

What Is The Scriptural Role Of A Deacon?

INTRODUCTION

Before discussing what a deacon is and does, I want to briefly summarize two important topics relevant to this study; correct church leadership and correct ways to give. First and foremost the scriptures do *not* support the office of a pastor, which in most churches consists of one senior pastor, and one or more junior pastors. Second, the scriptures do not validate the method of financial giving (as it presently exists) in the vast majority of churches; the stereotypical mode of financial giving taught by fundamental Christianity says each believer should give a "tithe" (10% of one's gross income earnings) plus an additional, "offering," which is over and above what they tithe.

I am not going to qualify the aforementioned statements because you can read about these issues in comprehensive detail by clicking onto the [Bible Answer Stand Ministry](#) and look for appropriate links OR just use any one of the several links on related topics I have provided below.

The reason I mention pastoral church leadership and tithing is simply to illustrate the misalignment of today's churches with precepts taught in the New Testament scriptures. In fact, the New Testament eradicates the notion and/or practice of using the financial offerings of believers to construct a religious edifice (i.e. – church building structure) for the specific purpose of worship. The description of what God considers genuine worship in scripture is nowhere close to what is observed when the assembly meets weekly for praise and sermons in a structure filled with pews. You can read in-depth on this topic in the following link:

[The Church Building: Man Made Tradition, Or The House Of The Lord?](#)

For the sake of discussion, let's say church buildings and one-man pastorates are suddenly removed since intense persecution by an ungodly antichrist government forces Christians to meet secretly in smaller groups at the homes of individual believers; can you imagine the beneficial changes that would come about? People would receive more personal individual discipleship from a conglomerate of older, more mature Christian men and women guiding the assembly by example with impartiality.

Simultaneous to the leadership and organizational changes, the only financial giving would be for the support of those unable to fend for themselves, such as the elderly, widows, single moms, the disabled, pregnant inner-city teens, and whatever other needs exists. Plus believers could lend some support to those few elders who labor in the study of scriptures for the purpose of teaching, given they need financial support (See 1 Timothy 5:18ff, 1 Corinthians 9:9-18). The need to provide financial support for the elders that labor in teaching may or may not exist, given the affluence in our modern social environment.

There's really no one set way of making the determination for giving to elders that devote their life to doctrine, except this: according to the scriptures it is only just and right for the workman worthy of his hire

to be taken care of by the church. The needs of an elder would have to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the overriding consideration being to insure those who feed the church spiritually have scriptural right to material compensation.

As it is right now (in 2005) the true teachers throughout the body of Christ are often languishing (money-wise) because they would rather not seek their own God-given privileges for financial support than to dishonor the ministry or the Name of Jesus Christ with pleas for economic assistance for fear it could be misconstrued as parallel to the scheming pleas of money-grabber, pseudo-teacher-wolves, often in pastor's clothing, that seem to abound in the ranks of Christian churches in the 21st Century.

The overriding principle for contributing one's resources, whether they be financial or whether investing time, labor, skills, etc is that it be done cheerfully, voluntarily, and that all giving should be motivated out of love for each other, mutual concern for legitimate needs, and that any substantial financial offerings be delegated (by mutual agreement of the entire church) to responsible men *as elders who have an established reputation for integrity, honesty, and impartiality*. In addition every dollar should be counted, deposited, and as allocated for legitimate needs by a group of men and/or women. In the early church in Jerusalem the apostles told the church to choose seven men from their ranks for the job of distributing food and other donated items; seven is an odd number and as such it is a good figure for a voting quorum. The early church met in homes in smaller groups and emphasized mutual care and concern for the spiritual and mundane needs of everyone.

Acts 4:32, 34-35 Now the company of believers was of one heart and soul, and not one of them claimed that anything, which he possessed, was exclusively his own, but everything they had was in common and for the use of all... Nor was there a destitute or needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses proceeded to sell them, and one by one they brought (gave back) the amount received from the sales and laid it at the feet of the apostles (special messengers). Then distribution was made according as anyone had need. AMP

Apostolic instruction exhorted the first Christians to abound in doing good, especially to those who are of the household of the faith (see Galatians 6:9-10). The pastoral instruction in today's average Christian church exhorts the people to give for the support of the church structure. Sadly, the vast majority of organized Christian churches pay little attention to the individual needs of its members, which needs have gone ignored because of, to a greater or lesser degree, wrong concepts and applications concerning the role and function of deacons in the body of Christ; I will speak directly to the specifics of this issue later in the study.

Instead of dumping money into newer, bigger or better church building projects, ministerial salaries, maintenance of church equipment, new carpet, etc, the needs of the PEOPLE should be the highest priority. After the needs of those in the church have been met, collective corporeal care for the needs of the community outside the church should be our focus to help further the cause of the gospel.

What Is A Deacon In Today's Church?

The word deacon is derived from the Greek 'diakoneo' or 'diakonos' meaning 'servant or one who serves.' In the mainstream orthodox churches today the role of deacon evolved from its original intent in the early church at Jerusalem into one of the oldest offices in the ordained ministry. Three New Testament passages

in the King James Version that are used to rationalize the appointment of deacons are found in the texts of Philippians 1:1, and 1 Timothy 3:8, 12. The deacon position is in close association with that of bishops in the Orthodox Church.

In the fundamentalist (i.e. – born-again) Christian churches the function and office of deacon differs somewhat from the orthodox churches in that deacon 'boards' have come to be recognized as a group of men that assist the senior pastor in the management of church finances. This role and function of the deacon here is no more scriptural than is that of the traditional orthodox Christendom (a watered down title for churches that are typically Christian in name alone, but whose words and deeds have no spiritual life).

