

**HOMILY AT ST. MATTHEW ORTHODOX CHURCH  
SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2023**

**ACTS 6: 1-7**

**“BE LIKE A DEACON”**

Sometimes we may evaluate how we are doing as Christians by saying to ourselves—“Well, I think I am doing pretty well----I am not committing any crimes, I am not gossiping, I don’t curse, I am not being immoral, etc....” That’s all well and good! But just not doing bad things is really not enough. What we *do* for God, not just what we *don’t* do, is a huge part of being a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In our first scripture reading this morning, Acts 6: 1-7, we heard about the early months and years of the first Orthodox Christian parish, the original church in Jerusalem. The church was growing rapidly, there were many poor to take care of..... And the 12 Apostles were being overwhelmed! And so we heard about how they ordained 7 deacons to help. The word “deacon” is of Greek origin and means “servant”. These seven deacons were ordained in Acts 6 to serve and work for God.

We are especially blessed by God to have two deacons---certainly not some super rare thing, but not that common either. Our two deacons, Deacon Macarius and Deacon Basil, serve God, they serve God’s Church, and they serve God’s people. Thank God for them!

The work of a deacon is not as public as other men who are ordained---bishops and priests. It’s not that they serve secretly, but their ministry is more behind the scenes than that of bishops and priests.

Deacons today are like deacons 2000 years ago. Servants of God and God’s Church. And even if we are not deacons, *we should all be like deacons*----serving God and His people.

But sometimes people get frustrated about serving God. Perhaps we do serve God and serve the Church, but sometimes nobody seems to notice. It’s not like with ordained clergy who are known by everyone and recognized by everyone because their work for God is more in the open. But quiet work for God, maybe noticed by few, is just as important!

Col. Charles Plumb was a navy pilot in the Vietnam War. He served on the U.S. Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier. He flew many bombing missions over North

Vietnam and received some medals. One day, right over the Vietnamese coast, his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire. As it began to fall to the ground, he was able to get out of the plane and activate his parachute. He was very relieved when the parachute unfurled with no tangling or other problems----he floated safely down to the ground and a rather soft landing. A rescue squad arrived quickly and he thus avoided enemy capture. He was brought back to the Kitty Hawk safely, greeted by all, and got another medal.

Years later, after the war, back in America, he and his wife were enjoying dinner in a restaurant. A man leaving the restaurant saw the colonel and walked over to his table and said, "Good evening, Col. Plumb? Do you remember me?" The colonel said, "No, I'm sorry, but I don't." The man replied, "No, I guess you wouldn't. We never met. I served with you on the Kitty Hawk. We never met because I was just a sailor who worked below deck. I was one of the men who packed parachutes for pilots to wear on their flights. We always knew the name of the pilots we were getting the parachutes ready for. I am the man who packed the parachute for you on the day you were shot down. How did that parachute work?" Plumb replied, "It worked perfectly----not any problem.....I had a soft landing!" The man replied, "So I guess I saved your life. Good evening!" And he turned and walked away. Plumb was so flabbergasted by the conversation that all he could say as the man walked away was "thank you!"---and he felt badly that he had never found the man years ago back on the carrier to thank him. ("Our Daily Bread", 4/21/04)

That sailor's work was quiet—hidden away below deck. No thanks, no recognition, no medal. Yet obviously incredibly important as it saved the pilot's life!

Maybe your work for God doesn't get noticed much either. You don't wear pretty robes like the clergy! Most people may have no idea what you do for God. You are like that sailor—no medals! No recognition. Yet you continue to serve God. God bless you for doing it, for your work for God is important!

Or maybe you don't really do any work for the church. You just come and worship and pray..... Well, that's very important work, too. But it would be great to do more.

What sometimes happens is that a person doesn't know what work there is for the Lord they could do. Especially that may be the case if you are a new parishioner.....

So I will close with this very practical matter----Dave Glaser has prepared a brochure (on the little table in the narthex) that lists and gives info about all

the things going on here. It has info about Bible studies and so forth. But most importantly, related to this sermon, it has a list of all the various ministries, works for the Lord, going on here-----with the name and contact info for who heads them up. There are lots of ways here to serve God and His people. So please grab one on the way out today. Look it over, pray about it, contact the leaders listed there to get info you may need-----and then decide what you think God would have you do to serve Him and His Church.

God wants all of us to serve Him. So if you are not doing much of that, decide what you can do---and start!

Those first seven deacons served God. Our two deacons here serve God. If you are not a deacon, be like a deacon....by also serving God and His Church. Maybe your service won't be public and known to many. Maybe you will be "below deck" like the sailor in the story. But your work for the Lord will be very valuable.

Think about it, pray about it. Decide what you should do. And then act and serve the Lord to the best of your ability and with God's help.

May God bless us all as we serve Him together!