

1 **diakonew**

2 a word study from Gerhard Friedrich Kittel, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,
3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 2000, c1964.

4 The concept of serving is expressed in Gk. by many words which are often hard to differentiate even
5 though each has its own basic emphasis. → **douleuw** means to serve as a slave, with a stress on
6 subjection. → **qerapeuw** emphasises willingness for service and the respect and concern thereby
7 expressed (esp. towards God). → **latreuw** means to serve for wages. In NT days it had come to be
8 used predominantly for religious or cultic duties. → **leitourgew** denotes official public service to
9 the people or to the state, being used in the LXX for service in the temple and in Christianity for
10 service in the Church. **uphretew** means at root to steer. In terms of service, it signifies esp. the
11 relation to the master to whom the service is rendered. In Xenoph. → **uphreth'** is often used in the
12 sense of adjutant. As distinct from all these terms, **diakonew** has the special quality of indicating
13 very personally the service rendered to another. It is thus closest to **uphretew**, but in **diakonew**
14 there is a stronger approximation to the concept of a service of love.

15 **A. diakonew outside the NT.**

16 1. Fundamental to an understanding of **diakonew** in all its uses is the fact that it has an original
17 concrete sense which is still echoed in its figurative meanings. In secular Gk. **diakonew**, which is
18 first found in Herodot. and is never too common, means a. "to wait at table": Aristoph. Ach.,
19 1015 ff.: **h̄kousa' wj' mageirikw' komyw' te kai; deipntikw' aujt̄w/diakoneitai**; Diod.
20 S., V, 28, 4: **oilde; Galatai ... deipnousi de; kaqhmenoi ... epi; th' gh' ...**
21 **diakonountai d̄f̄ upo; tw̄n newtatw̄n paidw̄n**; Athen., IX, 21: **ōtan ejanistai'**, **Kariwn,**
22 **diakonh'**; cf. Plut. Virtutem Doceri Posse, 3 (II, 440c). In particular it means "to taste," Ps. Luc.
23 Asin., 53: **kai; paide' h̄min pareisthkeisan oijocooi kaloi; ton oihon h̄min crusiw/**
24 **diakonoumenoi**; or "to direct a marriage-feast," Athen., IX, 20: **diakonoumen nun gamou'**; so
25 also Athen., VI, 46; Dio Chrys.Or., 7, 65. b. Rather more generally it means "to provide or care
26 for," Soph.Phil., 285 ff. In this sense it is often used of the work of women, Plat.Leg., VII, 805e:
27 **poteron h̄j Qrake' tai' gunaixin crw̄ntai kai; polla; ētera genh, gewrgein te kai;**
28 **boukolein kai; poimainein kai; diakonein mhden diaferontw' tw̄n doulnw̄;**
29 Plut.Adulat., 22 (II, 63d): **h̄ldiakonousa presbuti'**. On the basis of these original senses, it
30 has c. the comprehensive meaning "to serve," Hdt., IV, 154: **dihkonh̄sein ōti āh dehqh̄i**
31 Demosth., 9, 43: **tw̄/despoth/diakonw̄n**; P. Oxy., II, 275, 10: **diakonounta kai; poiounta**
32 **panta ta; ēpitassomena aujt̄w/**

33 In Greek eyes serving is not very dignified. Ruling and not serving is proper to a man, Plat.Gorg.,
34 492b. The formula of the sophist: "How can a man be happy when he has to serve someone?"
35 expresses the basic Greek attitude (Plat.Gorg., 491e). This attitude is still reflected in Plato's
36 characterisation of the servant as a contemptible flatterer (Gorg., 521ab). In Gorg., 518,
37 shopkeepers, bakers and others, as distinct from physicians and the teachers of gymnastics,
38 pursue activities for the nurture of the body which are described as **doul oprepei' te kai;**
39 **diakonika;' kai; ājel euqerou'**. Service acquires a higher value only when rendered to the
40 state, Demosth., 50, 2; Plat.Leg., 955cd: **tou;' th/patridi diakonounta' ti dwrwn cwri;'**
41 **crh; diakonein**. Even the merchant, tradesman or moneylender can in his way render service in
42 the state, Plat.Resp., II, 371a ff. The statesman, however, does so directly, though naturally in
43 terms of an idealistic understanding. For the Greek, the goal of human life is the perfect
44 development of individual personality. This determines the nature of service to others. Logically,
45 the sophist argues, a real man should simply serve his own desires with boldness and cleverness,
46 Plat.Gorg., 492a. Plato contradicts this, but his basic attitude is the same. The only point is that a
47 harmonious individual personality is for him interrelated to the harmonious totality. Gorg., 508a:
48 **fasi; d̄f̄ oilsofoiy kai; oujanon kai; ghn kai; qeou;' kai; ājqrw̄pou' thn koinwnian**
49 **sunecein kai; filian kai; kosmiōthta kai; sw̄frosunhn kai; dikaiot̄hta, kai; to; ōlon**

50 **touto dia; tauta kosmon kalousin.** The form of this **kosmo**" for social life is **politeia**.
 51 Hence the statesman rules as **diakono**" **th**" **polew**", not for the sake of ruling nor for the sake
 52 of his own desires, but for the sake of the service laid upon him, which consists supremely in the
 53 education of good citizens. Even this service, however, is determined by the self-understanding of
 54 the ego as a microcosm. Thus, even though it demands certain renunciations, it does not entail
 55 any true self-emptying for the sake of others. Service is not one of the powers which hold heaven
 56 and earth together, and it does not lead to sacrifice.

