

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ROSWELL

DEACON HANDBOOK

2010

INTRODUCTION

This Deacon Handbook is dedicated to helping you as a deacon to serve faithfully and effectively. It is designed to acquaint you with the Biblical materials related to the office of Deacon, and the particulars of the Deacon ministry of First Baptist Church of Roswell, Georgia.

The church has elected you to the honorable position of Deacon because your life has exhibited the characteristics of faithfulness and loyalty, both to the Lord and His church. A Deacon must remember, however, that Jesus said, **“The greatest among you shall be your servant.”** (Matthew 23:11).

The word for Deacon in the New Testament originally described a servant who “stirred up dust while waiting on tables.” As a Deacon, your major attention will be given to serving God under the leadership of the Pastor and Deacon Officers in the practical ministry of the church.

Three passages in the New Testament which are most often cited concerning the office of Deacon are: Acts 6: 1 – 7, I Timothy 3:8 – 13, and Philippians 1: 1.

I. BIBLICAL/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF A DEACON

This scripture cites the beginning of the office of Deacon in the early Christian church. Though the seven who were elected were not specifically called “Deacons” in the technical sense, they nonetheless functioned as Deacons. The office of Deacon is thought to have grown out of this experience.

These men were chosen to solve a problem that arose among the church fellowship. They were called upon to preserve the harmony of the church, and to free the apostles to give full attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word (v.4).

The position of Deacon in Acts 6 is an elected one. A Deacon should certainly feel led to serve in that position; however, the initiation of that commitment rests in the hands of the local church. It is not a position to which one appoints oneself.

II. BIBLICAL/PRACTICAL QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

The Biblical qualifications for a Deacon are found in Acts 6 and in I Timothy 3: 8 – 13, and are divided into three categories:

A. SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS (Acts 6: 1 – 6 NIV)

1. Full of the Holy Spirit
2. Full of wisdom
3. Full of faith

B. MORAL QUALIFICATIONS (I Timothy 3: 8 – 10, 12 – 13, NIV)

1. Worthy of respect
2. Sincere
3. Not indulging in much wine
4. Not pursuing dishonest gain

5. The husband of one wife
6. Manages children and household well

C. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE SPOUSE OF A DEACON (I Timothy 3: 11)

1. Worthy of respect
2. Not malicious talker
3. Temperate
4. Trustworthy in everything

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DEACON

The Deacon Body shall serve under the leadership of the Pastor and assist him in performing duties in order to free him for the ministry of the Word. The Deacons will support and work with the Pastor as follows:

1. Loyal support of the Pastor and staff.
2. Faithful attendance at the services of the church.
3. Encouragement of and participation in the organizations of the church; Sunday School, music, Outreach, etc.
4. A consistent commitment to stewardship shall be attested by the Deacon's example of significant support to the Church.

5. Personal evangelism among the lost and personal contact with members with ministry needs.

6. Regular attendance at the meetings of the Deacons.

- The Church Constitution and By-Laws states, “Active Deacons must attend Deacon Meetings unless providentially hindered. Absence from three successive deacon meetings, without being excused by one of the Deacon Officers, automatically places him/her on the inactive list. Another Deacon will be elected by the church to take his/her place.”

7. Participation in the “**Deacon of the Week**” assignments.

- The Deacon of the Week will be prepared for the offertory prayer in both the 8:30 and 11:00am Sunday services. Following the last service the Deacon should;

- a. Pick up the visitor slips from the Usher Room and make phone contact with each visitor on Sunday afternoon.
- b. Return visitor slips to the Pastor with your comments.
- c. Be prepared to go visiting with the Pastor, upon his request during the week.
- d. Be on call for crisis situations.

8. Deacons should volunteer to serve the Lord’s Supper a minimum of twice during a calendar year.

RELATIONSHIPS OF A DEACON

Certainly the Deacon's primary relationship is with God. Without this healthy, vertical relationship, the horizontal relationships will be distorted. A Deacon should be more concerned about his/her walk with God than anything. Next in importance is the Deacon's knowledge and understanding of his/her role in relating to family, Pastor, church committees, and the church membership at large.

A. Relationship with Their Family

The New Testament mentions a Deacon's responsibility in relation to family; therefore, the church feels that a Deacon should give the family first priority in devotion, care and ministry.

B. Relationship with the Pastor

1. A Deacon should serve under the leadership and spiritual direction of the Pastor and be loyal to the Pastor in prayer support, encouragement and fellowship.
2. The **First Baptist Church of Roswell** looks to the Pastor for giving overall leadership and administration to the church and its ministry. The church, therefore, expects the Deacons to respect the office of Pastor and to welcome the unique opportunity to learn from and serve with the Pastor. As a Deacon functions in the practical ministry of the church, the Pastor is freed to give attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

C. Relationship with Church Committees

The Deacon Body gives counsel to, but does not have control of, all committee actions. Nowhere in the New Testament is there even a

hint that the Deacon Body is to function as a board of directors or as administrators of the business affairs of the church. Deacons are servants first and last. Out of courtesy, committees report to the Deacon Body concerning actions or recommendations for information and feedback. The Deacon Body may indicate support or give counsel, but not instruct committees as to what they can or cannot propose to the church for official action.

