

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))

Okay, let's begin in prayer.

Our grace has got me heavenly. Father we thank and praise you. That just as, With the physical structure of the tabernacle. So also now with the spiritual structure of your church, You have given us much specific instruction in your word. That we may have our hope in you that we may rejoice.

At being given. From you. What to do and to know with our confidence in you. That you've given us all that. We need. In your word. And yet, o lord. That you've given us all the instruction that we need. We know that we depend upon you. We need the continued act of working of your spirit.

To help us as we study. Help our minds to help our hearts. And so, we look to you for that. With confidence and gladness and thanksgiving. Knowing that in christ, we are beloved children, knowing that Your spirit from his work, we ask is the very one who taught us to call you Araba.

Being the spirit of a son, being the spirit who is from you, Producing in us. Christ likeness Towards him and child likeness towards you. So lord. Even as we ask for your blessing on the lesson, We are reminded. That your way is the best way. To help us, not only to learn but also to put into practice.

And walk with you and confident. Trust. We asking jesus name. Amen. So he come to the end of the act, six section. Uh, as a reminder, it's been about A year, i think maybe more. Since we were here in the preaching and we're just doing in very kind of scenario fashion, Um, In these lessons.

What we did in? In those sermons. And you can always. Go back and get that. Uh, but we've covered the purpose of the deacon, the work of the deacon, the qualifications of the deacon. We're going to cover some of these things again. Obviously, when we get to first Timothy 3 there covered again and they Of course, the passage is agree with each other because it's the word of god.

That's one of the wonderful evidences of god's word. Our own thoughts don't agree. With with ourselves. From one day to the next and yet what god wrote by the minds and hands of dozens of men over thousands of years has a perfect internal consistency. What a wonderful. Uh, what a wonderful truth.

Anyway, act five, we'll begin in verse 42 because that becomes a significant again when we Think about the ordination. Of the deacon. We've covered purpose. Work qualifications will cover coordination and success. Lord willing in the next few minutes. Act, five, verse 42 and daily in the temple. And in every house They did not cease teaching and preaching jesus as christ.

Now, in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplying, There are roads are complaint against the hebrews by the hellenists because their widows were neglected in the

daily distribution. Then the 12, summon the multitude of the disciples and said it is not desirable that we should leave the word of god and serve tables.

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. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer. And to the ministry of the word. And the same, please the whole multitude and they chose Steven.

A man full of faith and the holy spirit and philip Proculus nikonur, Timon. Harmonness and nicholas a broth light from antioch. Whom they sat before the apostles and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them, Then the word of god spread and the number of the disciples multiplied, greatly in jerusalem, been a great many of the priests were obedient To the faith.

So far the reading of god's word. And so, You can see how. Of. The officer training. Uh, was taking place and In this church. Actually met this church by. The church in jerusalem at the time, but It's uh it's taking place similarly in our congregation. By God's. Providential mercy is As much as by anyone's planning.

And that is all, we're being trained. In the teaching and preaching of jesus, as the Christ verse 42, all were being led by the apostles. Continually in prayer. And ministry of the word. Verse 4. There was the public ministry daily. The daily in the temple in verse 42. And there was also, Ministry that was in every house.

Similar to what we heard recently. In x 20 ministry, according to the houses. And so there's training of all, there's especially training of the men. Uh, this would be implied in in the house to house. Ministry, when you minister the word of god, the means of grace. To households you focus on the men because they are going to be the ones who are carrying on that ministry every day, the elders and Whomever, the lord calls to labor and preaching and teaching is not going to be able to be in your house every day.

Uh, And so there is this continual officer training. Uh, sometimes i'll have a Uh, another pastor Sincerely. I don't mean i, you know, i don't mean it to I'm not belittling them. Because oh, we're we're doing officer training right now and i think, yeah, we are too. I i do officer training, i got three boys in my family had officer training a couple times a day every day.

Uh, this is how the lord does officer training. A man does not become full of the holy spirit and wisdom. In a 12 week, canned. A series of classes. He may receive some some specialized information. Uh, but as far as training up officers for the church, This is. Uh the this is the way that the church in jerusalem did it.

They were all. The whole church was was being trained with A special focus on the men. And so, when you come to, Ordained people to the office. The first thing you need is not just a few trained men. You need an entire trained congregation from whom. Those whom the spirit is gifting and gracing.

You guys don't understand what i mean when i say gifting and gracing. So when the holy spirit gifts, someone he does. He does a work in them that emphasizes Certain understanding. Uh, They, they grasp the truth, they have They have different roles that the lord has put them in.

