

SUMMARY OF OFFICES IN THE CHURCH

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| <u>Office</u> | general vs. <u>local</u> | supernatural vs. <u>natural</u> | authoritative vs. <u>non-authoritative</u> |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Lord = Christ Messiah | general | super | author |
| apostle ¹ "the disciples" "the twelve" | general | super | author |
| prophet ¹ prophet ² | general | super natural | non-a non-a |
| evangelist = apostle ² | general | natural | non-a |
| elder (= presbyter) bishop (= overseer) (= <u>episcopos</u>) pastor (= shepherd) teacher ruler | local | natural | author |
| deacon | local | natural | non-a |

The conclusion seems too restrictive that elders handled spiritual matters while deacons handled material ones. The idea comes from the account of the seven appointed in Acts 6:1-6 to “serve tables.” The account does not call them “deacons,” and later we find Philip and Stephen involved in spiritual matters and operating beyond the local situation. Their work evidently progressed beyond the earlier or primary responsibility. So, the case is ambiguous for defining the role deacons fulfilled.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 provides the only list of characteristics for deacons. Paul adds that those who serve well in this way “gain good standing and great boldness in the faith.” Such a description does not specify a definite role for the “office,” so it is better to say that deacons served under elders in whatever function they were qualified to fulfill and needed for. Besides, there is no clear distinction between spiritual and physical matters. Proceeds from the sale of property were laid at the apostles’ feet to be distributed to the poor; the apostles were the ones who called for selecting others for the task in Jerusalem so they themselves could concentrate on ministry of the word (Acts 4:35, 36; 5:2).