

Empowering and encouraging leaders
to do church ministry effectively!

Deacons

Church Ministry Manuals



Dr. Byan Cutshall

CHURCHTRAINER
SERIES

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Biblical Profile and Pledge

CHAPTER ONE

The Deacon's Pledge

I fully understand that my performance as a deacon is solely based upon my personal relationship with God, personal integrity and business ethics. I must seek to advance the kingdom of God through the means of being a prudent steward of the resources He has entrusted to the care of His church. I must seek wisdom in order to make discerning decisions in the best interest of every member of God's church. I pledge my confidentiality to my pastor, the business administrator, the other deacons, as well as every member of our church. I pledge my service to the areas to which I have been assigned. I make an integral vow of honesty to the Lord who has selected me for the task of a deacon. I fully understand that, as a deacon, I am called upon to assist in establishing guidelines and procedures for God's church that will best serve the vision God has given us through our pastor and staff. Finally, it is my desire to see that God's church is protected legally and that the integrity of our church is upheld in the public eyes as well as in the sight of God.

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I. DEACON'S BIBLICAL PROFILE

"Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

- A. Deacons must be reverent (v. 8).
An individual cannot serve as a deacon if he/she does not show respect to all people, but in particular, reverence to God Almighty.
- B. Deacons cannot be double-tongued (v. 8).
Whereas no Christian should participate in this evil, it must be extremely true of a deacon. A deacon cannot be a conniver or divider of people. This office requires the utmost of personal integrity. The congregation should be made fully aware of this before nominating names for the deaconate. This individual must be a person of his or her word.
- C. Deacons should not be given to much wine (v. 8).

At the time Paul was writing to Timothy about this role, he was also advising him to take a little wine for his stomach problem. Therefore we can conclude that the intent of his writing was in reference to the sobriety of a deacon. This would now encompass other forms of medicinal prescription drugs that could allow one to be incoherent of vital issues within the church. The intent is that the deacon be of a clear mind, sober and alert.

- D. Deacons should not be greedy for money (v. 8).
The key word here is greed. *Greed* is defined by Webster as “excessive desire for getting or having.” The key to this demand is to keep desires in balance. Deacons must be prudent in their spending, but not money hoarders. The kingdom of God is not advanced by the storing of God’s resources into our man-made barns. We are to invest into the harvest and view our role as managers of God’s properties and funds. Because of the financial aspect of the deaconate, a deacon should have some previous business knowledge to properly fulfill the required role.
- E. Deacons must be men of conviction and doctrinal soundness (v. 9).
This verse is admonishing deacons to hold on to their faith with a pure conscience. Another way of saying this is, *Know what you believe and why you believe it*. This is one of the areas where the physical and the spiritual overlap. It isn’t good enough for a deacon to simply possess a business knowledge. The principles of God must be incorporated into his business ethic. There will be times when the deacon will need to walk by faith and not by sight, and no man can walk by faith unless he knows his faith. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).
- F. “But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless” (v. 10).
There must first be a testing, before an appointment or election is made. This can be done through a screening process for deacons. For instance, every deacon candidate should be required to go through deacon training before being considered as a nominee. This will eliminate hasty appointments. Next, candidates should have a required reading and a brief written report. Finally, they should submit their personal testimony of salvation in writing.
- G. “Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things” (v. 11).
Many churches have been hurt because a deacon’s wife was privy to classified information, yet was accountable to no one.
- H. “Let deacons be the husbands of one wife” (v. 12).
A deacon should not practice polygamy.
- I. Deacons should rule their children and their own houses well (v. 12).
If a deacon is having severe family problems, it will surely affect the way he or she makes choices for God’s church. A statement from his family may be in order to ensure their support.

- J. “For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (v. 13).

The position of the deacon should be an honored one in the church. They should be esteemed as leaders who bear an extra load of responsibility for God’s church. The pastor should affirm them publicly on a regular basis as men and women of faith and integrity. Each deacon should seek to be worthy of such public honor. For by serving in this role, he or she will obtain a good standing in the church. Do not fall into the negative trap of stereotyping deacons based on the bad management of church history. Many deacons have served churches in crisis when they were in a no-win situation. Proper church structuring and a Scriptural approach to the diaconate should eliminate such incidents in the future. Our past election process, as well as church politics, has polluted this humble ministry in our history. The *table waiter* is a servant leader, and as a servant, he holds one of the highest positions in the kingdom of God.

