

# **Calvary Baptist Church of Santa Barbara**

## **The Biblical Function, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Deaconesses**

The New Testament words which refer to a deacon(ess) simply mean servant and service. The role of a deaconess is one of serving.

The first picture we see of deacons in the New Testament was probably those men chosen by the church in Acts 6 for the purpose of caring for the widows. There are two principles in this passage that help us understand the duties of deacons and deaconesses:

1. The first is that it was very important for the church to look after the needy in the congregation. The church had a responsibility to look after the widows; however, the widows were being neglected, and something had to be done about it.
2. The second principle is that those who were the spiritual leaders of the church were not to sacrifice the time they spent in the ministry of the Word and of prayer, even for such an important responsibility as caring for the widows. Therefore, the church chose seven men to fulfill this role so as not to hinder the spiritual leaders from their responsibilities.

Deacons and deaconesses, therefore, serve in such a way that the elders can devote their time to the oversight of the church, to the ministry of the word, and to prayer.

- The primary role of Deaconesses is to assist the Elders so that they can devote their time to the oversight and shepherding of the church (Acts 6:1-6).
- They shall assist the Elders in the shepherding of the congregation. This may include leadership or caring responsibilities for a small group of women, leading or serving in women's ministry, teaching a Sunday School class, or other areas of ministry designated by the Elders.
- They shall aid the Elders as called upon in the administration of the Lord's Supper, baptism, worship services, prayer meetings, visiting those in need, visiting the membership, and participating in outreach ministries.
- Deaconesses may be assigned the responsibility of representing the Elders on various commissions, committees, or ministry teams of the church.
- The Deaconesses will meet with the Elders as needed. They will meet for communication, evaluation of needs, and oversight.

Deaconesses and candidates for the office of Deaconess shall meet the qualifications of Scripture, specifically 1 Timothy 3:11 and Romans 16:1-2.

- (a) Dignified ..... 1 Timothy 3:11
- (b) Not slanderers ..... 1 Timothy 3:11
- (c) Sober minded ..... 1 Timothy 3:11
- (d) Faithful in all things ..... 1 Timothy 3:11
- (e) A helper of many ..... Romans 16:2