And different skills and abilities that the lord gives them. For those roles and that lens that lens itself then to whatever the holy spirit plans to do with them further. When we talk about gracing, we talk about those things that are common to the spirits work and all believers.

And yet, he He does a work of grace in those whom he is going to make officers. In the church, such that they become examples unto the rest of the flock. You, when you read the fruit of the spirit and the character qualities of an elder or of a deacon, You don't say, oh well, i guess since i'm not an older or deacon, i don't have to have those.

No, those are all describing things that we know. Every christian will be growing in because they're being conformed to Christ. Uh, hence hence the name that was originally used majoritatively but Uh, we will gladly wear it christian All these little christis. Uh you can do the same with puritan although it's not this.

Holy is as the name christian. Oh Up pure, you know, someone with pure doctrine and pure life, how dreadful i wouldn't hey, to be one of those. Uh, thank god. That he would brace suchman. So, Uh, so the whole church is trained. And yet, there is A recognition and there needs to be that instruction for the church.

You notice you verse 2. Then the 12, summon the multitude of the disciples and said it is not desirable that we should. Uh, leave the word of god and serve tables. So, whom did they summon? The. Multitude. So they gathered Thousands. Believers. An announced, uh, you know, the whole congregation At that time.

And announced to them, that Right now, tables need deaconing in the future. Other things are going to need deaconing. And the apostles are not going to leave. Uh, the the ministry and the means of grace for overseeing. So it says, therefore so they said therefore brethren And again. Talking to the entire.

Body. Uh, seek out from among you seven men. You remember last week that's the male specific word of good reputation full of the holy spirit. I would they know Uh, what full of the holy spirit? Looks like we covered last week, but now pertaining to how you do officer training recognition election.

Uh, they would know what full of the holy spirit. Looks like because the apostles are constantly preaching and teaching in public and from house to house, what it looks like when the spirit is applying Christ to someone And so that, you know, it's not like some nebulous term, the that Those about whom you feel or with whom you feel really impressed out.

How? Connected to the spirit. They look, No, it would have been defined by the instruction, full of the holy spirit and wisdom him. We may have appoint over this business. So not only was the whole church being trained on a continual basis, but when it came time and officers were needed, the entire congregation was instructed, Uh, in what those officers were needed for, well, what the task of of the, the deacon, Was was going to be and How we could, you could recognize him the lord.

Uh, wanted to be A deacon. Okay, so there's instruction in the qualifications. Now, it's interesting, the multitude was to seek into identify Uh, Because i have known my own heart. And suspected based on the word of god that other people's hearts are similar to mine. Uh, i have often.

Thought to myself. Um, congregational election is a really dangerous and unwise thing. Uh, first of all, the elders have the authority. Uh, in the congregates congregational nomination and And election, first of all, the elders have the authority. The. Letters in the new testament that Are written about recognizing. Elders and deacons are not addressed to churches, generally.

But to elders specifically Timothy and titus. But we do have here, don't we? Uh, precedent seek out for, from, among you talking to the whole Uh, congregation at the time, seven men

and giving them, then the good reputation full of the holy spirit full of wisdom. That we went over briefly last week, so the multitude seek and identify Now.

There are two things that are necessary for this to be followed well, It has to be a well-instructed. Uh, church that is actually walking with the lord and growing in him, which means you have to do church discipline. Uh, there are going to be an every church. Those who are what we call gospel hypocrites.

Uh, they look like they believe. Uh, for a time they speak like they believe for a time but they're actual facebook before god. Is different and that will come out eventually in the province of god. You don't have to Um, you know, sometimes when a congregation rediscovers church discipline which is supposed to be a feature of the church throughout the ages They do what we often do.

They get all excited about the new thing they discovered. And everybody runs around jumping on the least least, error or sin. They can find from anybody else and they start Matthew 18. And, you know, maybe you get a lot of brothers repenting or whatever. But they're very earnest to pull up all the tears out of the church.

They go after the tears. The problem is this contradicts the wisdom of the lord jesus christ. Who forbids tear hunting in the church? In his provenance. Sin will come out. And you deal with it as it presents itself, you don't have to go looking for it. We're centered. It's going to come out.

And and it's in a context where Where, We hope that everyone who seems to be presenting as a tear is really one of those. Actual sprouts of wheat. That looks so much like a terror because of how weak and worldly it is. That it is for their sakes. That jesus says, don't go hunting terrors.

In in the church. Because you're going to find things that you think are terrorists, but they are baby believers. And you're going to hurt them. Um, and so very, very amazing considering the priority that christ has upon the purity of his church. That out of love for. The weakest and least mature believers in the church.