“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave” (Matthew 20:26, 27).

Emphasis on Excellence

Biblical Profile of a Deacon

“It is a privilege to work with a church that supports House of Manna, a necessary community outreach, as well as to serve underneath Pastor Cutshall, the elders, my fellow deacons and the church body of TRWC.”

—Deacon Steve Christman

The Ministry of Deacons

I. SELECTION PROCESS

- A. In the New Testament, the deacons were approved by the people and appointed by the church leaders.

“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles” (Acts 6:3-6).

- B. In accordance with Acts 6:3-6, a deacon must be selected and appointed. When a church becomes larger, the deacons will carry much of the business load of the church. Each deacon must fully understand his role before accepting the position to serve. Deacons will usually serve with a committee that is assigned to a specific area of ministry. The chairman of that committee becomes the deacon.

- C. Addendum to Selection: MAT Training

The church will offer an eight-hour training course for advancement, called Ministry Advance Training, or commonly referred to as MAT Training.

1. The only way you can attend this class for ministry advancement is to be endorsed by an existing elder or deacon.
2. The class is offered twice a year, in May and November.
3. The MAT Training Schedule for the deacons is as follows:
 - a. 7:00 - 8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
 - 8:00 - 9:45 a.m. The Ministry of Deacons Part I
 - 9:45 - 10:00 a.m. BREAK
 - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. The Ministry of Deacons Part II
 - 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. LUNCH
 - 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. The Stick and the Stutter (T.D. Jakes)
 - 2:30 - 2:45 p.m. BREAK
 - 2:45 - 4:00 p.m. Church Structure

4:00	-	4:30 p.m.	TRWC (Motto, Mission Statement, Vision Strategy)
4:30	-	5:00 p.m.	Testing and Closing Remarks
5:00 p.m.			Prayer and Dismissal

- b. Supplemental reading materials include:
Developing the Leaders Around You, by John Maxwell
TRWC Members Handbook

4. Those who are invited to attend the MAT Weekend become the candidates in the leadership pool. We recruit all future elders and deacons from this leadership pool.
5. The object of MAT is not to fill up the class, but to select people who have evident leadership potential. We only want potential leaders to attend the MAT Weekend.

D. Terms for Immediate Dismissal

1. If a deacon is caught in a serious moral failure such as adultery, homosexuality, embezzlement or any type of criminal activity, he should be dismissed from his position immediately to avoid damaging the reputation of the church in the community.
 - a. Galatians 6:1 admonishes us not to judge an offender but seek rather to restore them. Excommunication from the fellowship of the church is not certain in every case, but a person needs to be removed from influential positions during their time of healing and recovery.
 - b. For such cases, a recovery period of at least two years is recommended and a stipulation that counseling must be a part of the recovery process. This is no Scriptural commentary for time frames of recovery. We must seek to make sound judgments based on the times in which we live. Two years is adequate for a proper healing of relationships and spiritual reputation of the leader if restoration is invoked by the other leaders and restitution is practiced by the offender.
2. Also, if a deacon is caught using divisive tactics within the church body, confrontation and perhaps dismissal is in order. Immediate dismissal should not be practiced without a proper confrontation by the elders or designated disciplinary board.

Divisive tactics would be such things as follows:

- a. Giving out confidential information from deacon board meetings
- b. Gossiping with the intent to stir up strife against another brother or sister within the church

- c. Disclosing the financial giving record of a church member to another
- d. Rallying groups of people to oppose certain items at an open forum business meeting of the church. This is misuse of Christian influence.
- e. Continual outbursts of anger against any member of the congregation. This includes family members.
- f. Rude and inconsiderate treatment of any church member on a continual basis.
- g. Insubordinate behavior to a church administrator who is acting in the line of duty. Disagreements should be handled in a professional and Christian manner and attitude.

