

2026
Believe
What's Greater

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

Isaiah 53:1-2 (NKJV)



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Bible Study Lesson 4: “Delegated Authority and Shared Leadership”

A Biblical Study of the Deacon's Role in the Local Church

Primary Text: Acts 6:5-6

Facilitator: Bishop Tracy L. Boles, D. Min.



Key Truth

Deacons serve under authority and operate with trust and responsibility.

Teaching Outline:

1. The congregation was involved

- Shared affirmation

2. The apostles laid hands

- Public recognition and spiritual covering

3. Names matter

- These were real men with real responsibility
- **History of each deacon**

The Seven Original Deacons

1. Stephen

- Described as “*a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit*”
- First Christian martyr (Acts 7:54-60)
- Powerful preacher and apologist

2. Philip

- Known later as *Philip the Evangelist* (Acts 8; Acts 21:8)
- Instrumental in the Samaritan revival
- Led the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ

3. Prochorus

- Later church tradition associates him with ministry alongside the apostles
- Name suggests Greek (Hellenistic) background



4. Nicanor

- Little else recorded biblically
- Faithful servant during a critical moment of church growth

5. Timon

- Name indicates Greek-speaking Jewish background
- Part of the intentional cultural bridge-building

6. Parmenas

- Scripture preserves his name as a testimony to faithful service
- Demonstrates that impact is not always measured by visibility



7. Nicolas

- A Gentile convert to Judaism (*proselyte*) before becoming a Christian
- Shows the church's early ethnic and cultural diversity

A Crucial Observation (Often Missed)

All seven names are Greek.

Why This Matters

- The complaint came from **Hellenistic (Greek-speaking) Jews**
- The apostles responded with **intentional representation**
- This was not political—it was **pastoral wisdom**
 - **It is one thing to administrate a need, it's another to be able to identify with it.**



God's solution to cultural tension was servant leadership that understood the people being overlooked.

Leadership Insight for Deacons (Teaching Point)

Deacons are often chosen not just for their character, but for their capacity to bridge gaps others cannot see.

Summary Statement

The first deacons remind us that God values:

- Spiritual maturity
- Cultural awareness
- Faithful service over public recognition



Their names are preserved because **service matters to God**, even when history remembers little else.

Leadership Insight

- Deacons function best when:
 - Clear authority exists
 - Mutual trust is present
 - Accountability is practiced

Application

Discuss how modern churches can:

- Affirm deacons publicly
- Clarify authority boundaries
- Maintain unity between pastors and deacons