

First Baptist Church of Garland

Deacon Manual

Updated
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INTRODUCTION

The office of a deacon demands a high level of commitment, a mature knowledge of the faith and dedication to fellowship and service. Only those committed to these precepts should pursue this endeavor. 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.

The church has elected you to the honorable office of a 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).

Four passages in the New Testament are commonly cited concerning the office of deacon: Acts 6:1-6, Philippians 1:1, Titus 1:6-9 and I Timothy 3:8-13. 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.

This manual is dedicated to helping you as a deacon to serve faithfully and effectively. It is designed to acquaint you with the Biblical principles related to the office of deacon and the particulars of the deacon ministry of the First Baptist Church of Garland, Texas.

I. THE BIBLICAL / HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF A DEACON

Acts 6:1-6 is the passage often cited for the beginning of the office of deacon in the early Christian church. Though the seven who were chosen were not specifically called "deacons" in the technical sense, they nonetheless functioned as deacons. The office of deacon probably grew out of this experience.

One reason they were chosen was to solve a problem that arose among the church fellowship. **They were called upon to preserve the harmony of the church.** Another reason was to **free the apostles to give full attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word** (verse four).

II. BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

The **Biblical qualifications** for a deacon are found in Acts 6:1-6, Titus 1:6-9, and in I Timothy 3:8-13.

They are divided into three categories:

A. SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS (ACTS 6:1-6, Titus 1:9)

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

B. MORAL QUALIFICATIONS (I TIMOTHY 3: 8-10, 12-13, Titus 1:6-8)

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 his children and household well

C. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE WIFE OF A DEACON (I TIMOTHY 3:11)

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

III. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH of GARLAND TEXAS QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

A. TITHING

Faithful tithing is part of being an active church member. The deacon, by example, is expected to be faithful in this role.

B. MATURITY

1. Must have been a professing Christian for at least five years
2. Must have been a member of First Baptist Church, Garland for at least one year.

C. ATTENDANCE

Maintain faithful attendance in Church Worship and Sunday School.

IV. PROCESS FOR BECOMING AN ORDAINED DEACON

Deacon Officers shall determine each year if new deacons are needed to support service. Prior to nomination, candidates must have been members of this church for a minimum of one year. The following provisions shall serve as guidelines for nominations for election:

- A. Over a period of two or three Sundays during late summer, Deacon Candidate Ballots will be distributed and collected during church services. Deacon qualifications will be publicized.
- B. The Pastor and Deacon Officers will meet with candidates who are nominated by the church members and express interest in serving as a deacon and exhibit the Biblical qualifications for becoming a Deacon. The Deacon Questionnaire will be given to the candidates at this time.
- C. A Deacon Questionnaire must be filled out and returned to the Pastor's office by the deadline date for one's name to be considered for election and service.
- D. A Deacon Confirmation Committee will be made up of the past three active Deacon Chairmen in the church, plus two appointees of the current Chairman. Appointees will not be current deacon officers and will not chair the committee. The appointees will have been ratified by a majority vote of a quorum of the Deacon body present at a regular meeting of the deacons. The chairman of the committee will be the past Deacon Chairman whose term was earliest. The Deacon Confirmation Committee will review the questionnaires and meet with each candidate individually. Any candidate not recommended by the Deacon Confirmation Committee will not proceed in the process.
- E. After the candidates have met with the Deacon Confirmation Committee and have agreed to serve, their names will be published. Any church member with an objection to a candidate may do so in writing to the deacon chairman. The Pastor or deacon chairman will meet with the candidate privately to review the objection. If necessary, the deacon chairman or pastor will reconvene the Deacon Confirmation Committee to review the objection.
- F. The candidates who are confirmed by the committee and complete orientation will be submitted to the Deacon body for consideration. Candidates who are qualified to serve and who have not been previously ordained as deacons will be presented to the church for ordination.

