

What about Deaconesses? (1 Tim 2:12, 3:11; Rom 16:1, 2; Acts 6:1–5)
GCC, 9/22/19, Morning Worship

Introduction: What about female deacons?

- I. Five Things to Remember When Working through the Question of Female Deacons
 - A. The Decision to Ordain Female Deacons is not, necessarily, a Liberal Tendency
 - B. The Church Must Hold the Line Against Any and Every Cultural Ideology that Would Contradict the Scriptures
 - C. Three Hermeneutical Principles Must Ground the Discussion of Female Deacons
 1. *Sola scriptura*
 2. *The Analogy of Faith*
 3. *The Regulative Principle*
 - D. The Question of Female Deacons is not a Primary Doctrinal Matter over which we Should Break Fellowship
 - E. Local Churches Must Take a Line in the Debate

- II. What Does 1 Tim 3:11 Say about Female Deacons in the Church?
 - A. “Their (deacons’) wives?”
 - B. “Their (elders’ and deacons’) wives?”
 - C. “Women?”

- III. What Does Romans 16:1, 2 Say about Female Deacons?
 - A. Is “servant” a generic functional title or is it an official title of an ordained officer?
 - B. In the NT, many people are called “servants” in the generic functional sense.
 1. Any Christian as a servant (Matthew 20:26; Mark 9:35)
 2. Civil Magistrates (Romans 13:4)
 3. Christ (Galatians 2:17; Rom 15:8)
 4. An apostolic team sent by Paul to deal with affairs in the local church (Ephesians 6:21)
 5. Paul (1 Cor 3:5, 6; 2 Cor 6:4; Eph 3:7; 1:23, 25)
 6. Apollos (1 Cor 3:5)
 7. Of Satan’s servants, i.e., demons (2 Cor 11:15)
 8. Of False apostles (2 Cor 11:23)
 9. Tychius (Eph 6:19; Col 4:7)
 10. Epaphras (Col 1:7)
 11. Timothy (1 Tim 4:6)
 - C. The context of the passage would need to clearly specify that the official and ordained sense is intended (e.g., 1 Tim 3:8ff; Phil 1:1).
 - D. Conclusion: While it is impossible to be certain, “servant” could be understood either way

- IV. What Does 1 Tim 2:12 Tell us about Female Deacons?
 - A. The Prohibition is Not Circumstantial, or Cultural, but Normative (cf. 1 Tim 3:14, 15)
 - B. Do deacons exercise authority?

1. Yes, they exercise a derived authority
2. Their authority is distinct from elders, but it is authority nonetheless
3. Authority is Conferred Through Ordination (Acts 6:1–5)
 - a. Acts 6:3. The word “appoint” in the Greek literally means “to assign someone a position of authority” i.e., to put in charge.
 - b. It is the same Greek word that Paul uses in Titus 1:5 when he tells Titus to “appoint” elders in every city.
 - c. “[the apostles] prayed and laid their hands on them.” This is the same language and same Paul uses in 1 Tim 4:14 concerning the ordination of Timothy to the position of elder.
4. **Conclusion:** Do deacons exercise authority? Yes. Therefore, 1 Tim 2:12 would seem to prohibit women from being ordained deacons.

V. Conclusions

- A. The Question is not, “may women serve in the church?”
- B. The Question is: “may women serve as ordained office-bearers in the church (elder or deacon)? No.
 1. God works through headship in salvation, family, and church