Deacon duties usually include collecting, counting and depositing the monetary tithes and offerings (usually collected as donations during weekly church services). Deacon boards are usually comprised of seven members, which is sufficient for a voting quorum, a requirement by law for all tax-exempt non-profit organizations under the corporate organization as a 501C-3 group. At this point I would like to address some of your comments about deacons; below you wrote:

"We (the churches in America) live in a "Democracy" where the people elect representatives to speak on their behalf to the government. This mentality has carried over into our church culture. The church is not a democracy but a Theocracy."

For pragmatic application, the word theocracy is derived from two Greek roots:

1. Theós = literally, "deity, Supreme Deity, or magistrate (for God)"
2. Krátos = meaning, "dominion, force, and to hold power."
3. Theocracy then is the government of a state by the immediate direction of God, (or the state thus governed). Of this species the Israelites furnish an well-known example in Psalms 114:8 where the words translated, "His dominion," exemplify God's reign as King by the administration of his laws thru appointed godly magistrates. This is the only *true* theocracy seen in scriptures whereby magistrates rule the people of God in matters of policy. The government of ancient Israel was a theocracy *until* they cast it off by choosing a king; thus we see the theocracy lasted till the time of Saul.

The word Theocracy is found nowhere in the scriptures that I am aware of. The Old Testament model, which is our primary theocratic example, was executed thru the agency of the judges or magistrates. However, the first theocracy failed because the children of Israel insisted on having a king to rule OVER them; they were dissatisfied with judges because this involved too much personal culpability. They wanted a KING to rule OVER them just like the surrounding heathen nations had kings ruling over them.

The Jews at the time of Christ were also looking for a messianic king to rule over them, but this time, they were expecting Yahweh to fulfill His promise to King David, that one of his descendents would ascend to the throne of Israel, and rule all nations with a rod of justice in righteousness forever. When Israel's true king (Jesus) came to them as a man, who was meek and lowly, the rulers of the Jews, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, incited the people to rebel against the Prince of peace and demand that Rome crucify him.

Luke 23:3 So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say." NASU

At his trial, Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you a king?" Jesus affirmed to Pilate that indeed he WAS a king, but that his kingdom was not of this world.

John 18:33-37 Therefore Pilate entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm." Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." NASU

The present form of spiritual government instituted by God is a delegated rulership whereby Jesus is entrusted with authority to reign as king of the kingdom of heaven. Few Christians today understand the intrinsic distinctions made by God, His son Jesus, and Israel concerning the kingdom of heaven (presently in full operation) and the kingdom of God, which yet to be summarily implemented upon the earth on the day, whereby Messiah WILL begin his reign as king over ALL the earth and rule the nations with a rod of iron. Meanwhile in this present age Jesus' role in the church on earth has a twofold purpose.

First and foremost, the glorified man Christ Jesus is the mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5); second, he advocates on our behalf as the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit, aka the Helper, Comforter, (i.e. – the Parakletos in John 14,15,16) and also as the Advocate (i.e. – the Parakletos in 1 John 2:1). Presently we do not yet see all things subject to Christ (Hebrews 2:8-11), but he has been made like his brethren in order that we might know him as a merciful high priest who is able to sympathize with the weakness of our human flesh since he too was a partaker of the same flesh and blood.

Jesus chose his apostles specifically for the purpose of establishing the church thru the proclamation of the gospel and the apostles helped the newly formed churches in the election of elders. This leads to my next point, which is church government. Earlier I listed some [hyperlinks](#) that provide detailed information concerning the role of church elders. Throughout scripture the elders are admonished to lead by example and also by providing the church with instruction (teaching) from the precepts of scripture.

Again, I won't take time to qualify this statement because I cover the topic in depth in other studies, but suffice to say, the current model of leadership in fundamental Christian churches is contrary to that seen in the New Testament and particularly in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. In Acts 14:23 there is however a precedent for voting (by a show of hands) by members of the church assembly to exhibit collective corporeal approval in the appointment of elders.

Acts 14:23 When they had **appointed elders** for them in **every church**, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. NASU

In Acts 14:23 the word rendered as, "appointed," in the NASU is inadequately translated because the Greek word, 'cheirotoneo' means literally, "to be a hand-reacher or voter," (by raising the hand); this term was

generally applied to appointment of elders by a majority vote as the means of group selection. Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines cheirotoneo as follows:

NT: 5500 cheirotoneo, cheirotoneo:

- a. Properly, to vote by stretching out the hand
- b. To create or appoint by vote: 2 Corinthians 8:19
- c. Without the notion of extending the hand, to elect, appoint Acts 14:23

The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament also defines cheirotoneo as, "stretching out the hands," or concurrent, "to elect... by lifting up the hand, to choose, to vote," (see 2 Corinthians 8:19), and it is used in the appointment of the elders in Acts 14:23. In more recent times cheirotoneo has often been used to mean, "to ordain." However, the word does not necessarily imply the actual laying on of hands. It simply means to elect through a show of hands by an assembly, as in 2 Corinthians 8:19, or to appoint, as by God (Acts 10:41) or by man (Acts 14:23).¹

A prime example of how cheirotoneo was used by the early church in the appointment of elders can be found in Acts 20:17, 28-30.

Acts 20:17, 28-30 From Miletus he {Paul} sent to Ephesus and called to him **the elders of the church**... "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers, to shepherd the church** of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. NASU

Here the apostle Paul sends word from Miletus to the church in Ephesus and calls to himself the, "elders" of the church to meet with him. The Greek word used for "elders" in verse 17 and throughout the New Testament scriptures is **presbuterous**; which is a **plural** noun. The Greek word used for "overseers" in Acts 20: 28 is **episkopos**, which is also a plural noun. The use of plural nouns to describe church leadership is no mistake; it demonstrates a fundamental precept of co-equality among men called to shepherd and watch over the flock of God.

Paul summons these shepherd-overseers as a cohesive group of equals, and this noteworthy illustration can be compared, for example, to the contemporary model of church leadership in the 21st century, whereby church leadership might convene for a conference or seminar, not interconnected as co-equals, but just the opposite, as a group of independent 'pastors' coming from various unrelated church denominations and for the most part, with no personal relationship with each other.

