

A quick Question and Answer on ACTS 6:1-8

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Q Since Collins (1990) and Hentschel (2007) in their studies in the *diakon-* group of words (including *diakonos* or deacon) have clearly demonstrated that such words in the New Testament or in ancient Greek usage, never refer to service done to another, to charity or ministry on the margins or service to those in need, where does the idea that a deacon is primarily a minister of charity or service to the needy and marginalised come from?

A From the 19th century revival of diaconal ministry in Germany specifically as a ministry to the needy, the marginalised and the poor and the subsequent entry of this experience into the definition of deacon in the Biblical theological dictionaries up until 1990.

Q Since no Greek manuscript of Acts 6:1-8 ever mentions a neglect of food or funds or any other specific material need, why do so many Bibles today mention food or funds?

A Because the modern translators have added the word to try to make the scene agree with the definitions in the Biblical theological dictionaries prior to 1990.

Q Acts 6:1-8 says the widows are neglected in the daily *diakonia*. How is *diakonia* used throughout the Acts of the Apostles?

A *Diakonia* is used throughout Acts either alone or with the qualifier *tou logou* (*the word*) and refers to the ministry of the Word (*diakonia tou logou*)

Q In what are the Greek speaking widows being neglected in Acts 6:1-8? And how did the apostles propose that such neglect be addressed?

A The Greek speaking widows, who would have stayed mostly in their homes were neglected in the daily ministry of the word because the apostles preached in Aramaic in the Temple and public places. The apostles proposed that the Greek speakers choose some from among the Greek speaking community for this daily ministry of the word and laid hands on them for the apostolic ministry of the word.

And hey pesto: The word of the Lord continued to spread (Acts 6:7).

Q Is it time for a rethink on the deacon as primarily a minister to the marginalised and needy?

A **Yes!**