

2022-01-12 Deacons' Meeting

Spiritual

Acts 6-7: Contemplations on the Life of St Stephen

- First of seven men to be chosen and ordained as a deacon
- Ordained because the apostles needed to give their time to Spiritual work
- The spiritual work is for apostles, bishops, priests. So the deacons are serving in the administrative work
- The role of deacons in the church is big. It's not just serving in the altar:
 - Making orban
 - Cleaning the church and its facilities
 - Preventing the heretics from entering the church
 - Serving on the board
 - etc.
- The apostles gave qualifications and criteria for those servants (Acts 6:3)
 - Good Reputation (inside and outside the church)
 - Full of the Holy Spirit (having the fruits of the spirit)
 - Full of Wisdom
- The Apostles, Bishops and Priests have a different role (Acts 6:4)
 - Ministry of the Word (i.e. sermons and preaching)
 - Prayers
- If the deacons didn't do their part, it ends up falling on the Apostles... And this happens sometimes now with Abouna
- The Result of the Deacons' Service (Acts 6:7)
 - The service multiplying
 - The word of God spreading
- When the service is organized and everyone is doing their part, the Church of God will grow and the Word of God will spread

Lessons from the Life of St Stephen

Brave Enough to Say Yes to the Call of Service

- "Speak O Lord, your servant hears"

- Christianity was not easy or popular in those days. The environment of service was martyrdom. It was a great risk
 - St Stephen and the deacons took a risk and showed great courage.
 - He didn't shy away when the times got rough, but received martyrdom
- We don't have risk of martyrdom, but we have many inconveniences and difficulties in our life and service. Schedule, tired, family, work, etc.

Filled with Faith and the Holy Spirit

- How could the apostles measure faith or holy spirit? It was manifested in their life and actions
- St Luke mentions St Stephen full of the Holy Spirit four times in these two chapters
- Conduct in our lives, in our business dealings, in daily transactions, etc.

Handled Opposition and False Accusations with Grace

- He did not defend himself but simply shared his faith with grace and love, seeking their salvation
- Be strong in the faith and stand up for the Truth

Good Knowledge of the Word of God

- No one would dare have this conversation unless he knew the Word of God
 - Acts 7 is a good A-Z summary of the Old Testament
 - "Be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15)
- This is shown in how you read the word of God. Someone who reads well can deliver a message to the hearer.
 - Sometimes the reader can delivery a clearer message than the sermon.
 - Every deacon should be **ready enough** to give a sermon in a moment's notice

Pray for those who Persecute You

- Many will stand against us and oppose us - Good intentions or bad, with knowledge or without
- How do I handle this?
 - Do I carry a grudge?
 - Do I speak evil of them?
 - Between deacons should be care and love, but we all still can grow
- Pray for those who treat us badly

Strive to be of Good Reputation

- When you have the urge to respond in a secular way, remember who you are and Who you are serving

Administrative

- Deacons' Meetings
 - These are important and require commitment
 - If you have a valid reason to miss it (i.e. sick, traveling, work, school), please communicate it with Abouna
 - The service of the Reader and Subdeacon is **as important** as Sunday School - both are services for TEACHING
- You should wear your Tonia even if it's not your day for service
 - "There's already a lot of people" is a reason sometimes, but if that's the case why would the Lord make thousands of thousands of angels?
 - To stand and serve as a deacon is the service you are ordained for, and you will greatly benefit from it
- Scheduling
 - Sending availability in a timely manner on the group every two months
 - Sending availability on groups for weekday liturgies (see Jonah in February)
 - Sending a message when you will be unable to make it to your service
- Attending the Tasbeha and standing with the deacons or in the front rows - especially during Kiahk
- Father of Confession and regular confession
- Proper Vestments (including Tonia, Badrashel, Taleeg) and respect for them
- Arriving 15min before the Liturgy Starts, regardless of your position

Announcement - New Adult Deacons Class

- Every Wednesday at 8:00-9:30pm
- **Arabic and English**
- Rituals, Dogma, Hymns, and the Deacons Service in General
- Purpose:
 - To remember things that were forgotten from lack of use
 - To be in harmony with the rituals and practices in our church
 - To serve the adult deacons
- Jan Guirguis will be responsible for and serving that class
- **Required attendance for Saturday Altar Servants**
- **Required attendance for Friday Altar Servants who are not already attending the Advanced Hymns**
- *It's okay if you don't know, but what is more important is a willingness to learn*
- **Starting Feb 2, 2022**