He says, don't hunt the terrace. Um, but but Oh, all that to say. If the congregation generally is going to be recognizing nominating setting before, The elders. For consideration. Uh, then the elders. First part is not. Uh, not even when there's instruction about the qualification. Certainly not when nominees are set before, then the elders are preparing.

Uh, for A well-recognized selected, trained ordained deaconate by their ministry, all the time. Not just in the instruction and prayer, but also in the discipline of the church, Uh, where there's accountability and calling to repentance and People, whose Uh, Whether it's their attendance, or the way, they attend or an inconsistency between What happens in the life versus what happens in the attending calling those things to their attention, applying those things?

So that you have a A congregation that is equipped by god already to be following christ and and to recognize For this verse three task. Therefore brethren seek out from. Uh, from among you. So you have the training of all the instruction of all the call to all to Instruction of all in the qualifications.

The call to all to to seek and identify And then there's

I think that should say approval on your outline. Um, Sorry, the older i get the the more Thoughts from the other tracks in my mind at the same time. Invade my fingers while i'm

typing. Approval, not approvable. Approvable by The, the ministers of the word, so they choose Um, The.

Seven men, Stephen. Philip, progress nicknard, etc. Set them before the apostles. So, So there's this presenting to the apostles and now In our context, the different the Uh, continuation, continuing application of that. Would be the the nomination set before the elders. For the elders consideration. This is. Significant in the way it says in verse 6, because this is how The giving at the time, Was being done, the people were taking, you know, as there was need they would sell whatever they had and common set it before the apostles.

And so now it's not The material wealth of an individual. That is being set before the apostles for Uh, for their approval and use in the congregation, it is the spiritual wealth of the congregation. The congregation is saying, Here is some of the best spiritual wealth that god has given us.

And there's an analogy there between setting the money. Um, before the apostles and now setting the men. Uh, before the Before the apostles, what a wonderful thing it is when a congregation is growing together. When a family Are growing together and And the congregation recognizes the spirit's gifting and the spirit's gracing and had received instruction and recognizing Yeah.

Whom the lord is calling to a particular office. And then, Uh, and then they nominate, this is very, very difficult. This is a very different view than what happened then what can happen if we're not, well, instructed and doing this as an obedience before god, which is, people think about whom they want.

Uh, on this. This deactivate or on or on that session, or even worse because we're americans and And the lord has been very merciful to give us a representative form. Of government. Yeah, whom do i want representing me on. And that is not a biblical idea, at all. Uh, but When you think, Um, These are these are our Our brothers in the lord.

And it's really a big. Ask for the family. For the husband and father to be made a deacon. Or an elder. And yet that that offering them together with the rest of the congregation, Before god for his service, in his church. For the good of his bride. Of christ's bride.

Whom he loves and he gave himself for redeemed with his blood. So, this Setting before the apostles and then the elders receiving. Uh, not just now. Uh, gifts. From god as presented. By the congregation. But Uh, ought to be a very joyful and humbling thing in which they see the lord having produced fruit from their ministry.

That i hope is going to lead to fruitful ministry and future years. Uh, i think it's fairly impossible for For you little ones. A littlest ones, maybe the older you grow? The more possibly gets Um, To. Uh, To understand or appreciate how some of us who are older. Look at your lives and look at the lord's work in your lives.

And think about when y'all. Are the mamas and the wives of girls and when you all are the daddies And the husbands, Men. And then. Especially when we we look at the boys. Thinking about what he may be. Uh, doing as far as raising up deacons raising up elders.

Raising up those his labor. Is preaching and teaching. The word of god. Uh, these are Uh gifts, without which Uh the reformation revival preservation of the church more glorifying of christ in his church and generations to come do not happen. Because this is how. The lord jesus operates and works and builds and and Um, makes us builds and his church and makes it Fruitful.

Um, So, A joyous step there in verse 6 as they are set before the apostles. Uh, notice. Uh, in the actual ordination action, there are two separate actions here first. Uh, the praying and then the laying on his hands, laying on his hands here is not a prayer action.

The prayer action comes first. The recognizing. Of the men, as Given by god and devoted to god and dependence. Upon. Upon god. Yeah, we uh Yeah, it's right and appropriate for us to take vows. Uh, in an ordination service because there are duties that belong to the officers, and they are duties, especially before God.

It's one of the things that we see, especially with the elders, but it also applies, To deacons. We don't have any new testament epistle sent to a deacon so we don't have quite the the same thing. But when it's sent to Timothy notice how many times The apostles. Paul says, i charge you or before god, or before the lord jesus christ.

