

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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~ All articles are written by Terry Carter unless otherwise stated ~

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Can an Evangelist also be a Deacon?



Brother Carter,

Can an Evangelist in the local Church also be a Deacon at the same time? Would he ordain himself and thus only be accountable to himself? Can he really do both jobs adequately as these are different roles in the Church?

Brother Carter's Answer:

Down through the years, I have often been asked about whether a man can serve as both an Evangelist and an Elder. I have always thought this is a conflict of interest for a couple of reasons.

First, Elders ordain Evangelists and Evangelists ordain Elders.

Ordination indicates accountability of the one ordained to the one, or ones, doing the ordaining. With Elders appointing Evangelists and Evangelists appointing Elders, there is mutual accountability between them. If a man is serving as both an Elder and an Evangelist, to whom is he accountable? Is there any accountability other than from his

fellow elders? Is that enough? It certainly is not the Scriptural structure as seen in the New Testament.

"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and **appoint elders in every city** as I commanded you" **Titus 1:5 (NKJV)**

"Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy **with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.**" **I Timothy 4:14 (NKJV)**

Appointing in **Titus 1:5** and laying on of hands in **I Timothy 4:14** refer to ordination. In **Titus**, it is the Evangelist Titus ordaining Elders. In **I Timothy**, it is an Evangelist being ordained by the Elders.

Second, but related to the first, who disciplines such a man if he sins?

Paul makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the Evangelist to discipline a sinning Elder. This also speaks to accountability. But if the Elder who is sinning is also the Evangelist, who rebukes him? It's like expecting a police officer to give himself a ticket when he is also the judge in town.

"19 Do not receive an accusation against **an elder** except from two or three witnesses. 20 **Those who are sinning rebuke** in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear." **I Timothy 5:19-20 (NKJV)**

For these reasons, I have always said that it is neither practical nor doctrinal for a man to be both an

Elder and an Evangelist at the same time. I believe we have a similar situation regarding a man serving as both an Evangelist and Deacon at the same time.

It may surprise you to know that the Bible is not very specific about who should ordain Deacons. The closest example of this we have in Scripture is found in **Acts 6:1-7** where seven men were appointed to take care of the Grecian widows. These seven men are not specifically called "deacons" although the Greek word for "serve" in **verse 2**, "*diakoneo*" is translated "deacon" in **I Timothy 3:10** and **I Timothy 3:13**. Further, that does seem to be the office they were ordained to fill.

"1 Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews **by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.** 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and **serve tables.** 3 "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, **whom we may appoint over this business;** 4 "but **we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."** 5 And the saying pleased the whole

multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 **whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.**" **Acts 6:1-6 (NKJV)**

It was the apostles who did that ordination. Obviously, we do not have living apostles anymore. The fact that the qualifications for Deacons were given to Timothy, an Evangelist, might imply that Evangelists ordain Deacons but I'm not sure you could be dogmatic about that.

It seems to me that there are both practical and doctrinal considerations here. On a practical level, I believe you are correct that the office of Deacon and the office of Evangelist have different roles in the Church. That alone doesn't necessarily prohibit one man doing both things, but your point about whether one man can do both jobs adequately is certainly a valid one.

There is an issue here on a practical level for sure. It seems to me that an Evangelist would be better off training someone else to be a Deacon than to do that job himself. That is certainly part of the work of an Evangelist and the work of Elders, as well.

On a doctrinal level, I think it would be good to consider what the apostles said when they appointed the seven men to care for the widows. They said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables, **Acts 6:2.**

They went on to say that they would give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word, **Acts 6:4.** That was the whole basis for establishing Deacons in the Church. Obviously, those are still valid reasons today for having Deacons to attend to such matters.

If the Evangelist is busy serving tables, who will be devoting themselves to prayer and the

ministry of the Word? Thus, it is both practical and doctrinal to have men serving as Deacons and a different man serving as an Evangelist.