II. ORIENTATION

- A. Orientation is very necessary for all committees and the Deacon Board. *Giving a title without direction only causes confusion.* Without orientation, you will only get the bare minimum performance from each committee. During orientation, the pastor can share his/her vision with the deacons and explain how they fit into the overall plan of the church.
- B. Orientation can be handled several different ways; however, MAT Training serves as a part of the deacon orientation.
- C. In addition, a special orientation will be given to the Deacon Board and another orientation then given to the various committees.
- D. Deacon orientation is done at the biannual Deacon's Retreat.
- E. Deacon orientation should include the following elements:
 - 1. The pastor's vision of the church (mission statement, church motto and vision strategies)
 - 2. The Biblical profile of a deacon from Acts 6
 - 3. A clear understanding of the responsibilities of each committee and deacon. It must be made clear that the deacon represents the committee's ideas and does not use the committee for leg work only.
 - 4. The church's prerequisites for each deacon and/or leader
 - 5. The confidentiality policy
 - 6. The friendliness policy
 - 7. Terms of immediate dismissal
 - 8. Other policies that would apply to the whole group

III. INSTALLATION

- A. A public installation ceremony will be held in order to publicly recognize the office of the deacon. It is appropriate to have the elders lay hands on them and commission them for service.

- B. An appointment card may also be issued, designating the term of appointment.

IV. REPORTING

- A. Deacons are asked to bring a written report or simply give a verbal report at the monthly meeting of their specific areas of care.
- B. It is necessary that each Deacon Board agenda include an appropriate time for deacons to bring the issues of their committees before the board. Most of the time, a standard section on the agenda for *committee reports* is sufficient for accountability and action.

V. NAME BADGES

It is a good idea that deacons, elders and staff wear name badges to identify them and their role in the church. This is a convenient service to the congregation and especially to newcomers.

VI. MAILBOXES

- A. Each deacon will be assigned a mailbox in the church office. It will be up to the deacon to check his mailbox each time he comes to church.
- B. The mailbox system is a simple but very effective communication tool. It should be used for memos, repair notices, incoming mail, receipts, and so forth. Checks and confidential reports should not be left in the public church mailbox, unless they are in an envelope marked "Confidential." Confidential items may also be hand-delivered or mailed through the U.S. Postal services.

Pledge and Function

The Deacon's Pledge

I fully understand that my performance as a deacon is solely based upon my personal relationship with God, personal integrity and business ethics. I must seek to advance the kingdom of God through the means of being a prudent steward of the resources He has entrusted to the care of His church. I must seek wisdom in order to make discerning decisions in the best interest of every member of God's church. I pledge my confidentiality to my pastor, the business administrator, the other deacons, as well as every member of our church. I pledge my service to the areas to which I have been assigned. I make an integral vow of honesty to the Lord who has selected me for the task of a deacon. I fully understand that as a deacon I am called upon to assist in establishing guidelines and procedures for God's church that will best serve the vision God has given us through our pastor and staff. Finally, it is my desire to see that God's church is protected legally and that the integrity of our church is upheld in the public eyes as well as in the sight of God.

Deacon of Public Relations

The deacon of public relations recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 10 individuals who oversee the advertising of TRWC. They should review the yellow page and white page ads, as well as seek ways to keep TRWC *in the news*. They should also seek ways to make sure TRWC is adequately represented in all the free publications and Christian publications in the area.

Deacon of Grounds

The deacon of grounds recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 10 individuals who oversee the planning and upkeep of all TRWC grounds. This task includes seasonal planting, lawn care and ground policing.

Deacon of Building Care

The deacon of building care recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 10 individuals who periodically walk through the building and inspect and record special projects that need to be done by volunteers. The Building Care Committee will organize at least one workday per year to make general repairs and/or do special projects. In addition, they may sometimes take on a special construction project.

