

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

REVERENT

We are measuring a godly man by looking at the spiritual characteristics required of leaders in the church. Even if you do not aspire to a position, your practice should be the same if you want to be a maturing, godly man.

In First Timothy 3:8 Paul turns his attention away from elders and on to deacons. The word translated “deacon” (*diakonos*) was applied to one who waited tables. One alternate translation has it meaning something like kicking up the dust or not letting the dust settle. The idea is that you are so busy serving that it kicks up dust; and that you are so consistent in serving that the dust doesn’t have time to settle.

The role of the deacons is to carry out, under the elders’ oversight, some of the more physical tasks of the church so that the elders can give their attention to more spiritual things. It is generally understood that a deacon is one who cares for the temporal affairs of the local church, whereas elders care for its spiritual life.

The choosing of the seven men in Acts six to deal with the widows in the early church is the prototype of what later became the “office” of deacon in the church.

The qualifications for the office of deacon are almost as stringent as for elder because of their public profile in the church and because the servant nature of their work requires strong qualities of maturity.

We are also reminded by Paul’s treatment of deacons that everything in our lives is to be understood as having a spiritual component. When looking for the original deacons the apostles didn’t look for the guys with the best business sense or the guys who had invested their money most wisely.

No, they were interested in spiritual characteristics. Only a spiritual man full of the Holy Spirit can truly conduct any of the Lord's business.

1 Timothy 3:8 Likewise deacons must be **reverent**...

"Reverent" is translated by the KJV as *grave*. In verse four the same word is translated by the KJV as *with all gravity*. A reverent man must be ready to get serious and to treat people and their circumstances with all seriousness.

Dignified is probably the best single word we could use to translate it. Think of the situation in Acts six and you'll get the idea. The widows needed assistance. It was important on many levels to treat them with the dignity they deserved and, so, you needed men who were sensitive to proper treatment that would communicate that the church held the widows in high esteem.

You know that I serve as a law enforcement chaplain. One of my most privileged duties is making death notifications. If there is ever a time for acting dignified, for treating a person with dignity, that's it.

I always want to dress with dignity. If there is time I don my entire police uniform. If I'm caught on the road I've got some clothing in the car I can change into.

I don't act weird but I do try to stay within boundaries. It's not a time for small talk or weather talk.

I continue to refer to the deceased by name. For example, rather than say, "The coroner has the body," I say, "Fred is at the county coroner's."

More applicable to all of us are the day-to-day situations we find ourselves in. It is especially important we here at Calvary Hanford pay some attention to being dignified because we are so casual.

You can be casual and still handle folks with dignity.

Allow me to give you an example of being treated without dignity. I get what I call 'ambushed' a lot. (I can't think of anyone in this group who has done this so don't think I'm talking about you!). Here's what I mean.

Someone has an issue to discuss. It could be an important decision regarding some policy or purchase for one of our ministries. Or maybe someone needs counsel about something. It's not dignified to blurt it out in the hallway after church, or in the Cafe standing in line. It would be better to set up a time to discuss it later.

The ambush doesn't take the situation seriously and it treats the person ambushed with a lack of dignity.

On a more positive note, think of some of the ways we try to treat others with dignity:

- Our *First Contact* ministry specifically tries to identify new people. We approach them in order to communicate that we consider their visit of great value to them and importance to us.
- Our *Greeters* ministry is intended to minister to everyone that we consider their presence a joy.
- After-service prayer is a great way to show folks how valuable their needs are to us. We solicit their feelings and concerns and treat them with dignity by taking them before the Lord.

Truth is, we should infuse every ministry with a sense of treating others with dignity.

Out in the world there are a lot of folks we might have trouble treating with dignity. Let's be reminded that they are ones the Lord gave Himself for as a ransom. If the Lord values them, even while they are yet sinners, then so ought we value them.

Being reverent doesn't mean you are soft-spoken or that you move slowly or that you have strange, serious expressions. We're to maintain joy at all times and that includes our being reverent.

Instead of calling ministers "reverend," we ought all to be reverent. I'm not Reverend Pensiero. I am to be reverent Pensiero.

It's a suffix to put in front of each of our names.

