

# Elders and Deacons, a Woman's Role?

by Shane Idleman

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*Men are called to lead the church in a servant leadership role, while women are called to come alongside and complement them.*

**Duration:** 9:17

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 3:8

**Topics:** "Church Leadership", "Women In Ministry"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the office of deacon, exploring the qualifications and responsibilities outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. It emphasizes the importance of deacons being reverent, not double-tongued, temperate, and faithful, with their wives also meeting specific criteria. The sermon touches on the controversial topic of the role of women in the church, discussing the biblical perspectives on leadership, submission, and servant leadership. It addresses the challenges and responsibilities of men leading their families and the distinction between equality and complementarity in God's design.

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## Transcript

Quick thoughts on the office of deacon. Quick thoughts on this office of deacon. Diakonos is the Greek word for it, and you'll see a lot of people, Phoebe, not a fishing lure, Phoebe was, it's spelled pretty close, she served, so the word deacon is used with her.

And then you have seven men, filled with the spirit, choose seven men, deacons, to come alongside and serve the church. Now, here's where it gets interesting. Let me just read to you, I'm just going to read to you the Bible, 1 Timothy 3, 8. Likewise, deacons must be reverent, they must be respectful, not double-tongued, what is double-tongued? Slander, backbiting, accusing, just kind of, you know, I call shifty.

They're not double-tongued, they're not given into much wine, they don't have an addiction in this area. They're not greedy for money. It means they're not going to try to manipulate things, and they hold the mystery of faith with a pure conscience, means it's a mystery.

They're not going to get in all these arguments and debates. They're not a proud, unteachable person who's eager to dispute. They're broken before the Lord.

But let these also be first tested, so test them throughout the congregation, get to know them. Let their character be tested, then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Now, this is interesting.

Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanders, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their house well. Whew, that would be a sermon right there.

But let me just say a few things. Wives cannot qualify a man, but they can disqualify him. So a wife cannot qualify a man for a position.

In other words, Morgan couldn't qualify me for this position, but she could disqualify me. What I mean by that is this. Look at these qualities.

If my wife is going about disrespectful, not reverent, you won't believe what my husband does. He's such a jerk, I can't believe I married that guy. Double tongue, slander, down-talking the church, not involved, not faithful in all things, not temperate, likes to grab that bottle of wine every night.

By default, I'm disqualified to lead the church, because although I'm qualified positionally and with character in certain areas, well, I'll stumble, of course, but the wife can disqualify a person if she doesn't fit these needs. Why else would it say their wives must be reverent, not slanderous, not temperate? Now, people have said that because when a deacon is in the position of deacon, the wife can come alongside and serve with him, and if so, this is what must transpire. Now, that's a good point, but I think what he's saying here is we have to look at the relationship of husband and wife and look at both sides in this office.

Now, are you ready to get a little controversial? I might have to change this around for the 11, but you guys can handle this. The controversial topic, role of women in the church. Uh-oh, did I just say it? Now, this is so funny, because me and my wife chuckle, my mom, we laugh, because we're all on the same page.

I'm gonna just unpack this real quick. Why is there an issue in this area? Because we have fought, and rightly so, for women's rights for centuries. And look at how women were treated in Jesus' time.

Look at how they couldn't even vote. So there's an equality where you have to fight for. Guys, we're equal in God's eyes.

We're absolutely equal in God's eyes. When it says the husband, treasure your wife as the weaker vessel, you better study that word weaker. It means more precious.

Like I have this precious thing behind me, I've gotta guard and protect, because it is precious, it's valuable. So when the Bible talks about this area, here's what it's interesting. The females are identified with the word deacon, what I just talked about, but not necessarily the office.

See, that's the problem here. When you have seven men filled with the Spirit to be deacons, and you also, here's the qualification of men to be deacons, we don't have qualifications for women to be deacons. And trust me, I've got headaches over this before.

I'm trying to find something here. Well, Phoebe was a deacon. We'll just use the word minister.

She was a minister here. So we look at what the Scripture says first. To define roles, we look at what the Bible says.

Elder, it's crystal clear. Here's the qualifications of an elder. Here's the qualifications of a deacon.

So we want to give people as much responsibility as possible. Women teaching women. The man teaching and leading in the church, but not to assert influence in what God has done.

And here's another argument. People often say, well, Shane, things have changed. That was the culture back then.

Actually, it has nothing to do with culture. It has to do with creation. How has God created us? Here's what happens.

The man leads into war. The man guards and protects his family. The man dies for his family.

And we forget something. The head of something is not necessarily above, but in front of. So it's not me going, okay, wife and kids, I'm ahead of you.

I'm up here. You need to do what I'm saying. I'm dominating you.

It's male chauvinism. That's why it's gotten a bad rap. What it is, the head of something, is it's come on, family.

Follow me. Let me go first. Let me fight.

Let me die for you if necessarily. Let me love you. Let me guard you.

Let me be the head of that. And that has nothing to do with male domination. That's servant leadership.

That's dying to self. So God says, you man, I want you to go ahead, die if necessary for your family, guard them, protect them. I'm going to have the woman come alongside as a help meet and be a complement each other.

So it's not egalitarian, equal in all sense. Women need to be pastors. How has God created us? And what I mean by laughing is my wife and my mom, they go, I don't want a woman pastoring me.

I want a man leading me in this area. So that's the confusion. And I'll get emails right here on this already for sure.

We're not saying man is better, man is dominating. Women do tremendous things much more better than men. Who's helping with the children's ministry? Who's helping with the church? I go to Morgan.

What do you think of this sermon? Is this going to suck? Can you say that here? I don't know. I'm sorry, Larry. Let me change it.

Is this going to stink? Larry doesn't care. He's one of my biggest supporters. And I go to them and I look and I submit to their needs.

So it's somebody being the head of something is not domineering them and pushing them. But God has called us to lead. That's why it's so hard.

That's one of the biggest struggles right now is to getting men to lead their families. Get off your couch and go get a job and make some money. That's the hard thing.

I told you I didn't come being seeker sensitive today. I'm going to let it fly. We need to hear this.

The man is responsible for the teaching in his home. I'm held responsible. It's servant leadership.

Now, there are exceptions. People say, what about Deborah in the Old Testament? Well, it's because Barack wouldn't step up. Not Obama.

He wouldn't step up and do something, so Deborah led the children of Israel into battle. There's wonderful... Man, if Sarah Palin wanted to run for VP, that was a good choice there for a while, back many years ago. And there's wonderful things, but I was talking this week, some of you might know Dr. Michael Brown.

He's got a radio show. He's a Hebrew scholar. And I asked him about this subject, and he agrees.

He has a short two-minute clip on this you should watch on YouTube. And I said, but what about these exceptions? And he said something that really struck me. He said, the exceptions only prove that there's a rule.

So if I say, well, I will make an exception for you in this case, that tells me there's something I need to follow, a rule. So, and I have pastor friends, and it would be the Vineyard, or Foursquare Movement, or other areas that embrace women pastors. And we've had talks, and it's always, but Shane, things are changing.

We can't keep pushing women down. Pushing women down? Let's elevate. Let's elevate.

But God's called us to get in front, take some shots, and lead, be the head. Not dominating? What don't you understand? There's nothing to do with male chauvinistic approaches to leadership. It's servant leadership.

It's dying. So always remember that. When God says, man, you be the head, it means that's a responsibility to protect these things that are valuable.

So He calls men to lead the church in this area.

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