Deacon of Pastoral Care

The deacon of pastoral care recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 10 individuals who oversee and plan the salary and benefits package of the pastors and church staff. They plan, organize and implement an annual anniversary celebration for the senior pastor, called Pastor Appreciation Day. Finally, they seek ways to show the church staff that they are valued, like Christmas bonuses, birthday gifts, cards or letters of encouragement, plaques, trophies or unexpected rewards for excellent service, and special days of appreciation.

Deacon of Security

The deacon of security recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than seven and no more than 15 individuals who police the grounds during worship services on Sunday and Wednesday Bible study hours. They should be identified with a badge marked "Security." They should walk the hallways, children's areas and parking lots and monitor the foyer. All security personnel should have minimal training in how to handle suspicious people or unusual circumstances. Each security person should also wear a communication device at all times. Security personnel should always accompany the ushers to the church safe after receiving offerings.

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Deacon of Finance

The deacon of finance recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 20 individuals who open the contribution envelopes, count the money and prepare the offerings for deposit. The committee should make sure that the individuals serving are tithers and church members and have no police record in regards to money. Each member of the Finance Committee will have a police background check run on them. They should always rotate so that no one person serves two weeks in a row other than the deacon of finance.

Deacon of Financial Planning and Budgets

The deacon of financial planning and budgets recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 10 individuals who study ways to invest, increase and properly manage the church's assets. They should shop the markets to make sure the church is using the right banks and have managed our funds properly. They should also prepare and review the annual church departmental budgets by setting up budget review meetings with each ministry leader that receives church subsidies for their ministry. Ideal church members for this committee are business owners, CPAs, top givers, people in the banking industry, and corporate managers or officers.

Deacon of Major Equipment

The deacon of major equipment recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 10 individuals who regularly service and maintain all heating units, air-conditioning units and hot water heaters. They may be called upon to assist in special-needs areas from time to time. This committee should make check lists and do regular scheduled inspections of these areas. They should also keep supplies on hand like fuses, filters and other items that are part of the regular maintenance of these units.

Deacon of Day Care

The deacon of day care recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 10 individuals who meet regularly with the day-care director to determine which needs should be represented to the Deacon Board. The deacon of day care should attend all day-care board meetings, but does not maintain a voting right on the Day Care Board. They are there as a representative of the interest and investment of TRWC. They should work in conjunction with the deacon of building care to do periodic inspections of that area to ensure that everything is in working order. They should review the bookkeeping of the day-care quarterly. They should review all policies and procedures of the day care on a regular basis. Finally, they should bring a day-care report to the Deacon Board at the regular scheduled monthly meeting.

Deacon of Transportation

The deacon of transportation recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than 10 and no more than 20 individuals who oversee the parking of cars on Sunday mornings and other church-related events where parking assistance is needed. They also service all church-owned vehicles to ensure that they are in proper working order. This committee operates the golf cart ministry, which assists individuals who parked long distances from the building or people who need assistance for any reason. All individuals operating golf carts should have a driver's license and have been properly trained and tested on the vehicles.

Deacon of Benevolence

The deacon of benevolence recruits, trains and manages a committee of no less than five and no more than 10 individuals who serve as the House of Manna personnel. The House of Manna ministers to individuals who have a benevolent need. They are in charge of raising additional funds that exceed the monthly subsidy and donations to this ministry. They are in charge of creating guidelines to serve the church and community effectively. They must submit a monthly report to the Deacon Board to be reviewed. No names of families being assisted should ever be listed on these reports. Case numbers will be used instead to ensure privacy and confidentiality. They should also conduct a "churchwide" program for holiday assistance by organizing a food and gift drive for those in need.

Procedure and Policy

CHAPTER FOUR

BOARD MEETINGS

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

The monthly Deacon Board meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month. The meeting begins at 6 p.m. with prayer, meal and a devotion. Both the prayer and devotion schedule will be distributed in December for the upcoming year. The agenda is as follows: review and acceptance of the previous month's minutes, review and acceptance of the previous month's finances, update from the business administrator, update from the senior pastor, and reports from each deacon. Deacons are encouraged to submit items to be discussed by the 3rd of each month so that it can be included in the agenda for that month's meeting.

Monthly finances are to be processed and distributed by the 7th of the month.