D. Relation to the Church Membership at Large

The Deacons are to be active in ministry to the church family, and to promote peace, harmony and a spirit of cooperation, and unity within the membership. The primary relationship of the Deacon to the church is as follows:

- 1. Deacons are to be problem solvers and preservers of Church harmony.** When a person becomes a Deacon, selected and called by the Holy Spirit, chosen by the church, dedicated by personal choice, the right is forfeited to promote in any fashion, a division in the life of the church. The one inescapable duty of the Deacon in the New Testament was the protection of the church fellowship. When situations arise that are divisive, it is time for a Deacon who believes the Book to stand up and say: "We cannot do it this way in this church. We must have harmony and peace if we are to follow Christ." That could make the difference between a great, fruitful church and an ineffective, dried-up one.

Every Deacon carries two imaginary buckets: one of water and one of gasoline. The Deacon must determine in many situations whether he/she will help put out the fires of disharmony or will fuel the problem.

- 2. Deacons are to be actively involved in ministry.** This will enable the Pastor to "feed the flock."

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DEACON MINISTRY SERVICE PROGRAMS

Our Deacon Ministry Service Programs are focused in two service areas: 1) the **Deacon Family Ministry Program**, and 2) the **Deacon Service Ministry Teams**. For the Deacon Family Ministry Program, each Deacon will be assigned a number of Families to serve during the calendar year. For the Deacon Service Ministry Teams, Deacons are encouraged to participate in the Service Team that best utilizes their spiritual gifts, talents, and skills.

Deacon Family Ministry Program

The Deacon Family Ministry Program allows Deacons to serve a group of Families during the calendar year. An attempt is made to align Deacons to the Sunday School Class in which they are a member in order to deepen relationships with Sunday School members. In larger classes, multiple Deacons may be assigned to that class with each Deacon serving 10 to 20 families.

Note 1: there will be situations where a Deacon will be assigned to a Sunday School Class that might not have a Deacon enrolled (Senior Adult Class, Youth, Singles, etc...). **Note 2: a Deacon who is assigned a class other than the one he/she regularly attends should, on a frequent basis, go to that class at the beginning of the Sunday School hour to meet and greet the members and any new members or visitors. You may choose to stay for the announcements and prayer time and then return to your class.**

The main responsibilities of the Deacon to their assigned families include:

1. Staying well connected to their assigned Families in order to share Christ's love with them in times of joy (births, birthdays, marriages, etc...), and in times of need (death, job loss, health issues, etc).
2. Communicating church wide information and keeping the Pastor advised of situations and needs that arise within your assigned

families.

3. Helping new members become acclimated and a vibrant part of the fellowship of First Baptist Roswell.

Deacon Service Ministry Teams

The Deacon Service Ministry Teams provide each Deacon with the opportunity to personalize their contribution to the Kingdom of God by choosing to serve on a Ministry Team based on their spiritual gifts, talents and skills. Every Deacon is expected to sign up for a Service Team. Those not signing up will be placed on a team. The Deacon Service Ministry Teams include:

- I. The Greeter Team** assists in welcoming and directing prospective new members to an appropriate Sunday School class, as well as extending a warm welcome to current church members.
- II. The Homebound Team** works with the church Homebound Committee in visiting and providing for the needs of homebound church members, including providing communion as requested.
- III. The Hospital Visitation Team** seeks to represent the Love of Christ through visitation of hospitalized members and their families.
- IV. The Special Projects/Events Team** will provide assistance for special events or projects which are ongoing in the church.
- V. The Sunday School Team** works with the Church Sunday School Teachers and the Sunday School Council in an effort to enrich the ministry within each class.
- VI. The Transportation Team** coordinates schedules and provides staffing for Sunday morning transportation to Sunday School/Church for those in

designated assisted living facilities, utilizing Church vehicles and the Elmcroft vehicle.

Each Team will have a designated Leader for the calendar year. This individual will recruit members and organize/energize the Team around their mission. Time will be allocated during each monthly Deacons Meeting for the Teams to meet briefly to discuss their mission activities over the next few weeks/months. Additionally, Service Teams will provide periodic updates to the Deacon Body during monthly Deacon Meetings.

CONCLUSION

The office of a Deacon demands a high level of commitment, a mature knowledge of the faith and dedication to fellowship and service. I Timothy 3: 13 summarizes it best, **“For those who have served well as Deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”** May your service as Deacon be one of the richest and most rewarding of your walk with the Lord.