57 This view persists in Aristotle and Hellenism. The significance of the **poli**", however, gradually
 58 yields before a stronger cosmic awareness in which the wise man has the sense of being a servant
 59 of God, Epict.Diss., III, 22, 69; III, 24, 65. As such he is the instrument and witness of God,
 60 Diss., III, 26, 28; IV, 7, 20. On the other hand, "if expressions for service become more common
 61 in relation to God, they withdraw into the background in relation to one's neighbour." To be sure,
 62 realisation of the service to be rendered to God carries with it a certain interrelationship with the
 63 totality of creation. But concrete obligations towards one's neighbour almost completely
 64 disappear. For the Greek in his freedom and wisdom there can certainly be no question of existing
 65 to serve others.

66 2. Judaism showed a much deeper understanding of the meaning of service. Eastern thinking finds
 67 nothing unworthy in serving. The relation of a servant to his master is accepted, especially when
 68 he serves a great master. This is supremely true of the relation of man to God. It is noteworthy
 69 that the LXX does not use the term **diakonein** at all, but renders the Heb. equivalents by →
 70 **douleuein**, or, in the cultic sphere, by → **leitourgein** and → **latreuein**. The harsher term
 71 **douleuein** is in no way thought to be unsuitable.

72 Philo uses **diakonein** in the general sense of "to serve," with a clear echo of the original
 73 meaning "to wait at table," Vit. Cont., 70: **diakonountai de; ouc; upf; ahdrapodwn;** cf. also
 74 Vit. Cont., 75. From the material understanding of the concept of service one can see how Greek
 75 thinking softens the severity of the Jewish view.

76 In Joseph. **diakonein** occurs in three senses: "to wait at table," Ant., 11, 163: **eujqu;" wl' eicen**
 77 **mhde; apolousameno" diakonhswn ešpeusen tw/basilei thn epi; tou potou**
 78 **diakonian;** so also Ant., 6, 52; 11, 166; 11, 188; a woman serves in the night: 18, 74; b. "to
 79 serve" with the meaning of "to obey," Ant., 9, 25: **basilikw/diakonwn prostagmati;** cf. also
 80 Ant., 17, 140; c. "to render priestly service," Ant., 7, 365: **dietaxevte mian patrian**
 81 **diakoneisqai tw/qew/epi; hmera" okt;w; apo; sabbatou epi; sabbaton,** at the Passover,
 82 Ant., 10, 72: **tw'n iherewn ... diakonoumenwn toi" ocloi".**

83 Israel had the great heritage of the commandment of Lv. 19:18: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as
 84 thyself." This included full readiness for and commitment to service of one's neighbour. In later
 85 Judaism, however, 3 factors tended to obscure it. A sharp distinction came to be made between
 86 the righteous and the unrighteous in the antitheses of the Pharisees, and this dissolved the
 87 unconditional command of love and service. There arose the attitude lashed by Jesus in the
 88 parable of the Good Samaritan. Again, the service was less and less understood as sacrifice for
 89 others and more and more as a work of merit before God. Finally, there arose in Judaism the idea,
 90 which is so obvious to the natural man, not to accord service, especially service at table, to the
 91 unworthy. When Rabban Gamaliel II, the son of the rabbi, served other rabbis reclining at table
 92 with him, this caused astonishment. But Rabbi Jehoshua observed (Qid., 32b, cf. M. Ex., 18, 12):
 93 "We find that a greater than he served at table. Abraham was greater than he, and he served at
 94 table. A third added: God ... spreads the table before all men, and should not Rabban Gamaliel
 95 therefore ... stand and serve us?"

96 B. diakonew in the NT.

97 Jesus' view of service grows out of the OT command of love for one's neighbour, which He takes and
 98 links with the command of love for God to constitute the substance of the divinely willed ethical

99 conduct of His followers. In so doing, He purifies the concept of service from the distortions which it
 100 had suffered in Judaism. Jesus' attitude to service is completely new as compared with the Greek
 101 understanding. The decisive point is that He sees in it the thing which makes a man His disciple.

