll tell you how to get a blue ribbon.

[28 : 16] I'll tell you how to get a prize. I'll tell you how to get a trophy. Use the office of a deacon well. Many times in Independent Baptist Churches, maybe deacons aren't respected, but we want them to be at Vision Baptist Church.

Maybe many times in Independent Baptist Church, it's almost like a token thing you do so you can pretend you have deacons, but we don't want to do that. We want our deacons to deke.

Amen? We want our deacons to do it. We want our servers to serve and to lead and to guide and to be spiritual leaders. And they have been carefully chosen and God has placed them there.

And they get to purchase to themselves a good degree. They also get something else. Great boldness in the faith. Great boldness. My brothers have recognized in me that I love Jesus.

My brothers have recognized in me, my pastors and my leaders have recognized in me that I do love Jesus and I am living that out. And it is real in my life.

[29 : 15] And so you get a good degree and great boldness, which is in Christ Jesus. And so tonight, as a church, we're going to ordain Brett Johnson as a deacon.

And he'll be a deacon. By the way, I want to tell you right now, we're looking for some more deacons. We're looking for some more deacons. We need men in our church. I want men in our church that can be an example to the community.

I want men in our church to be an example to our church. We have an important, special job to do. We're to get the gospel to the world. And I pray that that becomes real over all of us.

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