Also noteworthy is that Paul calls the elders of the "church" (singular noun) at Ephesus. The word 'church' is translated from the Greek 'ekkleesia,' as a singular noun *to represent one body of believers*, even though there were undoubtedly numerous individual assemblies of Christians at Ephesus, most of which met in the private homes of fellow believers. Ephesus was a very large commercial metropolitan and Paul exhorts these men as a group of co-equal, "overseers," (episkopos); in his exhortation he addresses their collective responsibility to, "shepherd the flock of God."

¹ The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993)

So it seems that a plural eldership is more in line with what was alluded to as as theocratic church government because it models as the antitype for the judges or magistrates found in the Old Testament prior to Israel's mistake of demanding a king to rule over them.

Nowadays Christian church leaders call themselves, "pastor," or some call themselves, "prophet," and some have gone to even further egocentric lengths and claimed the title of, "apostle." I once visited a purported 'prophetic' ministry in Portland, Oregon and met with a man who had embossed in large, ornate gold-painted letters above the entry door to his office, "THE APOSTLE." I'll spare you the details because just below this gaudy sign was a 30" X 30" decoupage-style cheap imitation of the Old Testament high priest's breastplate, decorated with cheesy multi-colored 'see-thru' plastic imitation gems and stones and trimmed all around by rounded wood trim painted.. you guessed it, gold.

Regardless of the motive behind a man stepping into these pastoral roles, and in spite of the fact there are some truly genuine pastors to be found in the body of Christ, this kind of leadership is NOT aligned with the pattern laid forth in the scriptures. In some cases, and I fear much more than merely some, pastors have taken upon themselves the role of church pontiff. I don't mean to stereotype all pastors, or do I think God will and is not using pastors to guide the church today. My point is that it is not in line with what scripture teaches, and is therefore substandard by God's judgment.

Many pastors, whether intentional or unintentional, have made themselves miniature versions of Israel's now infamous "kings." I personally have encountered **many** wounded sheep wandering about without a shepherd because of the dictatorial force and severity imposed upon them by one-man pastors who use their position of power to dominate others.

God never uses the singular noun, "pastor" the New Testament scripture and Ephesians 4:11 is the ONLY verse that even uses the word, "pastors." Here it is a mistranslation of the Greek word, "poimen" typically translated elsewhere in scripture as plural, "shepherds." I do not object to the word 'pastor' itself as much as I object to the CONCEPT of one-man leadership practiced in today's churches. God never intended one man to do all the teaching, decision making, counseling, etc.

The blueprint for church government should be what we see in the New Testament synoptic gospels, and then in the epistles, which correspond to the Book of Acts; these affirm the leadership of plural elders. The Old Testament should NOT be used for a pattern of church leadership; be very wary whenever this is done. You may wonder why I have taken such a long-winded approach to the study of deacons in the Bible. My reasoning is that it is necessary to first establish what God's true model of leadership is, as it is intended to exist today, before mentioning *the intended use* of the Greek word "diakoneo" in the New Testament. As you progress in reading this study, this point will be punctuated over and over when breaking down word meanings and uses of the Greek words translated as deacon, serve, servant, service, hospitality, etc.

This Greek word diakoneo is mistranslated as "deacon" only in the King James and a few other older versions of the Bible. The word deacon cannot be found in the New American Standard or other more credible translations. The reason for this variance is the doctrinal prejudice of the KJV translators, acting by authority of King James of England, who 'authorized' the version of the Bible produced by his duly appointed translation committee. This particular version was heavily influenced by the hierarchy of the Church of England, whose predisposed objective played strongly in the committees' use of this particular word 'deacon' in their manuscript translation.

Only since the mid-late 1800's (i.e. – Nineteenth century) have the present role of deaconate developed into a traditional fiscal position. Changes in tax laws that provide tax-exemption occurred as the Federal Internal Revenue Service developed its guidelines and soon thereafter a board of directors became a requirement for all non-profit corporations. What this means for churches is that the church bylaws must be written in conformity with IRS requirements *as a non-profit corporation and include corporate officers*. The organization of a non-profit corporation to include Federal tax-exemption status by law must include corporate officers such as the following:

1. President = Some churches name the senior pastor
2. Vice-president = Usually filled by a senior elder
3. Secretary = Church employee
4. Treasurer = Senior deacon; must also be a voting member of the board of directors
5. Board of directors = an odd number of officers is required by law to vote for approval in the use and distribution of all moneys accrued thru donations; this voting board is called a quorum

The board of directors is often comprised of the chapter officers, however to minimize liability, churches often appoint a board of deacons. The members of the Deacon Board are typically elected by vote; if required by state law church members hold an informal election to affirm the chosen candidates. This is a legal maneuver for the church records in the event of an audit by the Internal Revenue Service, or in the event of a state audit.

In addition to organizing as a non-profit corporation by filing for Federal tax-exempt status with the IRS, churches are usually required by individual state governments to file separately as non-profit organizations. The United States Constitution guarantees the right to freedom from taxation of church by the state; just the same, watchdog groups make certain churches are under constant scrutiny. I will not digress by wasting valuable time explaining constitutional law and its relation to freedom of speech and freedom of religion. There are pros and cons on both sides of the argument and I do not care one bit to jump into this arena.

I will say however that I personally find there is a conflict between the scriptures and present day church government and I do not personally advocate tax-exemption for the church. I'm sure I'll get some dirt clods tossed my way on this one, but this means less to me than doing what I believe is right.

The main reason for my opinion in this matter is simply because the tax laws require the church to submit the way its organizational structure is formed, (i.e. – its church leadership as corporate officers), the way it operates and the way it collects and distributes financial donations. Some would argue that it is to our benefit as believers to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the law and the U.S. Constitution and use the tax-exemptions for the church to stretch the dollar as far as it can legally be stretched to finance the needs of the ministry.

