

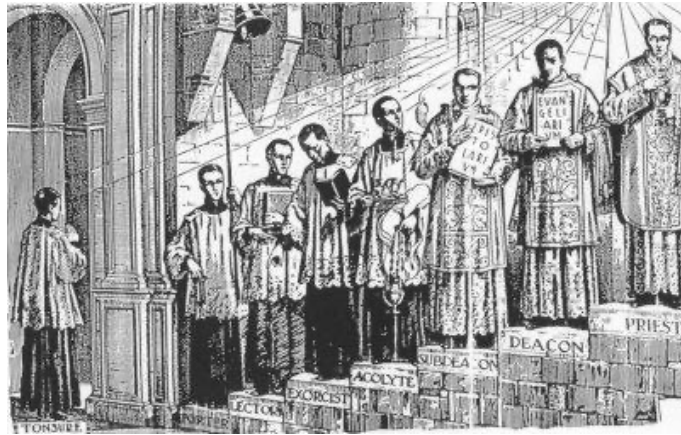
Exegesis on the Deacon - Evangelist Ministries



The origins of the Deacon Ministry

The **Seven**, often known as the **Seven Deacons**, were leaders elected by the early Christian church to minister to the community of believers in Jerusalem, to enable the Apostles to concentrate on 'prayer and the Ministry of the Word' and to address a concern raised by Greek-speaking believers about their widows being overlooked in the daily *diakonia* or ministry.

New Testament



The Choosing of the Seven - Acts 6:1-7

"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.

We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread.

The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith."

The works of Stephen and Philip are the only two recorded and their works concern preaching, catechizing and baptizing.

Philip is simply referred to as "the evangelist" in chapter 18.

Their appointment is described in chapter 6 of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 6:1–6).

According to a later tradition they are supposed to have also been among the Seventy Disciples who appear in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 10:1, 10:17).

Although the Seven are not called 'deacons' in the New Testament, their role is described as 'diaconal' (διακονεῖν τραπέζαις in Greek), and they are therefore often regarded as the forerunners of the Christian order of deacons.

The Seven Deacons were:

Stephen the Protomartyr

Philip the Evangelist

Prochorus

Nicanor

Timon

Parmenas

Nicholas

MINISTRY OF DEACONS

The Gospel is for everyone, regardless of race, nation, gender, or background (Acts 8:5). Philip preached to the Samaritans; this was a revolutionary act in his time.

Traditionally the Jews and the Samaritans had no contact with one another.

They hated each other.

Yet, Philip broke tradition and went to those who were different.

In doing this, he followed the example of his master, Jesus, who had ministered to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4).



When the Samaritans accepted the Gospel, it was a great breakthrough because it proved that Christ is for the whole world, not just the Jews.

The preaching of God's Word attracts multitudes (Acts 8:6).

When God's Word is preached, one can expect large crowds of people.

Some will accept Jesus, some will ridicule and mock, but when the Gospel is preached there is definitely not silence.

True Gospel evangelism never remains silent or hidden.

When people start accepting Jesus, a ruckus ensues.

Some have questioned the value of mass campaign evangelism in today's society, but Philip's story provides a valuable example for today's evangelists.

Mass evangelism is not the only way people come to Jesus, but it is a valid way to minister to people.

After evangelists lead people to Jesus, they need the help of other ministry gifts to disciple people (Acts 8:14).

First, Philip the evangelist preached and multitudes were saved and healed.

Then, when the church in Jerusalem heard what God was doing, they sent Peter and John to authenticate the move of God and to disciple the new believers.



After Philip completed his job as an evangelist, the job of the Apostles began.

The most common question the evangelist is asked is:

How do you follow up on new believers?

The truth is no evangelist can do everything alone. The evangelist is not the only one involved in the process of turning a convert into a disciple. Standing beside the evangelists are other ministry gifts; the pastor, the prophet, the teacher, and the apostle.

Evangelists, must go where God sends them (Acts 8:26).

Philip was in the middle of leading a successful revival in Samaria when an angel of the Lord told him to head south along the desert road to Gaza.

As Philip walked along the road, he fulfilled Jesus' command to "go out into the highways and hedges" (Luke 14:23 KJV).

God does not want us to stay inside the four walls of the church.

He wants us to take the Good News out on the roads. God often sends evangelists to spiritual deserts.

There is ministry waiting to be done there.

Evangelists should be sensitive to God's voice (Acts 8:26).

Philip is led, first by the angel of the Lord, and then by the Spirit. Both times, he obeys.

Luke uses this to show that Philip's mission was Spirit-led and Spirit-inspired.

So, it should be with the evangelist today.

When God speaks, it is important to listen and obey.

When evangelists obey, doors are opened to share the Gospel
(Acts 8:27-29).

Some people have hard hearts toward God and some are open and ready to receive.

As the evangelist stays sensitive to the Spirit's leading and follows His leading, the evangelist will discover those who are ready to respond to the Gospel.

Evangelists are desperately needed (Acts 8:30-31).

The Ethiopian eunuch needed someone to explain the Scriptures.

Today there are many people who have questions about God and the meaning of life.

Who will answer these questions?

The need is urgent.

If the evangelist does not go, then who will tell them about Jesus?

How can they understand unless someone explains?

As Paul writes,



*“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And
how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?
And how shall they hear without a preacher?
And how shall they preach unless they are sent?
As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the
gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”*

(Romans 10:13-15 NKJV).

When evangelists preach, every Scripture leads to Jesus **(Acts 8:32-35)**.
Jesus is the central point of the Bible.

The Old Testament is Jesus concealed, the New Testament is Jesus
revealed.

Every verse in the Old Testament points forward to Jesus and every
verse in the New Testament points backward to Jesus.

No matter where one starts reading in the Bible, the Scripture leads to
Jesus.

The difference between a real evangelist and another preacher who just
uses the title is how much they talk about Jesus.

For the real evangelist it doesn't matter what subject he's talking about or
where he begins to read in the Bible, ultimately, his or her sermon will be about
Jesus Christ.

The evangelist may begin by talking about how to have a happy
marriage. But by the end of the message, the true evangelist will invite
people to give their lives to Jesus so they can have a happy marriage.

The evangelist may talk about finding peace in desperate times, but ultimately his sermon will lead back to Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

The Spirit sends evangelists wherever they are most needed (**Acts 8:39**). Philip was caught away and reappeared in another city where he continued to preach.



The evangelist moves in, does his or her job, and then moves on to his or her next assignment.

While culture and location may be different today, the principles one can take from Philip and his evangelistic ministry are still relevant today.

Context may change, but the message of the Good News always remains the same!

Evangelists are the shock troops of the kingdom



Their function is similar to the Navy Seals or Army paratroopers who are the first to advance into enemy territory to prepare the way for the main battle group.



Friends, please remember, You can't buy your way into heaven or out of hell.

Rev. Jesus Del Rio, Ed