

May Women Serve as Deacons in the Church?

A comparison chart of both views with concluding observations

Scripture	Advocates for Deaconesses	Opponents of Deaconesses
Acts 6:1-6	These seven “men” were temporary and extraordinary officers (not deacons).	The seven were the first deacons, and “men” were to be appointed.
1 Timothy 3:8-12	Unlike the section on elders, this list includes qualifications for women.	That deacons wives must be reverent does not imply they are to be ordained.
Romans 16:1-2	Phoebe is called a deacon	The word simply means “servant”
1 Timothy 2:11-12	Deacons exercise ministries of mercy in the church; not teaching authority.	Ordination is a public act which confers spiritual authority in the church.
Galatians 3:28	The new covenant is more complementarian in its administration than the old.	The verse is about adoption and relationships, not ecclesiastical government.

Concluding Observations

- Good and godly men have disagreed on this issue throughout history
- Both sides offer exegetical, theological, and historical grounds for their position
- The matter should be discussed / debated in a sober and loving manner
- Calvin provides a potential moderating position with two “orders” of deacon:

Procurers - Administrative workers who collect and manage funds

Hospitaliers - Actual care-givers to the poor and sick (includes women)