

# Covenant Membership — Week 3

## The Covenant Relationship Between Deacons and the Church

Primary Text: Acts 6:1–7

### Opening Prayer

A prayer asking the Lord to focus our minds on His Word, to instruct and equip us for His glory and our good.

### Purpose of This Study

This is the third and final week in our study on **covenant membership**, answering two key questions:

- **What is covenant membership?**
- **Why does it matter?**

This teaching prepares us for **Covenant Renewal Sunday in January**, helping ensure that our renewal is not merely routine, but a meaningful act of worship rooted in understanding.

### Review of Previous Weeks

#### Week 1: Covenant Membership vs. Traditional Membership

- We are **members of one another**, not merely attendees.
- Our fellowship is rooted in **koinonia** — deep, covenantal participation with God and with each other.
- Covenant membership reflects how **God deals with His people** — not casually, but through binding, faithful promises.

#### Week 2: The Covenant Relationship Between Elders and the Church

- Elders are called to **spiritual oversight**, guarding the flock.

- Their role is likened to **watchmen on city walls** — vigilant, prepared, and diligent.
- The church is called to work *with* elders, not against them, so leadership may be a joy.
- There is a **mutual partnership** between elders and congregation for spiritual growth and refreshment (cf. Romans 1:11–12).

## Week 3 Focus: Deacons and the Church

### Central Doctrine: Covenant Theology

A **biblical covenant** is a solemn, binding relationship initiated by God, calling for faith and obedience from His people.

- All church covenants (elder, deacon, membership) flow from the **New Covenant established by Christ**.
- God oversees and sanctifies how His people relate to one another within the church.

## Biblical Foundations for Deacon Ministry

### The Meaning of “Blessed” (Matthew 5)

The Beatitudes teach that *blessedness* (Greek: **makarios**) is:

- Living under the **approving favor of God**
- A joy rooted in **relationship**, not circumstances

This helps us understand:

- Suffering and blessing are not opposites
- Joy flows from belonging to Christ, not from ease or prosperity

### The Early Church (Acts 2:42–47)

The church was devoted to:

- Apostles’ teaching

- Fellowship
- Prayer
- Meeting one another's needs

As a result, **God added to their number daily** — not through strategy, but through faithfulness.

## Acts 6:1–7 — The Problem and God's Provision

### The Issue

- The church grew rapidly and included both **Hebrew and Hellenistic (Greek-speaking) believers**
- Widows among the Hellenists were being neglected in daily food distribution
- This threatened the **unity of the church**

### The Apostles' Response

- They affirmed the importance of meeting physical needs
- They recognized their primary calling: **prayer and the ministry of the Word**
- They called the church to select men:
  - Of good reputation
  - Full of the Spirit
  - Full of wisdom

### God's Design

- The congregation selected the men
- The apostles appointed them through prayer and the laying on of hands
- Unity was protected, and the Word continued to spread

This moment serves as the **origin and model** for deacon ministry.

## Deacons in God's Redemptive Plan

- Old Testament parallel: **Levites assisting the priests**
- New Covenant distinction: deacons are not limited by tribe or ethnicity
- This reflects God's plan to unite Jew and Gentile in one body

## Covenant Responsibilities of Deacons

Deacons covenant to:

1. **Guard the Unity of the Church**
  - Address practical issues before they become spiritual divisions
  - Serve in ways that preserve peace and harmony
2. **Support the Ministry of the Word**
  - Work alongside elders so they can remain devoted to prayer and teaching
  - Help communicate and implement church direction
3. **Serve Practical Needs**
  - Oversee care for widows, shut-ins, and facilities
  - Lead the church in acts of service (not do everything alone)
4. **Model Godliness**
  - Meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8–13)
  - Lead by example in character and conduct
5. **Carry Out Tasks on Behalf of the Church**
  - Serve faithfully under the spiritual direction of the elders

## The Church's Covenant with Elders and Deacons

The congregation covenants to:

- **Pray** for church leadership
- **Follow their spiritual leadership**
- **Support their work** through encouragement and service
- **Speak the truth in love**, not gossip
- **Hold leaders accountable** to Scripture — not personal preference
- **Receive their ministry** as God's provision

## **Deacon Covenant (Summary)**

Deacons commit to:

- Serve under elder leadership
- Meet the physical needs of the body
- Protect unity
- Lead in humble service
- Walk blamelessly before God
- Step down if qualifications are no longer met, seeking restoration

## **Membership Covenant (Summary)**

Members commit to:

- Submit to biblical leadership
- Pray and support elders and deacons
- Hold leaders accountable to Scripture
- Protect unity
- Honor leaders as servants of Christ

## **Closing Encouragement**

Covenant membership is not about roles or hierarchy — it is about **faithful partnership** in the body of Christ.

There is no such thing as an unimportant church member.  
God has designed the church so that **we need one another**.