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THE BUDGET

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

An annual budget is reviewed in October of each year for the following year. In order to maintain the budget, we ask that our leadership follow these policies during the budgeting process and throughout the year:

Projections—We ask that each group include any known expenditures they will incur for the upcoming year within their budget projections. By itemizing expenses for the upcoming year we can accurately reflect cash flow needs throughout the year and ensure a proper balance between income and expense.

Monthly Allotment—The Deacon Board will use the projections to set the monthly subsidy for each ministry. Departments may spend the entire amount of their monthly allotment each month or may roll the balance into the following months. Departments may not spend over the total balance of their account in any given month without approval of the Deacon Board and/or the business administrator.

Variations—As with any budgeting process, there will be times when a department will need to incur expenses outside of the projections. Variations that the department cannot absorb into the allotment require preapproval from the Deacon Board.

DAY CARE EXPENDITURES

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

The TRWC Day Care and Learning Center opened for operation in the month of July 2004. As the center becomes self-supportive, the director will have authorization to purchase necessary food and supply items only. This will not exceed the total tuition amount. This expenditure should be taken from the tuition payments and documented in the center's monthly report. Any exceptions must be reviewed on an individual basis by the business administrator and the senior pastor.

Once the center is operating at capacity, these guidelines will be reviewed by the Deacon Board. At that time, a budget will be developed to include an expenditure policy for the director, as well as the Day Care Board.

DEACON ON DUTY

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

The position of deacon on duty is established to provide assistance to our congregation and guests, as well as assuring that our facility is monitored during services. The deacon on duty will walk through the building and be highly visible. This schedule is distributed in December for the upcoming year. The deacon on duty is required to carry a two-way radio to communicate with the sanctuary sound booth, the platform, nurseries, children's area and parking lot. The radio is kept in a key cabinet located in the copy room. Each deacon is provided a key.

It is necessary for the deacon on duty to arrive 30 minutes prior to the service and remain on duty until the end of the service.

The deacon on duty is responsible for obtaining information from any injury that occurs. Injury forms are available in the copy room, located in the mailbox area. All incidents should be forwarded to the business office along with the completed form. If an emergency situation develops, the deacon on duty will locate the business administrator immediately.

EXPENDITURES

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

SENIOR PASTOR EXPENDITURE POLICY

The senior pastor of TRWC has the right to decide upon minor disbursements at his own discretion. The amount he can approve is one-half of 1 percent of the gross receipts for the previous year.

Business Administrator Expenditure Policy

The business administrator of TRWC has the right to decide upon minor disbursements at his own discretion. The amount he can approve will be one quarter of 1 percent of the gross receipts for the previous year.

Deacon Board Expenditure Policy

The Deacon Board has the right to decide upon minor disbursements over and above the senior pastor and the business administrator's authority (up to a major disbursement). The amount the board can approve will be 2 percent of the gross receipts from the previous year.

Any amount over 2 percent of the gross receipts from the previous year will be considered a major disbursement and must be brought before the church body to vote upon after being given a minimum of 14 days advance notice of the called meeting. An exception is given per the Deacon Board's approval of the annual church budget.

All expenditures that exceed \$5,000 must have a minimum of three bids from individual vendors before a decision can be made by the Deacon Board. Each bid must accompany an RFP (request for proposal) form. The Deacon Board may request additional bids and/or information.

All expenditures exceeding \$5,000 must include a signed contract noting that the vendor agrees, in writing, to be responsible for all local, state and federal guidelines pertaining to the building codes related to our location.

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Any item voted on by the Deacon Board must be done by a simple majority (51%) for the item to be approved.

Expenditure Limitations

The limitations specified for the senior pastor, business administrator or Deacon Board will apply for each calendar month. However, an exception may be given for "shutdown" items (e.g., utilities).

Outside Bank Accounts

Only ministries, groups or funds approved by the Deacon Board will be allowed to establish independent bank accounts. Both the senior pastor's and the business administrator's names must remain on the account file at all times. Each external account will be required to provide a monthly report to the business administrator. These reports should include an itemized listing of all monies received and all disbursements made from the account. All accounts shall be held in the name of Twin Rivers Worship Center. As a result, frequent and proper accounting measures are necessary to ensure all funds are used properly.