I fully disagree on the basis that it creates more problems or potential problems than the purported benefits, plus financial 'giving' then often becomes a matter of legislation rather than prayerful concern and individual desire to meet the needs of people in the community. I have witnessed time and time again Christians giving to what they consider to be, "legitimate Christian ministries," based upon the fact they are assured of getting a written receipt for whatever moneys were given to a given church or ministry. On many

occasions my heart has been grieved by the actions of Christians that give with a personal tax-exemption motive, simply because it adds lucrative incentive for when they file their own individual annual tax forms (for which they will inevitably get a nice tax write off).

I'm not saying this scenario above is always the case, or that it is wrong to get a deserved write-off for giving a charitable gift to some church ministry; nor do I think tax write-offs are the motivation for giving by every Christian. But this study about deacons really comes into focus now, because in today's church, the deacon board is fiscally responsible for the equitable distribution of church funds. When I show from scripture the meaning and application of diakoneo and how the first church served each other's needs, you will see it's a far cry from an austere deacon board deciding whether to pay the phone or electric bill, or whether to buy new carpet for the church foyer, or a new sound system for the church choir.

In 1895 a Wesley Chapel in Cincinnati Ohio had incurred significant debt and found itself floundering in financial trouble. In desperation the church leadership attempted to raise funds by hosting events that charge admission such as suppers, carnivals, lectures, and stereopticon shows. This particular Wesleyan church even tried using subscriptions, which was like a contest whereby a promise to give was made by writing one's name in a pledge; such as, each man subscribed ten dollars.

According to a Wesley Chapel layman William G. Roberts, "... the whole round of man-made schemes and devices," were implored unsuccessfully; finally, Roberts and others introduced a new concept of, "storehouse tithing, which turns the church around." Tithing is revived as a popular practice in U.S. churches. As more and more churches embraced storehouse tithing and large sums of money became readily accessible to church officers a system of checks and balances became a necessity to prevent misuse of church funds. The 'Deacon Board' evolved from this need and the practice is a church tradition now.

Church ministers convened to arbitrate the issue and by using misguided rationale, they determined the seven men initiated by the apostles to wait on tables in Acts 6:1-7 was biblical support for the Deacon Board prototype. In accordance with this tradition, the number of deacons assisting a bishop in the orthodox churches was for a long time limited to seven. It's hardly worth mentioning, but the Roman Catholic Church has its own version of the deacon, which amounts to little more than a glorified altar boy in many parishes.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the liturgical functions of the deacon involve helping or serving the celebrant. The liturgical act chiefly associated with the deacon is the reading of the Gospel at the Eucharist. In Rome the seven deacons had charge of the property of the diocese and exercised considerable power. However, during the Middle Ages, the diaconate lost this function and supremacy. It became simply one of the major 'orders' and a step on the way to priesthood.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the office of the deacons is to provide incense for the officiating Catholic priest in a bizarre, esoteric liturgy during mass; the Catholic deacon duties also include laying the corporal on the altar; the corporal is a fine linen cloth, used to cover the sacramental elements in the Eucharist; he also receives the cup from the subdeacon and presents it to the person officiating; he also brings incense to the choir, receives the pax (a little image or piece of board with the image of Christ upon the cross on it) from the officiating prelate, and carries it to the subdeacon; and at the pontifical mass, the deacon places the miter on the bishop's head. The miter is that ridiculous looking pointed hat worn by Roman Catholic bishops and archbishops, purportedly to reflect the similarities between the Catholic priesthood and the miter worn by the high priest under the term of the Law (Exodus 29:6; Leviticus 8:9). Some scholars attribute the miter to Dagon the ancient Philistine 'Fish god,' because the priesthood of Dagon worship wore the exact same miter!

Most Protestant churches have retained the diaconate as a lay office, with no sacramental or liturgical function. For example, one function of the board of deacons in a parish may be to administer the church property. Today, the Roman Catholic Church and some Anglican churches have sought to restore some of the dignity of the office by creating permanent deacons, who devote considerable time to a helping ministry in a parish but earn their living at a secular occupation.

In the church of England, the office of deacons is to assist the priest in administering the so-called "holy communion" and their office in Presbyterian and independent churches is to distribute the bread and wine to the communicants. In the latter the members of the church elect them. In Scotland, the deacon is an overseer of the poor, and the master of an incorporated company. Some church organizations also have the office of the deaconess, a female deacon in the church.

As mentioned earlier, today's born-again Christian churches identify the role of an individual deacon as one who is part of a group of church elders that manage the financial dealings of the church as a non-profit religious organization. The rules of administration for deacon duties may vary from one church to the next, but typically deacons are men named as individual members of a quorum in the charter statutes that define officers for the church organization's non-profit, tax-exempt status with the government.

The reason I mention this instead of going directly to the scriptures first is because it is relevant and imperative to identify the role and function of a deacon as it currently exists. I hope to persuade you and whoever reads this study expose that the New Testament scripture does not support the popular deacon board function. In exposing what is wrong with the concept of a deacon board, I will also provide the scriptural answer.

The True Deacon Is A Servant Not A Church Officer

While researching definitions for the Greek word diakoneo provided in Greek New Testament lexicons and dictionaries, I found them to be riddled with ecclesiastical rhetoric. Most applied the role of deacon to some minuscule church office, akin to waiting on tables, or the contemporary function of the church secretary or sub-pastor. Below is a simple breakdown of the word components and their meanings:

Diakonéo (NT: 1247) is derived from a word cognate diákonos (NT: 1249); as a noun this word means, "servant," and as a verb it means, "To serve or wait upon," (with emphasis on the work to be done and not on the relationship between master and servant).

