

BAYSHORE BAPTIST CHURCH ROLE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

ROLE

The word “deacon” comes from the Greek word “diakonos.” It means servant, one who executes the command of another. It is translated in various ways in the New Testament:

1. “Minister” – Rom 13:4; 1 Tim 4:6
2. “Servant” – Jn 12:26; Rom 16:1
3. “Deacon” – 1 Tim 3:8, 12; Phil 1:1

The role of the Deacon is interpreted most often from two passages of Scripture, Acts 6:1-4 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13:

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. Acts 6:1-4

Men were chosen in Acts to take care of people’s material needs. By the time we come to 1 Timothy, the church has grown and the role of deacons has expanded to broader leadership and service. The Bible does not describe a set role for deacons. We have some latitude to shape the role of deacons and still be biblical.

In Baptist polity and history, deacons have served in primarily two ways. They have been administrative boards voting on all issues brought to them by staff and committees. They have been the body of last resort. When the church was in trouble, the Deacons were the ones responsible for rescue. In the 1970’s and 1980’s, many deacon bodies chose not to be the final authority and chose to give primary emphasis to spiritual and church family issues. The Family Ministry Plan was one such effort. Most deacon bodies over the years, including Bayshore, have given more attention to one of these ways at the leading of the Pastor. The role of Deacons today seems to be a mix of these two ways of serving balanced by the needs of the church and the relationship between the Deacon leadership and the Pastor and the staff.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS (1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13)

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 8-13

More information is given about qualifications for deacons in the Bible. As the church grew, it needed leaders. The two roles that were first defined are elders and deacons. Another translation of the word “elder” is “shepherd” or “pastor.” Baptist polity has made the “elder” role that of the ordained pastor/minister. The role of deacon has been as an “under-shepherd,” working with the pastor and staff serving and providing leadership in ministry and counsel in critical decisions.

1. ***Full of the Spirit.*** Deacons should be persons whose lives by action and word express their love for God because of the presence of the Spirit which is evident to others.
2. ***Wise.*** Wisdom is the practical application of knowledge. Deacons should have wisdom that is the result of prayer, study of the Bible, and experience.
3. ***Worthy of respect.*** Deacons should have a respectable reputation especially in spiritual matters.
4. ***Sincere, not double tongued.*** Deacons should not say to one person and then something different to someone else.
5. ***Not indulging in much wine.*** There should be no abuse of alcohol or dependence on any drug.
6. ***Not pursuing dishonest gain.*** They should not be involved in inappropriate or illegal means for personal gain, either for money or recognition. The person demonstrates a proper values system, including the willingness to give money for the support of ministry and the church.
7. ***Keeping hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.*** Deacons should have deeply held beliefs and commitments to the core truths of the gospel.

8. ***Tested first and beyond reasonable criticism.*** Deacons need to have a track record of service and leadership. We do not decide that someone is a deacon; we recognize that someone already is “serving as a deacon.”

10. ***Husband of one wife.*** Literally a “one-woman” man,” this means there is only one person of the opposite sex to which this person is committed.

11. ***One who manages his household well.*** Relationships in the home are generally healthy and stable. A pattern of broken relationships suggests an inability to get along with others.

BAYSHORE EXPECTATIONS OF DEACONS

* Grow spiritually by practicing disciplines of Christian life: prayer, reading the Bible, and private and corporate worship.

* Serve the body of Christ by using your gifts in ministry. Participate in a ministry identified by the church.

*Have a positive and inclusive spirit exhibiting the Spirit of Christ.

*Be committed to Bayshore Baptist Church and the vision of loving God and serving others for Jesus.

*Support the church by giving Biblically of your income.

*Be present in worship, on Wednesday night, and other special events of the church whenever possible.

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