

# St. Phoebe Center

FOR THE DEACONESS

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## Suitable Women Should Be Ordained as Deaconess

### **THE DIDASCALIA STATES:**

#### **"SUITABLE WOMEN SHOULD BE ORDAINED AS DEACONESSSES**

Chapter 16. Wherefore, O bishop, appoint thee workers of righteousness as helpers who may co-operate with thee unto salvation. Those that please thee out of all the people thou shalt choose and appoint as deacons: a man for the performance of the most things that are required, but a woman for the ministry of women. For there are houses whither thou canst not send a deacon to the women, on account of the heathen, but mayest send a deaconess. Also, because in many other matters the office of a woman deacon is required. In the first place, when women go down into the water, those who go down into the water ought to be anointed by a deaconess with the oil of anointing; and where there is no woman at hand, and especially no deaconess, he who baptizes must of necessity anoint her who is being baptized. But where there is a woman, and especially a deaconess, it is not fitting that women should be seen by men: but with the imposition of hand do thou anoint the head only..."

### **WHAT IS THE DIDASCALIA?**

The Didascalia (also referred to as the Didascalia Apostolorum) is a composition said to have been written by the Apostles at the time of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), but in reality was pastorally composed in the third century. The original was in Greek. Reference is also often made to the Apostolic Constitutions, of which the first eight books are simply a revised and enlarged edition of the Didascalia.

### **MORE FROM THE DIDASCALIA:**

#### **"DEACONESSSES SHOULD INSTRUCT WOMEN CONVERTS**

Chapter 16, cont. And when she who is being baptized has come up from the water, let the deaconess receive her, and teach and instruct her how the seal of baptism ought to be (kept) unbroken in purity and holiness. For this cause we say that the ministry of a woman deacon is especially needful and important. For our Lord and Saviour also was ministered unto by women ministers, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the daughter of James and mother of Jose, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee, with other women beside. And thou also hast need of the ministry of a deaconess for many things; for a deaconess is required to go into the houses of the heathen where there are believing women, and to visit those who are sick, and to minister to them in that of which they have need, and to bathe those who have begun to recover from sickness."

#### **"DEACONS AND DEACONESSSES ARE TO CARE FOR PEOPLE**

Chapter 16, cont. And let the deacons imitate the bishops in their conversation: nay, let them even be labouring more than he. And let them not love filthy lucre; but let them be diligent in the ministry. And in proportion to the number of the congregation of the people of the Church, so let the deacons be, that they may be able to take knowledge (of each) severally and refresh all; so that for the aged women who are infirm, and for brethren and sisters who are in sickness—for every one they may provide the ministry which is proper for him. But let a woman rather be devoted to the ministry of women, and a male deacon to the ministry of men."

[More information on the Didascalia Apostolorum](#)