The root word meaning for diakonéo implies the work of a servant and most Greek lexicon definitions *assume* this applies only in its narrowest sense, to serve by waiting on a table, or by serving a dinner. Of the many examples I found throughout the New Testament when applicable to believers, without exception diakoneo was inevitably a labor of love whereby hospitality synonymous with the Middle Eastern culture was demonstrated.

Matthew 8:14-15 When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and **waited** (**dieekónei**) on him. NASU

Peter's mother-in-law responds in gratitude by providing hospitality to Jesus after being healed thru his prayer; in the eastern custom such hospitality was expected and included food, wine, washing the feet, providing lodging, bedding and whatever other mundane needs the guests in one's home may have had. Although the word associations in the Greek New Testament for diakonéo are numerous, there are four basic categories of servitude mentioned:

1. Diakonéo NT: 1247, "to serve" (akin to diakonos), "to render any kind of service," is translated, "to serve," e. g., in Luke 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; 22:26,27 (twice). In the noun form, it means a 'servant.'
2. Douleúo NT: 1398, "to serve as a doúlos," is to serve as a slave; however, in the gospel message, believers are slaves to righteousness by choice, having escaped slavery to sin. Slavery did exist on a massive scale in New Testament times and slaves were expected to serve their masters as unto the Lord, but not as the Lord. In Christ, this form of forced slavery was negated by the spiritual freedom God gives thru Christ to everyone that believes (Galatians 3:27-28).
3. Latreía NT: 3000, primarily, "to work for hire," (akin to latris, "a hired servant"), but also translated as, "serve, serving, service or worship."
4. Huperetéo NT: 5256 is translated, "to serve," or as, "served," in Acts 13:36; there is a contrast intimated between the service of David, lasting for only a generation, and the eternal character of Christ's ministry as the One who not having seen corruption was raised from the dead.²

In each category there's an application to all believers; we are all called to serve as a servant, or to serve by supplying the basic necessities of life, particularly those of our fellow Christian brethren. Diakonéo simply describes the service believers we give to each other when meeting needs. In this regard EVERY Christian has been called to be a servant; sadly, the Christian church has drifted so far away from this basic fundamental precept, that believers today are self-absorbed, selfish, stingy and lukewarm. I don't mean to broad brush all churches or individual Christians because there are still many good women and men of God working as unprofitable servants to show their love for Jesus.

Throughout his ministry Jesus used diakonéo to define the role and function of a true disciple and there are too many examples to list, but below I have chosen some of my favorite New Testament passages, followed by summary conclusions.

Luke 22:24-27 And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like **the servant (diakonéo)**. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who **serves (diakonéo)**? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who **serves (diakonéo)**. NASU

The example of Jesus provides his disciples in Luke 22:24-27 reflects his own humility and willingness to serve as the "diakonéo" servant. The disciples, who were arguing about which of them was greatest, stand

² Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers

in bold contrast to the meek and lowly carpenter from Nazareth. Jesus chooses a subject familiar to all Jews of the day, who were continually oppressed by the “kings of the Gentiles” who lord it over them. The kings of the Gentiles is a reference to the puppet kings who ruled the Provinces, being appointed by whatever Roman emperor was in power, such as Herod the Great who murdered all the Jewish male children two years old and younger in an attempt to exterminate the Jewish Messiah.

Jesus first contrasts the harsh, cruel, dictatorial rule (i.e. – lording it over) of the Roman Gentile kings with the humblest form of servitude; he does this by establishing a permanent precept for all who claim to be his followers and disciples, aimed at meeting the most basic of physical needs, such as food, clothing and shelter. But what Jesus says immediately after concerning the word, “Benefactor” in Luke 22:25 has implications for any and all persons in positions of church leadership.

The Greek word for, “Benefactor,” is “euergetes,” and it refers to a title of self-importance, which the Greek kings, especially those ruling Egypt and Syria, coveted because of its egotistical implications. Jesus exhorts his disciples with the severest form of correction possible when he likens their bickering and arguing about who will be the “greatest” in the kingdom of God to the narcissistic behavior and attitude of these cruel and deadly kings of the Roman Gentiles, who seek the flattery lavished upon them by others, but more so in the presence of other Roman kings, who are their peers and co-equals, by ascribing to themselves the title of and being addressed by others as a merciful and generous, “Benefactor.” Keep in mind this teaching is still set in the context and pragmatic application of the Greek word for deacons (diakoneo).

The exercising of power and sway is better suited to the kings of the Gentiles than the servants of Christ. This is very important and related to the subject of deacons as an office in the church. When I was in the full-time ministry my eyes were opened as I witnessed firsthand the power struggle and manipulation among church leaders that takes place behind the scenes, as warring factions seek control of how the money would be allocated and spent.

One pastor whose identity I won’t reveal was terribly un-Christlike in private, but behind the pulpit on Sunday morning he excelled at manipulating others into thinking he was God’s “Benefactor,” to the church. He boasted on his kindness and generosity to others, but in real life, he was stingy, greedy, self-absorbed and I do not recall one single time he gave to another out of love, without expecting some gratuity in return. Just as the kings that exercise authority, and take upon themselves to rule the church with a heavy-handed mannerism, and once in control of the general populace opinion, he made or changed church laws and by-laws to suit his own agenda.

How many church pastors really follow the example of Jesus, who although the Lord and Master, was always willing to humbly serve in the most mundane of needs? Instead, most pastors delegate the mundane affairs of the church activity to the deacon board, a group of men or men and women appointed to provide hospitality whenever necessary. Shame on such shepherds! Read Ezekiel chapter 34 sometime, and you will find out how God feels about pastors that do not furnish the example of a servant (and it ain’t pretty!).

Each Believer To Be A Deacon

Today churches justify their use of the deacon board with the rationale the “pastor” must spend his time solely in spiritual pursuits because he has the Bible training needed to preach, teach and lead the flock of

God. While it is true that too much mundane activity can weigh down teachers of scripture, all too often there exists a 'clergy-versus-layman' mentality. Subconsciously seminary trained upstarts in the ministry vaunt a persona that says, "See how important I am!"