Uh, to Timothy The vow making is a recognition of and an application of the fact that an officer must consider his His calling his duty and the office that he's put in first and foremost before the face of god. And, And the congregation then will also take about or recognize Not only that about the officer but that these officers are provided by god, for god's purposes independence upon God's grace and we are entrusting ourselves.

Not to the men so much in god has set over us as deacons or said over us as elders. But entrusting ourselves to god, who is But who is doing us good by them, according to his design. So what, one of the things that, that we often because it's unusual, we don't, there aren't vows every week.

At least public congregational vows, every week in the public course. So at an ordination service, it can be quite common. For us, or we I have a tendency. To really think about and notice that bows are being taken place. Um, but there's an emphasis here on the prayer. Uh, that takes place.

Uh, the The crying out to god for his blessing. On what is happening that we engage with god himself? And not just, Um, Not not just with one another. So, Prayer ought to have a significant part. Well, a central part and An ordination service per se. The other action then And notice the laying out of the hands is not a prayer action, but an ordination action.

And the laying on of the hands is something that Originally goes back to god's commandments in a few different situations where someone would lay their hands on someone else as an act of transfer. Uh but not a mechanical transfer like you can transfer it with your hands but a recognition that god is going to do this.

One of the most One of the most obvious and moving. Um, Descriptions of that. Is with the scapegoat and delaying on of the hands. And that case, it's not. Authority and ministry. That's being extended transferred. It's it's sin and guilt. But, When you sing, you know, those wonderful for wonderful words.

My faith would lay her hands on that deer head of vine. While like a penitent i stand in their confess my sin and you're talking to jesus. Um, But here, the laying one of hands is the recognition that That these that authority and duty that had rested on the apostles, Uh, exclusively up until that point was now.

Being assigned to these seven men. And in this case, it was transferred. The apostles were not going to do this anymore but we still have laying on of hands will. Paul talks about doing that. With Timothy. Remember the gift that is in you by the laying on of my hands.

And when Paul laid hands on Timothy, it didn't transfer from Paul. Paul was still a minister of word and sacrament and prayer and his office. As a parcel but Timothy now was being brought into ministry of word and sacrament and prayer. Um, So, The laying on of hands as an ordination action.

Uh, so that's well. It went quick. Uh, but when you look at and if you got one of the sheets and it's at the bottom of the back of each sheet, The, the different steps. Uh, you can see how roughly following the form of government. Uh, actually parallels, the procedure here in x6 Uh, no surprise with Presbyterians.

Of everything as that has been very carefully studied. Uh, the only times that there's ever departure is when you have brand new stuff that was invented after 1850. Um, Not so carefully. Studied usually. At that point. For reasons that we won't get into because we're out of time. But then the success of the deaconate, what do they do?

What do the deacons hope for? They do hope for attendance to material needs and people not being neglected and freeing up the ministry of the word, the ministers, the elders. Uh, for the elders for their eldering. They hope for all of those things. But they define success as God's blessing upon them, they're doing all of their work.

Unto the smoothness of worship. And service. Uh, strengthened ministers, the spread of the word. Uh, And the conversion. Uh, Uh, conversion of many, and the conversion, even of difficult cases, then the word of God spread, And the number of the disciples multiplied, greatly in Jerusalem and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith, you know, the same ones who back in chapter 5 and 21.

It was especially the high priest and those who are with him who came and called the council together against the church. And now a bunch of those who were with him, are being converted to the faith. When you say, we really want to see a tidal wave of conversions and some of the hardest people who are most hostile to the church converted.

So what we really need is and one of the big Bible answers to that is a functional deaconate. The facilitates, the life, and the worship of the church. So that the means of grace may be freely and fully attended to independence upon. Independence upon the God of grace and he will bless those means to that multiplication and to the conversion of those hard cases So sorry, for the way we had to abbreviate at the end there.

And again. Uh, I think we spent like five or six sermons. In this passage and you can go back and listen to those if you'd like more. That's right. Father, thank you. Thank you for. Your plan. To make your dwelling place with man. And the Lord Jesus Christ. And by your spirit And a new heavens and a new earth.

Uh, those who you have redeemed have been conformed, Uh, to Jesus to the sun and he is the firstborn among many brethren. And we thank you for the deaconate and it's part in this plan. Help us, Lord, as we continue to pursue this. To do so, not just in the procedure that you have given us, but recognizing the principles of priorities And by your spirit, Having our Um, Our hearts do it in the spirit which you have taught us and presented to it in your word.

Now help us. We pray as we go to your public worship and do come By your power. Uh, by your spirit in your power. And blessed. The means. Of your grace, that with which you have built your worship. We ask in Jesus name, amen.