102 1. In the NT **diakonew** is first used in the original sense of "to wait at table": Lk. 17:8: **eltoimason**
 103 **tivdeipnhsw, kai; perizwsameno" diakonei moi ew" fagw kai; piw;** Jn. 12:2: **epoihsan**
 104 **ouh aujtw/deipnon ekei, kai; hMarqa dihkonei, olde; Lazaro" ei| hh ek tw**
 105 **ajakeimenwn sun aujtw/** At table there is a palpable distinction between the worthy man
 106 reclining on the couch and the girded servant or the attentive woman. It is thus a high honour for
 107 the vigilant servants when their returning lord rewards them by girding himself, setting them at
 108 table and coming to serve them (Lk. 12:37). The astonishing act of Jesus in the appraisal of
 109 service is to reverse in ethical estimation the relation between serving and being served (Lk.
 110 22:26 f.). Among the disciples **olhgoumeno"** must be **wl' oldiakonwn. tiv' gar meizwn, ol**
 111 **ajakeimeno" h|oldiakonwn e ouci; olajakeimeno" e egw; de; ej mezw/uhwn eijni wl' ol**
 112 **diakonwn.**

113 The natural man—and especially the Greek—would see no difficulty in answering the question
 114 who is greater, the one who serves or the one who is served. It is obviously the latter. Jesus in His
 115 emphatic statement (**egw; de; ...**) does not oppose to this view the general thought that serving is
 116 greater than being served. Instead, He points to the actuality: I am among you as a servant. This is
 117 said by the uncontested leader of the disciples, by the Son of Man who knows that He is Lord of
 118 the kingdom of God (Lk. 22:29) and who summons the disciples to exercise final judgment on
 119 Israel with Him (v. 30). It is thus clear that Jesus is not merely bringing about a radical change in
 120 the academic estimation of human existence and action; He is instituting in fact a new pattern of
 121 human relationships. He makes this no less clear in terms of the specific process of waiting at
 122 table than by His own action in washing the feet of His disciples.

123 There is a variant reading of Lk 22:27 f. in Codex D. This would give the following sense:
 124 "Better the leader be servant than the one who sits at table. For I have come among you, not as
 125 one who sits at table, but as one who serves. And you have grown through my service." Blass and
 126 J. Weiss regard this as the original version. It blunts, however, the sharpness of the antithesis
 127 between the current view and that of Jesus, and reduces to mere pedagogy the impressive
 128 reference to the manner and conduct of Jesus. It is surely a later softening.

129 In a rather wider sense **diakonein** means "to supervise the meal" in Ac. 6:2: **diakonein**
 130 **trapezai"**. The reference is not merely to the provision of food but to the daily preparation and
 131 organisation. H. J. Holtzmann describes the men to whom this task was committed as organisers,
 132 dispensers and overseers of meals, **trapezopoioiv** The **diakonein trapezai"** is brought into
 133 emphatic contrast with the **diakonia tou logou**, and embraces practical love rather than the
 134 proclamation of the Word.

135 It is a debated question how this service, in which the Hellenistic widows felt they were being
 136 overlooked, was executed in the period depicted in Ac. 6, whether by the distribution of portions
 137 to those in special need or by the arranging of common meals. The latter is more likely. For it
 138 means that the overlooking of the Hellenistic widows was probably no mere matter of partiality,
 139 and therefore of petty wrangling for the better portions, but a radical difference of opinion on
 140 whether they should be admitted to the fellowship and therefore whether they really belonged to
 141 the community. Possibly such issues as the attitude to the Law and to the strict Jewish concept of
 142 purity were already involved. For the committing of this service to the Hellenistic Seven surely
 143 implies rather more than a purely external release of the leaders of the community from
 144 administrative duties.

145 Martha's care for her guest is described as **diakonein** in Lk. 10:40, the narrower sense being
 146 included as in Jn. 12:2. Peter's mother-in-law cares for her guests in the same way in Mk. 1:31
 147 and par. The word also seems to be used in this sense of the angels who ministered to Jesus after

148 the temptation (Mk. 1:13; Mt. 4:11); their ministry consisted in bringing Him food after His
149 period of fasting.

150 2. The same change in evaluation as we find in respect of waiting at table applies everywhere in the
151 NT to **diakonein** in the wider sense of “to be serviceable.” Sometimes the link with waiting at
152 table may still be discerned, as when it is said of the women who accompany Jesus: **aitine**
153 **dihkonoun autoi**” (or **autw**) **ek tw n uparcontwn autai**” (Lk. 8:3). Cf. also Mt. 27:55; Mk.
154 15:41. In Mt. 25:42–44, however, Jesus comprises under the term **diakonein** many different
155 activities such as giving food and drink, extending shelter, providing clothes and visiting the sick
156 and prisoners. The term thus comes to have the full sense of active Christian love for the
157 neighbour and as such it is a mark of true discipleship of Jesus. For what the Christian does to
158 even the least of his fellowmen he does to the Lord Himself. Here it is plain that “**diakonein** is
159 one of those words which presuppose a Thou, and not a Thou towards whom I may order my
160 relationship as I please, but a Thou under whom I have placed myself as a **diakonwn**.” In exact
161 accord with His own attitude as expressed in Lk. 22:26 f., Jesus draws from this basic insight the
162 demand of Mk. 10:43–45; Mt. 20:26–28: **o’ ah qel h/mega**” **genesqai ej umin, estai umwn**
163 **diakono**”, **kai; o’ ah qel h/eh umin eihai prwto**”, **estai pantwn doulo**”: **kai; gar ol**
164 **uib;**” **tou ahqrwpou ouk hlqen diakonhqhnai aj la; diakonhsai kai; dounai thn yuchn**
165 **aujtu lutron ajti; pol lwn**. Jesus consciously opposes this command to the natural order
166 whereby the princes of the nations lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority (Mk.
167 10:42; Mt. 20:25). The aim of Jesus and His disciples is not to set up human orders in this world.
168 Their concern is with the kingdom of God and the age of glory. But the way to this goal leads
169 through suffering and death. This determines at once the attitude of all whom God calls to His
170 kingdom. The point of suffering is to be found in the service therein accomplished. This makes it
171 sacrificial. For the Christian, then, there is only one way to greatness. He must become the
172 servant (**diakono**” **umwn**), indeed, the slave of all (**pantwn doulo**”); cf. Mk. 9:35; 10:44.