Pastors today are often selected because of their charisma and public speaking skills, not their heart of love and compassion for the hurting and needy. Quite honestly Christians today *want* somebody that will give them lots of feel-good messages and tell them how "blessed" they will be if they give money to the ministry; this kind of perverted gospel message is being insatiably fueled via the 'blab-it-and-grab-it' prosperity wolves in sheep's clothing.

Four years of seminary and Bible College is not criteria for being in the ministry as a shepherd of God's flock. The true shepherds these days are rarely paid for their labors of love in the scriptures, and they prefer to stay out of the limelight, so to speak. Modern church pastors quickly point to Acts chapter six to justify the need for a deacon board, but as I mentioned earlier, this is usually part of an overall design to erect a corporate structure by applying for and obtaining tax-exempt status with the IRS thru 501C-3. The churches today are so messed up and so far away from what God's heart and plan, it's almost impossible to use scripture alone as the blueprint for how things are and should be done.

We read in Acts 6:1-18 how the apostles were weighed down and overburdened with the mundane activity of distributing goods donated to the poor and needy. Unlike many pastors today, the twelve apostles of Jesus were laboring hands-on to coordinate the distribution of goods to the poor, however this took away the time they were able to invest in teaching the scriptures and training others in the word of God. It only made sense to replace the mundane work done by twelve apostles with seven trustworthy men who could take over their mundane activity; in this way, the church would benefit much more because the training and experience of the 12 apostles, men who walked with Jesus during his 3 ½ year public ministry, would be utilized for teaching other shepherds to lead.

As the first church in Jerusalem grew and developed teachers were in short supply until the apostles were able to train other disciples of Christ as teachers of the sacred scriptures.

Acts 6:1-6 Now about this time, when the number of the disciples was greatly increasing, complaint was made by the Hellenists, the Greek-speaking Jews, against the native Hebrews because their widows were being overlooked and neglected in the daily ministrations for distribution of relief. **2** So the Twelve apostles convened the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not seemly or desirable or right that we should have to give up or neglect the Word of God in order to attend to serving (diakoneín) at tables and superintending the distribution of food. **3** Therefore select out from among yourselves, brethren, seven men of good and attested character and repute, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we may assign to look after this business and duty. **4** But we will continue to devote ourselves steadfastly to prayer and the ministry (diakonía) of the Word. **5** And the suggestion pleased the whole assembly, and they selected Stephen, a man full of faith, a strong and welcome belief that Jesus is the Messiah and full of and controlled by the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte convert from Antioch. **6** These they presented to the apostles, who after prayer laid their hands on them. AMP

This text is hardly justification for the misguided practice of appointing "deacons" in the church. Several key factors stand out in opposition to the modern practice of appointing a deacon board. First, note above

there are two distinct applications of **diakoneín** (serving at tables vs. 2) and **diakonía** (ministry of the word vs. 4); both are considered a form of service.

Taking the aforementioned distinctions into consideration, if we followed the rationale of modern day churches that appoint deacon boards, then the apostles would have been considered little more than glorified deacons. This is absurd, but it illustrates a point. The scripture does not show partiality toward one class of service by men as elders that teach and another class of service by men as elders that wait tables.

Note: Waiting tables is not to be viewed as what waiters/waitresses do in restaurants today; instead, it refers to the impartial distribution of food stores collected from the corporeal donations of believers to meet the daily needs of those in the first church birthed in Jerusalem. This is not necessarily a precedent for how the day-to-day contemporary church should function. It must be taken into account that Jerusalem was home to the major Jewish feast day's celebrations, which in ancient times took Jews from many surrounding nations, journeying far away from their own homes in other cities and provinces. This meant at first there was a tremendous need to feed those Jews whose initial conversion following the events on the Day of Pentecost meant they were temporarily stranded and without sufficient food, water and lodging.

Should the Christian church ever return to its roots in scripture, deacon boards should be abolished, groups of elders elected to guide the church equally and with impartiality, and those with skills in management of money, buying and distributing necessities of life distinguished between elders that excel in teaching; both groups of elders would pull one yoke however, working for the common good by recognizing each other's strengths in different areas of diakonía service.

In the beginning, the apostles were intricately involved in distributing goods to the poor and only sought relief from this duty when it became apparent some widows were being inadvertently overlooked. The Book of Acts records how hundreds were being converted, and then thousands, so the task of caring for the needy soon became overwhelming. Thus it was impractical to use the twelve apostles for this duty because it would be detrimental to the cause of the gospel if their ability to teach the word of God were neglected.

The twelve met together, discussed the issue, and then determined among themselves to present a plan to the believers in the church. This is an important point because we see group leadership and group decision-making as the policy. This is much different than the patterned model in today's organized church government.

The apostles did not DEMAND the church to accept and implement their plan to have seven trustworthy men selected. Instead, they showed respect for the co-equality of their fellow Christian brethren and had them choose the seven men. Again, this is an important aspect of church government, which should ALWAYS involve the participation of everyone. This just does not occur in 21st century America churches.

In reality, the preponderance of American Christians live a lifestyle that is plain old lazy, deferring individual responsibility to church leaders. It's just easier to drop a check in the offering plate and have someone else deal with it. The apostles said, "Therefore select out from among yourselves, brethren, seven men..."

Earlier I showed how elders were selected by a vote of the members of a church assembly via upraised hands. Here the process is similar; the Greek word for "select" in Acts 16:3 is **επισκεπτομαι**, transliterated as **episképtomai**. This Greek word is a cognate of **epískopos**, the Greek word for, "overseers," in the New Testament. It is a compound word from **epí** (around) and **sképtomai** (To look at something, examine closely,

inspect, observe); sképtomai is from skopós (goal, mark) and thus it carries the meaning, "To look at accurately or diligently with the goal being to look for, seek out, as persons for office."