Bank Statements

All church bank statements must be initialed by the senior pastor and the business administrator before filed.

FACILITY/SECURITY

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

All full-time staff members and the Deacon Board members are issued a master key that will allow entry into the entire building. The only exception of entry is to the senior pastor's office and the business administrator's office. The master key system has been divided into color codes which represent various ministries and their areas. All color-coded keys open the front door to permit access to the facility. Along with each key, a personal identification number (PIN) is issued. The alarm system monitors each arming/disarming by the PIN. When a key and code are issued, the recipient agrees that the key/code should not be shared, duplicated or loaned out. If a key or code is lost, the key holder must contact the Business Office immediately.

TRWC facility is made available to the congregation for family events such as birthdays and showers. A temporary key and code is issued for that specific event and then returned to the Business Office.

Facility Repair Forms: If a request comes to a deacon that a repair must be made in the building, a maintenance form must be filled out and given to the Church Office so that proper protocol is followed.

The security system is monitored by both exterior door sensors and motion detectors. The system keypads are located at the main entrance, the administrative area, the Day Care area and the main foyer of the Day Care entrance. At this time Interface Security System monitors the TRWC facility. Their number is 636-947-4400.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

Confidentiality of each deacon is important. The disclosure of confidential information is terms for dismissal and/or discipline according to the type of information given out. Chapter 2, under Item I, D, titled "Terms for Immediate Dismissal," deals with this matter (p. 6).

FRIENDLINESS POLICY

PROCEDURE AND POLICY

Love, acceptance and care are expressed through friendliness—showing concern and compassion. We want both members and "newcomers" to feel our affection and affirmation of their worth to God and to the church family. As a church leader and primary caretaker, we are calling you to be a model to show the Biblical model of friendliness. As you model friendliness, you will teach others. Easy ways to display this friendliness is through a sincere welcome or by simply smiling and asking how their day has been. When you take the time to invest in someone's life, there may be a day when they invest back into yours because of your friendly attitude.

Questions and Answers

I. WHY DO WE HAVE DEACONS?

So the ministers can devote more time to God in prayer, Bible study and ministry-related duties.

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:1-7).

II. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE PASTOR OPERATING A CHURCH WITHOUT A DEACON?

- A. “Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14).
- B. “Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors they are established” (Proverbs 15:22).
- C. “Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word’” (Acts 6:2-4).

III. SHOULD DEACONS BE VIEWED AS MINISTERS?

They are ministers of administration and helps.

“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28).

IV. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DEACON AND AN ELDER?

A deacon serves over the areas of helps and administration; an elder attends to the flock of God as a shepherd or watchman. The ministry of the deacon is more physical servant-oriented tasks, whereas the elder serves over the spiritual and ecumenical tasks.

1. “Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business’” (Acts 6:1-3).
2. “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:1-3).

V. CAN WOMEN SERVE AS DEACONS?

A. There is no mention of a deaconess in the New Testament. The culture of their day would not have allowed this. Through the years the roles of women have changed and they have assumed more leadership roles in the church. We must understand that God has never excluded women from ministry even when the culture excluded them. Women did serve in other roles such as a judge (military leader), a queen (national ruler), a prophetess (a speaker on behalf of God) and a disciple (one being mentored by a leader). As the roles of women have changed, many churches have recognized God’s hand on their lives. Some churches view a woman’s ministerial role as a role of authority from God, but they believe she should be submissive to her husband or other male church leaders. Some groups still prohibit women to serve in any capacity that would enable them to usurp authority over a man. Finally, the role of a deacon is to serve in the ministry of administration and helps. We do find many women in the Bible fulfilling this role without a title. Therefore, we conclude that the role of a deaconess is proper and acceptable.

B. Women who served in the ministry of helps:

1. “There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses and Salome, who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem” (Mark 15:40, 41).

2. "And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life" (Philippians 4:3).
3. "But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head" (1 Corinthians 11:5).
4. "But Martha was distracted with much serving and she approached Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me'" (Luke 10:40).
5. The entire book of 2 John is dedicated to one whom John calls the "elect lady."