173 This reversal of all human ideas of greatness and rank was accomplished when the Son of Man
174 Himself came, not to be ministered unto (→ 84, in exposition of Lk. 22:26), but to minister. The
175 new feature as compared with Lk. 22:26 is that in Mk. 10:45 and Mt. 20:28 Jesus does not stop at
176 the picture of table service. **diakonein** is now much more than a comprehensive term for any
177 loving assistance rendered to the neighbour. It is understood as full and perfect sacrifice, as the
178 offering of life which is the very essence of service, of being for others, whether in life or in
179 death. Thus the concept of **diakonein** achieves its final theological depth. And what is true of
180 Christ Himself is made a command for all His disciples in Jn. 12:26: **ejan ejnoivti**” **diakonh/**
181 **ejnoi; ajkolouqeitw, kai; opou eijni; ejgw ekei kai; oldiakono**” **olejno;**” **estai: ejan ti**
182 **ejnoi; diakonh/ timhsei aujton olpathr**. It can be seen quite irrefutably from v. 25 that
183 discipleship of Jesus Christ demands service even to death. To serve the neighbour, Christ, or
184 God is one and the same thing. The resultant fellowship with the Father is the reward of such
185 service.

186 3. This gives us at once the meaning of **diakonein** in the community. According to 1 Pt. 4:10,
187 every *charisma* is a gift entrusted to man with the condition that the man who has been blessed by
188 it should serve as a good steward of the manifold gifts of God. As there is at the beginning of this
189 train of thought (1 Pt. 4:7) an exhortation to prayer and brotherly love, so grateful regard for God
190 and concern for one’s neighbour together make the divine gift which each is to receive into a gift
191 which is owed to the neighbour. In 1 Pt. 4:11, as in Ac. 6, the *charismata* are divided into ministry
192 of Word and ministry of act, the latter being specifically described as **diakonein**. This ministry is
193 to be discharged in the power which God gives and to His glory alone. In true Christian service
194 there can be no thought of the righteousness of works or of religious pride. It takes place both
195 from God and to God.

196 The Christian has many opportunities of service. Timothy and Erastus are assistants
197 (**diakonounte**”) of Paul in the preaching of the Gospel (Ac. 19:22). Paul would have liked to

198 keep Onesimus with him for similar personal and material service in prison (Phlm. 13). What
 199 Onesiphorus did in Ephesus (2 Tm. 1:18) was a free service of love and not the exercise of an
 200 official diaconate, in contrast to the normal usage of the Past. The searching and foretelling of the
 201 prophets was an advance service to the community (1 Pt. 1:10–12). The apostolic office is a
 202 similar service, as we see from Paul’s description of the Corinthian church as **epistolh;**
 203 **Cristou diakonhqeisa ulf hmw** (2 C. 3:3).

204 4. A particular service which played a great role in the life of Paul was the gathering and
 205 transmission of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (2 C. 8:19: **ej th/cariti tauth/th/**
 206 **diakonoumenh/ulf hmw**; cf. 8:20). When Paul goes to Jerusalem with this gift, he expresses its
 207 purpose in the formula: **nuni; de; poreuomai eij' ilerousalhm diakonwn toi" agioi"** (R.
 208 15:25). When it is said of the recipients of Hebrews in Hb. 6:10: **diakonhsante" toi" agioi"**
 209 **kai; diakonounte"**, this does not mean that they rendered particular service either to Jerusalem
 210 as a whole or to outstanding individuals, e.g., the preachers of the Gospel, but that they
 211 discharged the general service of love which Christians evince to one another as saints.

212 5. In the Past. **diakonein** means “to discharge the office of a deacon” (→ **diakono**”, 89): 1 Tm.
 213 3:10, 13.

214 **diakonia**

215 **diakonia** denotes the activity of **diakonein**. It Occurs in the various senses of the latter both in
 216 secular Gk. and twice in the LXX: 1 Macc. 11:58: **kai; apestelen autw/crusmata kai;**
 217 **diakonia** (where we have to render “table vessels of gold”); and Est. 6:3, 5 A: **oilek th"**
 218 **diakonia**” (B: **diakono**).