Though episképtomai (NT: 1980) carries primarily the meaning, "to inspect," it is a later form of episkopeo, "to look upon, care for, exercise oversight," and signifies:

1. "To visit" with help, of the act of God, Luke 1:68; Acts 15:14; Hebrews 2:6
2. "To visit" the sick and afflicted, Matthew 25:36,43;
3. "To visit" the orphan & the widow in distress James 1:27
4. "To go and see," "pay a visit to," Acts 7:23; 15:36
5. "To look out" certain men for a purpose, Acts 6:3
6. Hebraistically, to look upon in order to help or to benefit, Luke 7:16

Because episképtomai is associated with the same Greek word translated "overseers" and since New Testament overseers are to be elders, **it is reasonable to suggest the seven men selected are in fact the first elders chosen by the believers to 'oversee' the distribution of goods donated for the poor**. Acts 6:3 cannot therefore be used for the pseudo-office of, "deacons" as purported by traditional Christendom. It is the duty of elder-overseers as a group of equals to lead the assembly, which role is primarily to care for the needy.

The qualifications recommended to the church by the twelve apostles for these seven men were much different than what is required for the deacon board in today's church. Below are the characteristics sought for those in the church that handle the management and distribution of goods and money donated to help meet the needs of the poor:

- Seven men of good and attested character and repute
- Full of the Spirit and wisdom
- Whom we (apostles) may assign to look after this business and duty

Every believer is called to be a sheep by following the voice and example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. In the kingdom of God, otherwise known as the church, you will find either sheep as legitimate believers or you will find goats, which are pseudo-Christians that profess Jesus as Lord, but their deeds and actions do not match their words.

In Matthew chapter 25 we read the parable Jesus told his disciples of the sheep and the goats and a stunning use of the Greek word **diakonéo** is found in the latter part of the text when Jesus reveals why the goats are not worthy of eternal life.

Matthew 25:44-45 "Then the goats themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not **SERVE** you (**serve** = **diakoneo**)?' **45** Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' NASU

Nowadays Christians abound (in name only) in great numbers and with the advent of computerized Bible study via software, many consider their intellectual pursuits and personal studying the scriptures as their contribution to the kingdom of heaven. This is a form of cerebral arrogance fueled by spiritual pride and is likened in the teachings of the New Testament to wood, hay and stubble, things fit only for destruction.

When each individual believer stands before Jesus on the day of judgment Jesus will separate TRUE believers (i.e. – sheep) from pseudo-Christians (i.e. – the goats). On that day it will only be those who spent their life expressing love for Jesus thru humble acts of servitude (diakoneo) that will be qualified to enter into his Father’s glory.

According to the teaching of New Testament scriptures, the main responsibility of elders in the church is identified as overseers that do the following duties:

1. Manage the donated moneys and other goods, such as food, clothing, etc to insure proper distribution of the basic necessities of life to those in need within the church. They must make certain no one is overlooked while providing the basic needs for those who are part of the household of faith. How far we as the church have drifted from the simplicity and common sense of the gospel today!
2. To look after the spiritual welfare of the church thru a variety of applications, which are primarily to keep watch over each other, to make sure no overseers are wolves in sheep’s clothing, and to disciple those less mature as they grow in Christ.
3. A limited few elders are called to labor as workmen in the scriptures so that they provide the church with teaching. In an ideal setting, the elder teachers should be provided for their basic needs, so that their labors in scripture can be continued.

Making Sense Of The Confusion

The confusion surrounding the modern-day role of the deacon stems from two main sources, ecclesiastic exegesis in the traditional function and role of a deacon and the KJV mistranslation of the Greek noun *diakónou* (NT: 1249), a word cognate associated with *diakonía*. Below is the context of whereby “deacon” is used in the translation and rendered as such to give credence to the office of deacon.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 Likewise must the **deacons** (*diakónous*; NT: 1249) be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; **9** Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. **10** And let these also first be proved; then let them use the **office of a deacon** (*diakoneítoosan*; NT: 1247), being found blameless. **11** Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. **12** Let the **deacons** (*diakónoi*; NT: 1249) be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. **13** For they that have used the **office of a deacon** (*diakoneésantes*; NT: 1247), well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus. KJV

The mistranslation occurs in two ways; first, the words in English that are rendered “deacon(s)” should be ‘service’ or ‘one that serves.’ Second, in verse 8 and verse 13, the words, “deacon,” and then, “office of a deacon,” respectively are mistranslated for two different reasons. The first reason is the context, which discusses overseers (‘bishops’) and verses 8 thru 13 are merely a continuation of the characteristics and moral qualities the apostle Paul instructs Timothy to look for in the men the church appoints as elders-overseers.

The second reason the words, "office of a deacon," are a mistranslation is the Greek does not support the idea of an, "office." The grammatical construction of the Greek text supports the idea that an overseer's 'service' (diakoneo) is to be continuous, (as opposed to temporary). Therefore the intended meaning for Paul's instructions to the overseers is to *maintain honorable and moral service as a way of life*, not something they do when called upon to execute a task, such as the distribution of basic necessities to the poor.

For example, in verse 8 **diakónous** is translated in the KJV by the word, "deacon," but the definite article in the Greek is found to be in the aorist participle active tense, which means it should be rendered, "**Servants similarly...**"³ and not as the KJV, "Likewise must the **deacons...**"

Again, in 1 Timothy 3:10 **diakoneítoosan** is translated in the KJV by the words, "office of a deacon," but in the Greek text the word is constructed in the present imperative active tense, which occurs only in the active and middle voices (i.e. – for self-interest) in the New Testament.⁴ In the active voice diakoneítoosan is a command to do something in the future, which involves continuous or repeated action. This grammatical notation indicates diakoneítoosan should therefore be rendered as, "... let them (the overseers) **be serving,**" and NOT as the KJV, "...let them use **the office of a deacon.**"

This difference is more than mere semantics; rather, it is the distinction between the following:

1. Active service initiated by the overseer, which in this case, includes good moral character AND...
2. The erroneous concept of a deacon in an appointed office, holding this position by appointment, (as opposed to him self-initiating his own service propelled by his individual commitment to serve the church and his brethren in love).

