

## Are You a Server or Just a “Waiter”?

Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13 I have a friend who puts a large amount of money on the table as the server arrives to take an order. He says, “This money is all yours. However, every time I can see the bottom of my coffee cup, I’m going to take some of the money off the table and put it into my pocket.” He told me that his coffee has never gotten cold. How many of you have ever waited for a server, or waiter, in a restaurant? Have you ever had to wave to a waiter as a gesture of appeal which says, “Please wait on me”? Have you ever lowered or withheld your tip as a protest of poor service? We tend to have high expectations of people who wait on us at restaurants. As you know, waiters and waitresses now prefer to be called “servers.” This term avoids gender issues, and it is seen to be more “professional.” It also suggests to me that they want to be seen as more than people who merely wait on tables. They want to be seen as persons who offer a valuable service. What does this have to do with us? We’re going to see today that all of us are “servers.” This fact raises several questions. What does it take for us to serve? Do we require a good “gratuity” to motivate us to do our job? What is our job? Are we servers or merely persons waiting to be served? In other words, are we *servers* or “*waiters*”? As I’ll point out today, this question raises the issue our church is facing at this time. We are selecting new deacons. What are “deacons”? What are their qualifications? We will see that the requirements of deacons are the same as those expected of all of us. Deacons are servers ... and so are we. To be a “server” (a “deacon”) ...

- We must be willing to accept the position definition and job description [The job description is in the definition of the job holder (Acts 6:2-4; 1 Tim. 3:8)]
  - Like the rose, a “servant is a servant by any other name” [A “deacon” is a Christian who lives up to his name (Matt. 20:25-8; 27:55; Mark 1:30; Luke 8:3; 12:35-37; 22:27; John 12:2; Rom. 16:1)]
  - We must remember that servers take orders rather than give them (Luke 17:7-10)
  - The only people qualified to do the big jobs are those who are willing to do the small ones (Matt. 20:26-27; Luke 16:10)
- We should know that our chief reference for the position is our reputation [The recommendation depends upon the reputation (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8)]
  - The “witness” of our life must make it impossible for others to question our word (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8)
  - A good reputation is never saying one thing to one person and something different to another (Hypocrisy is being one person at church and another elsewhere (Matt. 5:37; 23:25))
  - “Do not do to others what angers you if done by others” (Socrates)
- We must be even tempered in all things at all times [Temperance is always being in our “right mind” (1 Tim. 3:8)]
  - We must put the proper harness on our desires [We won’t get out of control if the right person is holding the “controls” (Acts 6:3; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:18)]
  - We must be “sober” every day in every way [Sobriety is controlling the mind as well as the mouth (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:3)]
- We must have a mature faith that has been proven to be authentic (1 Tim. 3:9)
  - Our faith must be both deep and clear [Authentic faith cannot be both mature and shallow (1 Tim. 3:9)]
  - Conscience can be a guide only when it has been taught the right directions [A conscience that has been shaped by secular society cannot be trusted as a guide to God (1 Tim. 3:9; 1 Pet. 2: 5, 9)]
  - Trust begins with a faithful track record [A faithful past is prerequisite for a present assignment (James 1:2)]
  - Our testimony must be validated by thorough examination rather than a period of probation (1 Tim. 3:10)
  - “The unexamined life is not worth living” (Socrates)
  - “By God’s grace, I will joyfully seek to show forth the presence of God in all that I am, in all that I do, in all that I say.” (Renovare Covenant)
- We must be faithful guardians of those entrusted to our care [Servers are the primary care-givers in God’s family (1 Tim. 3:12)]
  - We must remember that the term “ruling servant” is a contradiction in terms (Matt. 20:25-27, 1 Tim. 3:8-12; 1 Tim. 5:17)
  - We cannot be trusted to maintain the church “building” if our own house is falling down (1 Tim. 3:5, 12)
  - Our marriage should “serve” as a model for the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph. 5:25-32)
  - A good care-giver is one who confronts with care [Christian confronting is “care-fronting” with a firm love (Eph. 6:4)]