219 In the NT **diakonia** means

- 220 1. “waiting at table,” or in a rather wider sense “provision for bodily sustenance.” Lk. 10:40: **hjde;**
 221 **Marqa periespato peri; polih diakonia**. The supervision of the common meals in the
 222 early church is called **diakonia kaqmerinhw** Ac. 6:1 (→ 85).
- 223 2. It is also used for any “discharge of service” in genuine love. Thus the house of Stephanas gave
 224 itself to the service of the saints (1 C. 16:15). Ministering love is linked with **efga, agaph,**
 225 **pisti**” and **upomonhw** Rev. 2:19. A decisive point for understanding the concept is that early
 226 Christianity learned to regard and describe as **diakonia** all significant activity for the edification
 227 of the community (Eph. 4:11 ff.), a distinction being made according to the mode of operation.
 228 There were **diaresei" diakoniwn** corresponding to the **diaresei" carismatwn** and
 229 **ejerghmatwn** according to 1 C. 12:4 ff. But all these different services were rendered to the one
 230 Lord. In each of them the believer serves not only his brother but also Christ. He is responsible
 231 for the service committed to him as a gift of grace. In general the → **ajtilhmyei**” mentioned in
 232 1 C. 12:28 must have formed the content of these acts of service, namely, acts of care and
 233 assistance on behalf of the community. In R. 12:7 **diakonia** is placed between **profhteia** and
 234 **didaskalia**. But even the highest Christian office, the preaching of the Gospel, is described as a
 235 ministry of the Word in Ac. 6:4. Probably the original meaning is reflected in this phrase. The
 236 Word of God is offered as the bread of life. The true service of the preacher is with a view to the
 237 salvation of his brethren, to whom he must render **thn diakonian th" katallagh"** by
 238 proclaiming to them the Word of reconciliation (2 C. 5:18 f.). In this respect the angels are a
 239 model (Hb. 1:14): **ouci; pante" eisin leitourgika; pneumata eij' diakonian**
 240 **apostellomena dia; tou" mellonta" klhronomein swthrian;**

241 Service is orientated to the Gospel. All effort to keep the Law is **diakonia tou qanatou,**
 242 **diakonia th" katakrisew**”. On the other hand, faith in the glad tidings is **diakonia tou**
 243 **pneumato**”, **diakonia th" dikaiosunh**” (2 C. 3:7–9). These phrases coined by Paul bring
 244 out the dialectical tension in the Christian concept of service.

245 3. It can also denote the “discharge of certain obligations in the community.” The apostolic office is
 246 service acc. to R. 11:13; 2 C. 4:1; 6:3 f.; 11:8; Ac. 1:17, 25; 20:24: **thn diakonian, h e| abon**

247 **para; tou kuriou Æhsou, diamarturasqai to; euaggelion th" carito" tou" qeou;**
 248 21:19; 1 Tm. 1:12. So, too, is the office of the evangelist (2 Tm. 4:5), or the activity of Mark, who
 249 combines personal service and assistance with missionary work (2 Tm. 4:11). Activity in office is
 250 also in view in Col. 4:17 when Paul admonishes Archippus: **blepe thn diakonian hn**
 251 **parelaben eñ kuriw, iha auñhn plhroin**, though it is uncertain whether the reference is to
 252 the office of deacon.

253 4. In keeping with Paul's use of **diakonein** the collection for Jerusalem is described as **diakonia**.
 254 The apostle emphasises that this is not to be regarded merely as an external incident but as a true
 255 act of love: R. 15:30 f.; 2 C. 8:1–6; 9:1, 12 f.; cf. also Ac. 11:29 f.; 12:25.

256 † **diakono**

257 A. **General Uses of diakono**.

258 1. "The waiter at a meal," Jn. 2:5, 9.

259 2. "The servant of a master," Mt. 22:13: **o; basileu' eipen toi" diakonoi**. In this sense the
 260 Christian is a servant of Christ, Jn. 12:26. It is part of his task, however, to serve his fellows, Mk.
 261 9:35; 10:43; Mt. 20:26; 23:11.

262 3. In the figurative sense, "the servant of a spiritual power," whether good or evil, 2 C. 11:14 f.: **tou**
 263 **satana, th" dikaiosunh**"; Eph. 3:6 f. and Col. 1:23: **tou euaggelion; Gl. 2:17: th"**
 264 **amartia**"; R. 15:8: **peritomh**"; 2 C. 3:6: **kainh" diaqhkh**". The action of the servant is to
 265 the benefit of the magnitude which he serves.

266 When it is said in R. 15:8 that Christ is a servant of the circumcision, this simply means, of
 267 course, that His work is on behalf of Israel.

268 More difficult is Gl. 2:17: "If, then, we who are accounted righteous in Christ are found to be
 269 sinners, is Christ a servant of sin? By no means." "Servant" here might be rendered "promoter."
 270 This would give us the following line of argument. In Jewish eyes everyone who does not keep
 271 the Law is a sinner (→ **amartwlo'**, I, 322; 325); this applies to all Gentiles, with whom Jews
 272 may not hold table fellowship. Thus, if Christ causes the Jews who follow Him to renounce the
 273 provisions of the Law, He is extending the domain of sin which embraces all the Gentiles.—Yet it
 274 is not impossible to keep to the stronger expression "servant of sin." If we do, we must interpret
 275 the saying in the light of Gl. 2:20. Christ Himself lives and acts in the man who trusts in Him. If
 276 this man is found a sinner, this applies to the Lord Himself dwelling within him, as though He
 277 were enslaved to sin. The absurdity of the conclusion naturally illustrates the falsity of the
 278 presupposition, namely, the Jewish view of sin.

