

gathering of elders. This πρεσβυτερίον would appear to be a clearly-defined, continuing body of elders, evidenced by the distinct name instead of merely the plural of elder. Ordination by this body was simply a human recognition of God's ordination. Because this body believed God had chosen a man, the members of the body laid their hands on him, showing their recognition and approval to the whole church.

(2) Deacon

(a) The meaning of the word δίακονος

The word δίακονος has a variety of meanings in the New Testament. In its thirty uses, there are three basic areas of meaning, with variation.

- A. "servant" -- a general usage, one who serves
  - 1. a servant of man (emphasis on position)
  - 2. a servant of God (emphasis on position)
  - 3. one who actively serves (emphasis on function)
  - 4. one who imparts or communicates something (emphasis on action)
- B. "minister" -- a special usage, denoting one who serves God in a special way, one especially set apart for Christ's service
  - 1. one who actively serves (emphasis on function)
  - 2. one who imparts or communicates something (emphasis on action)
- C. "deacon" -- a technical usage, denoting a distinct office in the local church

These meanings of δίακονος may be seen in its uses:

Matthew 20:26 -- "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."

Matthew 22:13 -- "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "

Matthew 23:11 -- "But the greatest among you shall be your servant."

Mark 9:35 -- "And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.' "

Mark 10:43 -- "But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."

John 2:5 -- "His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.' "