Concurrently 1 Timothy 3:12 in the KJV uses diakónoi, "Let **deacons** be..." when the text should read, "Let **servants** be..." The error appears on the surface to be slight, but in reality, the KJV version is rendered as such to bolster support for the previous, "office of a deacon," and thereby inferring this office is automatically assumed. However, the correct version portrays what a true elder-overseer is supposed to be and do as a, "servant."

Finally, in 1 Timothy 3:13 the KJV uses **diakoneésantes** a second time as the, "office of a deacon," when it should read, "... for **those who serve ideally...**" (Compare these renderings with the King James Version above and note the divergence).

The apostle Paul's letter to Timothy is very specific and details the role and character of overseers not deacons. If you are familiar with Englishman's New Testament Concordance, a simple word search using the primary Strong's Greek word reference numbers related to diakonía will prove beyond all uncertainty that every believers is called to be a diakonía servant *without any exceptions*. The primary Strong's word reference numbers related to diakonía to use in your search are below:

NT:1247 diakonéo diakoneoo, diakonoo; to be a servant, attendant, domestic; to serve, wait upon

NT: 1248 diakonía, diakonías, hee; service, ministering

³ Concordant Literal New Testament, Copyright © 1983, Concordant Publishing Concern

⁴ The Complete Word Study Bible Copyright © 1991, 1994, 2002 AMG International, Inc.

NT:1249 diakonos, diakónou, ho, hee; one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a sergeant, attendant, minister⁵

If you have Bible software with Englishman's, open the Search Criteria box, click onto the icon that reads, 'New Testament,' and then enter your four-digit Strong's reference number, then hit, 'OK' or your 'Enter' button on the keyboard. This will provide you with a list of every single New Testament verse that contains this individual Greek word.

To conclude this study about deacons and its true meaning and applications, I have provided a partial list of the New Testament Bible verses that use the three word cognates listed above, and which prove beyond any doubt that the deacon is not a separate office in the church, but rather a way of life that Christians, as followers of Jesus Christ, are exhorted and commanded to do. Serving (diakoneo) should be the expression of our love for Jesus and each other.

Because of the great volume of actual Bible verses I have only listed a minuscule fraction of them under each Strong's word reference number using a variety of Bible versions to help you see the many uses of this word family. I used a smaller font to include as many verses as possible; the words highlighted in **bold font** reflect the Greek word in the particular category they are listed under. I encourage you to use Englishman's Concordances of the Old Testament and New Testament words, as it is truly one of the most valuable scripture study reference tools you will ever use. No serious student of scripture can make an exhaustive search using the original languages of the Bible without it. It is available in book form, on CD and included in many Bible software packages.

If you do not further pursue the study of the Greek words, it is my prayer and desire that you will use this information to inspire a willingness in your life to serve others. In today's charismatic churches so much emphasis is put on prophecy, praise and other so-called "spiritual" forms of worship we forget that the greatest Servant of them all said in Matthew 25:34-40, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, **to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.**'

SELAH

ADDENDUM

List Of Word Cognates Of Diakonéo Used in The New Testament

⁵ Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003 by Biblosft, Inc. All rights reserved

NT: 1247 diakonéo diakoneoo, diakonoo - to be a servant; to serve

John 12:26 "If anyone **serves** (serves = NT: 1247) me, let him follow me; and where I am, there my **servant** (**servant** = NT: 1249) will be also. If anyone **serves** (serves = NT: 1247) me, him My Father will honor. NKJV

Matthew 8:15 He touched her hand and the fever left her; and she got up and began **waiting** on Him. AMP

Matthew 20:28 the Son of Man did not come to be **served**, but **to serve**, and to give His life a ransom for many. NASU

Mark 15:40-41 Now some women were there also, looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome, 41 Who, when [Jesus] was in Galilee, were in the habit of accompanying and **ministering** to Him; and [there were] also many other [women] who had come up with Him to Jerusalem. AMP

Luke 8:3 And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager; and Susanna; and many others, who **ministered to and provided for** Him and them out of their property and personal belongings. AMP

NT: 1248 diakonía, diakonías - service

Luke 10:40 But Martha was distracted with **much serving**, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." NKJV

Acts 1:25 To take the place in this **ministry** and receive the position of an apostle, from which Judas fell away and went astray to go [where he belonged] to his own [proper] place.

AMP

Acts 11:28-30 And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send **a contribution for the relief** of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders. NASB

Acts 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete **the task** the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. NIV

Romans 12:6-7 Having gifts (faculties, talents, qualities) that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them: [He whose gift is] prophecy, [let him prophesy] according to the proportion of his faith; [He whose gift is] **practical service**, let him give himself to **serving**; he who teaches, to his teaching. AMP

1 Corinthians 12:5 And there are distinctive varieties of **service and ministration**, but it is the same Lord [Who is served]. AMP

1 Corinthians 16:14-16 And everything you do must be done with love. You know that Stephanas and his household were the first to become Christians in Greece, and they are spending their lives in **service** to other Christians. I urge you, dear brothers and sisters, to respect them fully and others like them who serve with such real devotion. NLT

NT: 1249 diakonos, diakónou - one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master

Matthew 23:8-12 "But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. 11 But the greatest among you shall be your **servant**. 12 And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted." NASB

Romans 15:8 For I tell you that Christ has become **a servant** of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs. NIV

Romans 16:1I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is **a servant** of the church in Cenchrea. NKJV

1 Corinthians 3:5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only **servants**, through whom you came to believe — as the Lord has assigned to each his task. NIV

2 Corinthians 3:5-6 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as **servants** of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

NASU