279 4. As **diakono" tou euaggelion** the apostle (→ **apostolo**", I, 437) is **diakono" Cristou** (2
 280 C. 11:23) and **diakono" qeou** in a very special sense, with all the troubles and sufferings and
 281 with all the responsibility of this office (2 C. 6:3 ff.). In his description of himself from this
 282 standpoint, Paul usually prefers the term **doulo**" (R. 1:1 etc.; Tt. 1:1), which expresses far more
 283 clearly the fact that he belongs wholly and utterly to Christ or to God.

284 5. Timothy is a "servant of God" to the degree that with the preaching of the Gospel he confirms
 285 and admonishes the faith of the Thessalonians (1 Th. 3:1–3). Timothy is also called a true servant
 286 of Jesus Christ (1 Tm. 4:6). Epaphras is **sundoulo**" of the apostles and **diakono" tou**
 287 **Cristou** (Col. 1:7). Tychicus is **diakono" eñ kuriw** (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7).

288 6. Heathen authorities can also be called the servants of God in the discharge of their office, since
 289 they are appointed by God and have the task of maintaining God's order in the world (R. 13:1–
 290 4).

291 7. Paul describes himself in Col. 1:25 as a "servant of the Church" (**e;klhsia**"") in virtue of his
 292 divinely given commission. Paul and Apollos are no more than servants of both God and the
 293 Church as they use their gifts to bring the latter to faith (1 C. 3:5).

294 B. **The Deacon as a Church Official.**

295 1. A distinction may be made between all these general uses and the employment of the term as the
296 “fixed designation for the bearer of a specific office” as **diakono** in the developing constitution
297 of the Church. This is found in passages where the Vulgate has the loan-word *diaconus* instead of
298 the *minister* used elsewhere (cf. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tm. 3:8, 12).

299 Members of the community who are called deacons in virtue of their regular activity are first
300 found in Phil. 1:1, where Paul sends greetings to all the saints in Philippi **sun episkopoi kai;**
301 **diakono**. Already in this phrase there emerges a decisive point for our understanding of the
302 office, namely, that the deacons are linked with the bishops and mentioned after them. At the time
303 of this epistle there are thus two co-ordinated offices.

304 We cannot gather with any certainty from this reference what constituted the special work of
305 these officers. It is highly improbable that the reference is to two different aspects of the work of
306 the same men, since this is supported neither by the context nor by 1 Tm. 3:1 ff., 8 ff. Nor can
307 there be any doubt that the description of office has here become a definite designation.
308 Nevertheless, we are not told what the offices involved. Attempts have been made to deduce this
309 from the contents of the epistle. It has often been argued that special thanks are due to the bishops
310 and deacons for the affectionate gift which was sent to Paul in prison and which they collected.
311 This seems to be a very likely reason for the particular mention of **episkopoi** and **diakono** in
312 this epistle. E. Lohmeyer sets this in the light of the main purpose of the epistle, namely, to
313 strengthen the Philippians in a time of persecution, in which their leaders were in prison. As he
314 sees it, this gives us the main reason for the special greeting to them. There is no proof for this
315 conjecture. The task of the **diakono** can in fact be deduced only from the actual name of their
316 office and from their later function.

317 That the diaconate stands in the closest relationship to the episcopate is confirmed by 1 Tm. 3:1
318 ff. Here an account is first given of the way in which a bishop must conduct himself (vv. 1–7),
319 and this is followed by a list of the requirements for a deacon (vv. 8–13).

320 Like the bishops, deacons must be blameless and temperate, having only one wife and ruling their
321 houses well. While the bishops must satisfy many other demands, including an aptitude for
322 teaching, deacons are not to be doubletongued or avaricious—qualities necessary in those who
323 have access to many homes and are entrusted with the administration of funds. Yet inward
324 qualities are also demanded of good deacons. They are to hold the mystery of the faith with a
325 clear conscience.

326 That the primary task of deacons was one of administration and practical service may be deduced
327 a. from the use of the term for table waiters and more generally for servants; b. from the qualities
328 demanded of them; c. from their relationship to the bishop; and d. from what we read elsewhere
329 in the NT concerning the gift and task of **diakonia**.

330 Appeal is frequently made to Ac. 6 in explanation of the rise of the diaconate, though the term
331 **diakono** is not actually used. On this view, the deacons undertake practical service as distinct
332 from the ministry of the Word. It is to be noted, however, that the Seven are set alongside the
333 Twelve as representatives of the Hellenists, and that they take their place with the evangelists and
334 apostles in disputing, preaching and baptising. This fact shows (→ 85) that the origin of the
335 diaconate is not to be found in Ac. 6. It is possible, however, that ideas gained from the existing
336 diaconate influenced the author when he gave its present form to his rather puzzling source
337 concerning the relationship of the Seven to the Twelve. If this is so, Ac. 6 may be regarded as
338 indirect evidence concerning the diaconate.