V. PROCESS FOR BECOMING A DEACON, ALREADY ORDAINED

If a man who has previously served as a deacon in another church of like faith and order desires to actively serve at First Baptist Church, Garland, he must:

- A. Be a member for at least one year
- B. Notify the Pastor and the deacon officers in writing of his desire for active deacon ministry (or be nominated through nomination process)
- C. Meet with the Pastor and the deacon officers
- D. Complete the Deacon Questionnaire
- E. Attend the Deacon Orientation sessions
- F. Meet with the Deacon Confirmation Committee
- G. Be approved by 2/3 majority of a quorum (50% of active deacons) present at a regular meeting of the deacons.
- H. Service will begin the following January.

VI. SERVICE LEVELS OF A DEACON

A. Active Service

A deacon shall remain in active status as long as he annually indicates his desire and demonstrates his commitment to serve. We can't minister without our deacons. While there are many competing ministries outside and within the church, the deacon must place his deacon service to the Church as a priority.

Ministry Expectation:

1. Attend Deacon Meetings. Please notify the Deacon chairman in advance if you are unable to attend.
2. Attend scheduled deacon group meetings. If you cannot attend your group meeting, either:
 - a. Have another deacon substitute for you and you substitute for him on his week to serve.
 - b. Contact one of the deacon officers so that you can be given the necessary information.In either instance notify the Deacon Vice-Chairman of the above.
3. Sunday morning service
 - a. Visitor Contact – coordinate with Deacon Vice Chairman to obtain information.
 - b. Service Prayer Time – Prayer time in the Bridal Room (located above Avenue D Church foyer) during service.
 - c. Crossing Guard
4. Wednesday Night Meal Service. Serving and cleanup of meal. Serve or find substitute.
5. Lord's Suppers – Sign-up, show-up, serve. Every deacon is encouraged to participate in this ministry service.

Because a deacon has been elected by the church he is accountable to serve in an honorable way. Similarly, the deacon officers were elected to ensure each deacon demonstrates his commitment through active participation in the duties above. The deacon officers will meet with any deacon not showing an active participation. A deacon will be declared inactive if he does not demonstrate an active participation after meeting with the deacon officers.

B. Inactive Service

If a deacon feels it is necessary to become inactive for a period of time, he may indicate on the annual status form or notify the Deacon Chairman in writing. Deacon privileges are revoked during period of inactive status. If inactive service does not exceed two (2) consecutive years, he can

reactivate by contacting the Deacon Chairman. If he exceeds two years of inactivity he may seek to become active again by:

1. Notifying the Deacon chairman in writing his reason for inactivity and his desire for reactivation
2. Meet with the Pastor and deacon officers for an updated orientation
3. Meet with the Deacon Confirmation Committee
4. Approved by two thirds majority vote of the quorum present at a regular meeting of the deacons.

C. Emeritus

While deacons are encouraged to serve until the Lord calls them to glory, it may become necessary to cease active deacon service when a faithful deacon is unable to continue active deacon duties due to age and/or health restrictions. He may request in writing to the chairman of the deacons to have his status changed to "Deacon Emeritus." This exempts him from regular duties without affecting his participation and voting privileges in deacon meetings. This high honor is only available to those deacons who have faithfully and actively served as a deacon to this church. This status must be approved by two thirds majority vote of the quorum present at a regular meeting of the deacons.

VII. RELATIONSHIPS OF A DEACON

Certainly, the deacon's primary relationship is to his Lord. Without that vertical relationship being what it ought to be, the horizontal relationships will be distorted. A deacon should be more concerned about his walk with God than anything. Next in importance is the deacon's knowledge and understanding of his role in relation to his family, pastor, church committees, and the church membership at large.

A. Family

While a deacon's primary relationship is to the Lord the New Testament mentions a deacon's responsibility in relation to his wife and children; therefore, the church feels that a deacon should give his family high priority in his devotion, care and ministry.

B. Relation to the Pastor

1. A deacon should serve under the leadership and spiritual direction of the pastor and be loyal to his pastor in prayer support, encouragement and fellowship.
2. The **First Baptist Church of Garland** 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. Relation to 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 church's business affairs. 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. Relationship 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 among the membership. The deacons are a servant body to this church.

CONCLUSION

The office of a deacon demands a high level of commitment, a mature knowledge of the faith and dedication to fellowship and service. Only those committed to these precepts should pursue this endeavor. 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.