

03/31/2020 First Timothy 3:8–16

Read 1 Timothy 3:8–16 in any translation. I will print the NET 2 translation.

8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not two-faced, not given to excessive drinking, not greedy for gain, 9 holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And these also must be tested first and then let them serve as deacons if they are found blameless. 11 Likewise also their wives must be dignified, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in every respect. 12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you 15 in case I am delayed, to let you know how people ought to conduct themselves in the household of God, because it is the church of the living God, the support and bulwark of the truth. 16 And we all agree, our religion contains amazing revelation:

He was revealed in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among Gentiles,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.

Comments:

The office of deacon is unique to the Christian church. Its beginning is recorded in Acts 6:1–7, and the essence of the office was service. Stephen, the first recorded Christian martyr, was the first-named of the original seven deacons. The word “diakonos” means servant.

The deacon has always been a servant order in the church. The word deacon is for the males who serve in that role. The word deaconess is for the females who serve in that capacity. It is one of the official roles we have in Synod. I had a deaconess who served with me in Our Savior congregation in St. Petersburg.

Yesterday we pointed out that sometimes in the New Testament the terms “episkopos” (overseer) and “presbuteros” (elder) are used interchangeably. But the deacon is a distinctly different position. The apostles asked for deacons to be appointed to make sure the Greek widows were treated equally with the Jewish widows.

The deacons are clearly regarded by Paul as special leaders of the church. The qualifications and high standards required of them are like those for the overseers. The apostles wanted to be free to pray and to tend to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:4) That is an important lesson for pastor’s today.

The focus of the pastor’s life should be prayer and the ministry of preaching and teaching the word of the Lord. Others, the deacons, should be caring for the physical needs of the members of the church assisting in their spiritual training.

Verses 11–12 reminds us again that the family life is important for all. The family is the first unit of life which God established. We need to reclaim the importance of family rather than chase the gods of contemporary culture.

The last verses of this chapter talk of Paul’s desire to come and see Timothy, but in case he can’t make the visit, these verses serve as an introduction to the rest of the epistle. He wants to set the standards for the behavior of people who are the church.

The word church is never used in the Bible to refer to a building. Church always is the people. Here Paul reminds us (v. 15) that the church exists to serve the living God. Our God is not created by us. He is the eternal, always existing God whom we serve.

The church is to be a bulwark (defender) of the truth. The church does not exist to please us. It is the creation of God to serve his plans for the kingdom. V. 16 reminds us we know the truth by revelation. God tells us about himself. We cannot put God under a microscope to examine him. Nor can we look through a telescope to peek into his house to see him.

The primary revelation is about Jesus. He revealed God in the flesh, was vindicated by the Holy Spirit and was seen by the Holy Angels. Then proclaimed to the Gentiles and found believers in the world, and then taken back into heaven and we await his second coming.

Reflection Question: Our primary task is to proclaim Jesus who showed us God in human form. He solves the sin problem and then reveals God's plans for life. We serve God not to earn forgiveness or salvation, but to express our thanks to God for his mercy and grace. Are you making the main thing, the main thing?