VI. DID THEY HAVE DEACONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- A. There have always been groups of people who have done the type of work designated to deacons; however, deacons were not appointed until the time of the early church. The closest thing we can find in the Old Testament to compare to the role of a deacon is a Levite.
- B. "But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it and camp around the tabernacle. And when the tabernacle is to go forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up" (Numbers 1:50, 51).

VII. DOES A DEACON NEED TO BE CALLED OF GOD AS AN ELDER DOES?

All who serve in the ministry should seek to do so in the will of God. When the Bible gives reference to the ministries of God, it declares that God has appointed these ministries. Therefore anyone who wishes to be considered a deacon should seek God's guidance for his or her life first.

"And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of *healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues*" (1 Corinthians 12:28).

VIII. WHY IS THE OFFICE AND FUNCTION OF A DEACON A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY?

- A. To whom much is given, much is required.
"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48 *NIV*).
- B. We are managers of *God's property*.
"After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you

delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him . . . 'Cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'" (Matthew 25:19-30).

IX. WHAT IS THE HISTORIC UNDERSTANDING OF DEACONS?

The origin of deacons is found in the roots of the early church.

- A. "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:1-7).
- B. The word *deacon* comes from the Greek word *diakonos*. The root meaning of the word brings out the best interpretation. *Diako* means "to run errands, to be an attendant or to be a waiter at the table." The best comparison we have in our modern vernacular is *waiter* in a restaurant. He attends the people he serves and does whatever is necessary to make sure they are fed and nourished properly and comfortably.

X. WHAT SHOULD THE CHARACTER OF A DEACON BE LIKE?

"Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

XI. HOW SHOULD DEACONS RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER?

A. Mutual Submission

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21, *NIV*).

B. Mutual Respect

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. . . . Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited” (Romans 12:3,16, *NIV*).

C. Christian Love

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away” (1 Corinthians 13:1-8, *NIV*).

D. A Sense of Brotherhood

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10, *NIV*).

E. Trust

“Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:1-8, *NIV*).

F. Loyalty

“Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them” (2 Timothy 4:9-16, *NIV*).

G. A Team Spirit

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2, *NIV*).

H. Mutual Servitude

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:3-5, *NIV*).

XII. HOW IS THE CONGREGATION TO RELATE TO THE DEACONS?

A. Recognize and esteem them highly in love for their work’s sake.

“Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other” (1 Thessalonians 5:12,13, *NIV*).

B. Imitate the faith of the deacons, according to their lifestyle of godly character.

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7, *NIV*).

XIII. WHAT ARE SEVERAL PRACTICAL AND RELATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR DEACONS?

A. If you are offended by another deacon, go to him privately concentrating on the problem, not his personality.

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may

be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector" (Matthew 18:15-17).

B. If there is something in the church that needs improvement:

1. Invest in the improving process by volunteering to serve as a helper.
2. Share with the ministry leader a private evaluation in a team spirit.

C. To achieve overall excellence in ministry:

1. Accept ownership of the goal for excellence ("my church").
2. Accept responsibility to work for the goal.

D. Things to pray for:

1. Wisdom
2. Soulwinning
3. Spirit-filled church
4. Favor with God
5. Favor with man
6. Other deacons and church leaders
7. Our children

E. Things we cannot discuss in open deacon meetings:

1. Negatives about another deacon who is absent, unless the discussion is focused on a church discipline matter.
2. Negative personal evaluations of specific ministries, pastors or ministry leaders. These should be dealt with directly with the senior pastor only. Why?
 - a. Disrespectful
 - b. Causes prejudiced thinking
 - c. Unfair to absent party
 - d. Divisive
3. Negatives about people in the church without first privately informing the senior pastor.

F. Advice for pleasing the Lord:

"No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he

is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things" (2 Timothy 2:4-7).

XIV. HOW IS THE DEACON AN EXTENSION OF THE PASTOR'S MINISTRY?

- A. Provide a hedge of protection around the pastor and his family.

"Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land" (Job 1:10, *NIV*).

- B. Hold up the pastor's hands in battle. How?

"The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.' So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.' Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner. He said, 'For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord. The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation'" (Exodus 17:8-16, *NIV*).

- Spirituality—"Choose us some men" (v. 9)
- Vulnerability—"Aaron and Hur went up" (v. 10)
- Responsibility—"held up his hands" (v. 11)
- Mutuality—"took a stone . . . supported" (v. 12)
- Adaptability—"until the going down of the sun" (v. 12)
- Potentiality—"Joshua defeated Amalek" (v. 13)

- C. Exhibit unity.

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1, *NIV*).

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3, *NIV*).

"On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard

me speak about. . . ' When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place" (Acts 1:4; 2:1, *NIV*).

D. Show up.

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25, *NIV*).

E. Know the pastor.

Four Assumptions:

- Don't have to be perfect to be valuable—he is not perfect.
- Don't have to please everybody—he can't please everybody.
- Personal responsibility for behavior—he is responsible for his behavior.
- Diversion is necessary—he needs time away from "ministry" to replenish his energy and vision.

F. Understand the pastor's various roles may include:

- Husband
- Father
- Pastor
- Teacher
- Administrator
- Counselor
- Businessman
- Writer
- Public figure
- Representative of local church family and denomination

G. Be patient with the pastor as he learns to delegate authority and responsibility in the church.

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Philippians 3:12, *NIV*).

H. Understand the awesome responsibility he feels in delivering the Word and the challenge of bringing a fresh message two or three times each week.

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned" (Galatians 1:8, 9, *NIV*).

"I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. . . . What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?" (1 Corinthians 4:14, 21, *NIV*).

"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2, *NIV*).

I. Love one another.

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. . . . This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:14, 16, *NIV*).

J. Know the great principle of Genesis 33:13,14: *The flock cannot be driven, they must be led.*

"But Jacob said to him, 'My lord knows that the children are tender and that I must care for the ewes and cows that are nursing their young. If they are driven hard just one day, all the animals will die. So let my lord go on ahead of his servant, while I move along slowly at the pace of the droves before me and that of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir'" (Genesis 33:13, 14, *NIV*).

XV. HOW SHOULD A DEACON RESPOND TO REVELATIONS AND RUMORS?

- A. As a church leader, people will share with you how they feel about programs and people, or what they heard about programs and people. Some of these individuals will be sincere and honest.
- B. The following pattern will help you respond in a way to *separate the positive from the negative* and to reach a proper conclusion.
 - 1. "Why are you telling *me* this?"
 - 2. "What do you want *me* to do about it?"
 - 3. "Whom do you represent? Who asked you to talk with me about this?"
 - 4. "Have you personally talked with the person involved?"
 - 5. "May I use your name?"
 - 6. "How can we believe and trust God for an answer or a solution?"

XVI. WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP MENTIONED IN 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7?

- A. "Desire"—but desire alone will not make up for the following character traits.
- B. "Blameless"—unquestionable character

- C. "Husband of one wife"—sexually pure
- D. "Temperate"—not given to excess
- E. "Sober-minded"—self-disciplined
- F. "Good behavior"—well ordered
- G. "Given to hospitality," (KJV)—hospitable
- H. "Apt to teach," (KJV)—able to teach
- I. "Not given to wine"—not known as a drinker
- J. "Not violent"—not a fighter
- K. "Patient," (KJV)—easily pardons human failure
- L. "Not a brawler," (KJV)—not quarrelsome
- M. "Not covetous"—free from the love of money
- N. "One who rules well"—maintains a godly family
- O. "Not a novice"—a mature Christian
- P. "Good testimony among those who are outside"—well respected by non-Christians.

Emphasis on Excellence

"As Deacon of Major Equipment, I assist in maintaining the air-conditioning and heating equipment and other major equipment of the church. As a deacon I feel called to support other leaders with prayer and to serve all the members of the church. We are all servants of the Lord Jesus Christ."

—Deacon Jerry Brouhard

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Dr. Bryan Cutshall,

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