339 If we ask concerning the origin of the diaconate, we must start with its relationship to the
340 episcopate. It is mentioned with this in the earliest sources, and was never separated from it. The
341 **diakono** is not merely the servant of the church, but also of the bishop. Two problems arise: a.
342 how two integrated offices came into existence; and b. how the Greek words **episkopo** and
343 **diakono** came to be used to describe these offices.

- 344 a. There were two offices in the Jewish synagogues. Conduct of worship was entrusted to the
 345 *tsiKḥi var*, the **ajrcisunagwgo**", who was accompanied by the *tsiKḥi ʿzj*, always translated
 346 **uphreth**" and never **diakono**" in Greek. If any model is to be sought for the Christian
 347 offices of bishop and deacon, this is where we shall find it. It must be remembered, however,
 348 that the activity of the **ajrcisunagwgo**" and the **uphreth**" is restricted to worship. The
 349 direction of the synagogue is in the hands of the elders. There are also collectors of alms
 350 (*hqdx| yaBG*) who for their part have no connexion with the conduct of worship. Thus we have
 351 in the Jewish community many points of initiation for the Christian offices of bishop and
 352 deacon, but neither here nor in paganism are there any exact models which are simply copied.
 353 The creative power of the early Church was strong enough to fashion its own offices for the
 354 conduct of congregational life and divine worship.
- 355 b. The same is true of the terms adopted. These arose in the world of Gentile Christianity,
 356 though Jewish Christianity contributed the term **presbutero**". Yet in pre-Christian Greek
 357 we never find the words **episkopo**" and **diakono**" used in the Christian sense, whether
 358 individually or in the distinctive Christian relationship. Early Christianity took over words
 359 which were predominantly secular in their current usage and which had not yet been given
 360 any sharply defined sense. It linked these words with offices which were being fashioned in
 361 the community, and thus gave them a new sense which was so firmly welded with the activity
 362 thereby denoted that in all languages they have been adopted as loan-words to describe
 363 Christian office-bearers.

364 The secular sense of **diakono**" corresponds to the meanings of **diakonew** and **diakonia**. It
 365 denotes one who waits at table, Xenoph.Hier., 4, 1 f.; Demosth., 59, 33; with **oijocob**" and
 366 **mageiro**", Hdt., IV, 71 f.; Athen., X, 17; with **agorastḥ**", Xenoph.Mem., I, 5, 2; or
 367 "messenger" with **aggelo**", **khruX** and **spondoforo**", Poll.Onom., 8, 137; Soph.Phil., 497;
 368 "servant," Aristot.Eth. Nic., VII, 7, p. 1149a, 27; Luc.Alex., 5; **turannou**, Aesch.Prom., 944;
 369 "steward," Demosth., 59, 42; Aristoph.Av., 70 ff.; "as" sistant helmsman," Xen.Oec., 8, 10 and
 370 14; "baker," "cook," "wine-steward" as **swmatwn qerapeutai** Plat.Gorg., 518bc; "statesman,"
 371 Plat.Gorg., 518b; of a woman "maid," Demosth., 24, 197; 47, 52. It is rare in the LXX, and
 372 occurs only in the secular sense. In Est. 1:10; 2:2; 6:3, 5 it is used for the courtiers and eunuchs of
 373 the king (Heb. *trwm*). Acc. to Prv. 10:4, the fool shall be the servant of the wise. In 4 Macc. 9:17 a
 374 prisoner addresses spearmen who torture him: **wmiero**;**diakono**i. The word is first used in
 375 relation to God by Joseph. on the one side and Epict. on the other. Joseph. also has the customary
 376 meanings in Ant., 6, 52; 7, 201 and 224; 11, 188 and 255. The word corresponds here to the new
 377 Heb. *ʿm*. Elisha **hh ʾhl iou maqth**," **kai; diakono**", Ant., 8, 354, just as the rabbinic pupil is
 378 the servant of his master. But Joseph. can also call himself **diakono**" **qeou** (Bell., 3, 354) or **th**"
 379 **fwnh**" **tou qeou** (Bell., 4, 626) on account of the revelation given to him concerning the reign
 380 of Vespasian. In Epict. we often find the idea that the cynic is the servant of God. Thus Diogenes
 381 is the **diakono**" of Zeus in Diss., III, 24, 65; cf. III, 26, 28; IV, 7, 20. Either in description of
 382 calling, or with reference to activities in sacral unions, **diakono**" often occurs on inscriptions,
 383 mostly in lists of similar titles. Thus in 3rd century (B.C.) Troiza it occurs after **ibroʾmnamone**"
 384 and **mageiro**" (IG, IV, 774) or between **grammatei**", **karux** and **paide**" (824). Again, a 1st
 385 or 2nd century (B.C.) list of names from Acarnania contains the following: **prutani**", **estia**,
 386 **upoprutanie**", **manti**", **aujhtaʾ ieroforo**", **mageiro**", **diakono**", **ajrcinocou**",
 387 **ieroquta**" (IG, IX, 1,486). And there is a similar list on the pillar of a temple to Apollo dating
 388 from at least the time of Christ's birth (IG, IX, 1, 487 and CIG, II, Add., 1793b, p. 982). This is
 389 probably how Inscr. Magn., 109 should also run. There can be no doubt that the reference is to
 390 cultic actions, sacrifices, consecrations etc. But the work of the **diakono**i obviously remained the
 391 same, i.e., the serving of food, since they are always mentioned after the cooks. Thus H.
 392 Lietzmann can describe as a cellarer's guild the **koinon twḥ diakonwn** which acc. to CIG, II,
 393 1800 dedicates an inscription to Egyptian deities. Yet this is obviously a sacral rather than a
 394 secular guild, as we can see from the fact that a priest stands at the head. Similarly the inscr. from

