Select from among you, brethren, men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of these tasks. Acts 6:3
THE OFFICE OF DEACON

The office of Deacon was established to free the Apostles (who functioned as the first Pastors) to pray and prepare to minister the Word. The essential role of deacons is servanthood.

The Bible defines a deacon as an officer in a Christian church. It states that a deacon has the responsibility to be worthy, respectful, sincere, honest, trustworthy and a person of faith. The deacon is considered to be a person who renders service in the church; the Bible references the deacon as a servant. The governing and the daily operation of the church are often dependent on services of the deacon.

• CARE FOR PEOPLE

The first duty of a deacon is the general caring for the people. Deacons are commanded by the Bible to maintain the well being of Christians and members of the congregation. This encompasses the physical and spiritual well-being of the congregation as well as being a witness to those outside the church. This duty is outlined in the Bible in John 13:13.

• GUARD AND PROMOTE CHURCH UNITY

Deacons also have the responsibility of building up one another and encouraging one another in the name of Christian worship and fellowship. Their duty is to promote the common good and unite the church and the members of the ministry. This is outlined in 1 Corinthians 14:26.

• SUPPORT THE TEACHERS

A deacon’s duty is also to support the ministry of the Word, as stated in Acts 6:3. Deacons serve the church as a whole by helping with responsibilities that the main pastors or elders cannot perform. Deacons may provide advice and conference to the pastors in matters pertaining to the welfare of the church. Serving the church in this way will free pastors from performing mundane duties so they can devote themselves to preaching the Word and prayer.
Deacon – A Study

The qualities necessary for those chosen to be deacons (servant ministers) are those which specifically come from the Biblical texts that address the issue.

Those texts are: Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-12

NOTE: While it is understood that other traits and behaviors are important for all Christians (i.e., faithfulness in church participation, stewardship, service and witness, especially those who have high visibility and respect in the church) the specific qualities outlined in scripture as necessary for servant ministers are central to choices of persons to serve in such roles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIBLE WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>Applied Meaning*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTS 6:3</strong></td>
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</table>

“of honest report” - has a good reputation, respected

“full of the Holy Spirit” - possesses, displays the fruit of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23) lives a life consistent with profession of faith.

“wisdom” - applying Godly understanding

“appoint over this business” - responsible, trustworthy with responsibility and authority

I TIMOTHY 3: 8-12

“grave” - sincere, reverent, not foolish acting
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“not double-tongued”</td>
<td>speaks consistently, truthful, not Hypocritical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“not given to much wine”</td>
<td>not controlled by addictive substances which can control judgment, sober minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“not greedy for filthy lucre”</td>
<td>does not pursue dishonest gain, earns money in a Christ-honoring manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience”</td>
<td>believes the revealed truth of the gospel, clear and settled conscience in his faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“proven”</td>
<td>tested maturity (I Timothy 5:22a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“blameless”</td>
<td>good reputation, good testimony with non-Christians, consistent Christian conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“wives or women”</td>
<td>wives of deacons, or women who serve or minister as deacons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“not slanderers”</td>
<td>not a gossip, denigrating others, hypocritical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“sober minded” - sober, clear minded, clear thinking

“faithful in all things” - trustworthy, dependable, honest

“husband of one wife” - monogamous, not polygamouos

“ruling their children/own houses well” - manages and cares for their own family and homes in a Christ-like manner

WHY DOES CHRIST CHURCH ORDAIN DEACONS?

Throughout history, deacons have been the basic and foundational order for spiritual leadership in the local Christian congregation. During times of persecution, opposing powers have often focused on eliminating the church’s highly visible leaders – bishops, pastors and such. But it has actually been the deacons who have made it possible for the church to survive and thrive.

Naturally, most Christian churches have deacons because the apostles established the deaconate in New Testament times. However, as the various Christian groups separated one from another, the word acquired different meanings, depending on denomination.

Some churches use the word deacon simply to honor a faithful member. In others, a deacon is a lay pastor who performs nearly every duty traditionally associated with fully ordained pastors.

At Christ Church, deacons are spiritual leaders who care for the flock according to their level of gifting, training and experience. Some teach. Some visit hospitals. Some lead in worship. Others perform acts of service for the poor and the sick.

In some cases, retired pastors and other types of fully ordained ministers serve us as deacons. That is because all ministers are deacons, regardless of the level of authority they have exercised in the past or exercise today. Serving as a deacon prepares a person for knowledgeable, spiritually mature levels of ministry. The deaconate most fully expresses what Christian ministry is about – more than bishops, pastors or any other church office. This was the point Jesus made when he washed his disciples’ feet. Indeed, the origin of the word deacon in Greek simply refers to a server, a waiter, a servant. It has been said that “once a deacon, always a deacon.”
Deacons are to the church what nurses are to the hospital: the ones most closely related to the people being served.

We ordain our deacons, as did the early church. We also accept and recognize ordinations performed by other Christian bodies. If an ordained minister of any sort comes to us from another church, we do not insist that they be re-ordained, provided of course that they meet our church’s criteria for Christian ministry.

If you have been ordained elsewhere and wish to serve in ministry at Christ Church, we will likely invite you to enter the deaconate where you will be placed in an area of service consistent with your gifts, calling, experience and passion.

In short, every minister in our church, regardless of his or her level of authority or experience, is expected to find a place of service in the deaconate structure. The deacon chairman or another deacon leader may call the senior pastor to make a hospital visit for example when it seems important that he do so. While the various orders of ministry perform different functions – it would be rare for a deacon to perform a wedding for example – they all share in the basic function of providing spiritual care to the congregation and are assigned responsibilities accordingly.

Because deacons are continual learners, the church provides ongoing theological and practical training to develop and improve their skill in ministry. For this reason, a deacon often begins his or her service in our church with a considerable lack of experience. However, an inexperienced deacon will be assigned responsibilities that help him or her develop experience. We believe that ordination is an act of calling upon God to spiritually equip a person for the work of ministry, much as a marriage ceremony begins a couple’s journey as family by calling on God.

In summary, the Christ Church Deacon Care Ministry goal is to serve effectively in the life of the Christ Church individual member, the individual family, and the community. This Deacon Handbook section has been written with the great expectation that it will help to awaken in the minds and spirits of dedicated men, women, and young people a desire to serve God, our church congregation, and community in the high calling of deaconship. May God richly bless you and your love, care and service to others.

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