395 Metropolis in Lydia (CIG, II, 3037) mentions male and female deacons along with priests and
 396 priestesses. According to Inscr. Magn., 217 **komaktore**", **khruke**" **kai; diakonoï** took part in
 397 the dedication of a statue of Hermes.

398 From these examples we can see that the **diakono**" might have a cultic function. But it is a long
 399 way from this pagan conception of the deacon to the Christian. If the inscriptions teach us
 400 anything, it is that the original meaning of **diakonein** ("to wait at table") persisted. In accordance
 401 with the saying and example of Jesus, early Christianity made this the symbol of all loving care
 402 for others. Here is the root of the living connexion between ethical reflection on service in the
 403 community and the actual diaconate. Again, the persistent sense of waiting at table is reflected in
 404 the fact that the Christian office had its origin in the common meal at the heart of the life of the
 405 community, namely, the Lord's Supper. Only in this way can we understand the later history of
 406 the diaconate, which has always consisted in assistance at divine service as well as in the external
 407 service of the community.

408 With the episcopate, the diaconate achieved its full stature only with the passing of the first,
 409 charismatic group of apostles, prophets and teachers. The capacity for diaconate was also a gift (1
 410 C. 12:28). It is worth noting, however, that **ajntilhmeyi**" and **kubernhsei**" are not among the
 411 *charismata* which in the next verse are stated not to be given to all members of the community.
 412 To exercise these offices the Christian needs to be elected and called rather than specially
 413 endowed by God. The transition from the first group of office-bearers to the second may be seen
 414 in 1 Cl., 42, 1ff. according to the sequence: God, Christ, the apostles and the bishops appointed
 415 by them. Clement is obviously conscious of a break in the development at the latter point, and he
 416 therefore supports the institution of bishops and deacons by an appeal to the widely divergent text
 417 of Is. 60:17: **katasthsw tou; episkopou; aujtw n ej dikaiosunh/kai; tou; diakonou; aujtw n ej pistei**. The origin of this rendering, and its significance for the history of the
 418 development of the diaconate, have not yet been elucidated. An interesting point is that Cl.
 419 derives both episcopate and diaconate from the one root. In Did., 15, 1 the summons to elect
 420 bishops and deacons is already self-evident.
 421

422 It is also stated that these succeed to the ministry of prophets and teachers. Cf. also Herm.v., 3, 5,
 423 1; s., 9, 26, The position of deacons naturally changes with the rise of moniscopacy. They
 424 become much more subordinate in relation to the bishop. At the same time, a clear distinction
 425 arises between deacons and presbyters. In 1 Cl., 44 presbyter is still an imprecise term for the
 426 leaders of the community, but now three distinct offices of bishop, presbyter and deacon emerge
 427 in this order (Ign.Mg., 2, 1; 6, 1). Thus deacons are to have in the church an honour similar to that
 428 of Christ, bishops to that of God (Tr., 3, 1). This gives us the basis of the later hierarchy, though
 429 the development was slow. Deacons are assistants, representatives and often successors of the
 430 bishops, e.g., Eleutherus in relation to Anicetus. Shortly before 250 Fabian divided Rome into
 431 seven districts, each set under a deacon. Explicit directions concerning the office and
 432 consecration of deacons may be found in the Hippol. Canons, the Syrian Didasc. and the Apostol.
 433 Constitutions. These bring to an end the development of the diaconate in the early Church.

434 2. Alongside the deacons there were also deaconesses. Their history begins with R. 16:1 where Paul
 435 describes Phoebe as **th n ajdel fh n hmwn, ou san diakonon th" ejklhsia" th" ej**
 436 **Kegcreai**". It is, of course, an open question whether he is referring to a fixed office or simply
 437 to her services on behalf of the community. Similarly, there is no agreement whether 1 Tm. 3:11
 438 refers to the wives of deacons or to deaconesses. It is indisputable, however, that an order of
 439 deaconesses did quickly arise in the Church. A particular part was played here by widows who,
 440 on the strength of their chaste conduct on the one side and their loving service on the other,
 441 already received official recognition in 1 Tm. 5:3 ff.