

## THE ORDINATION OF DEACONS

If a minister follows the right process,  
ordaining deacons can be a blessing to them and the church.

What process should you follow?

Preach two or three sermons on the office of deacon using the classic scriptures found in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3:13-18. The minister may preach on such subjects as the spiritual requirements of a deacon; moral requirements of a deacon; the doctrinal requirements of a deacon; personal qualifications of a deacon; the ministry of a deacon; the marriage of a deacon.

Call the church to prayer for the following Wednesday night, praying for wisdom and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Let the church, by secret ballot, select the number of deacons to be ordained.

Trust your church to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Let it be understood that all nominated must meet the qualifications before they are ordained. Sometimes a deacon selection committee is used to screen candidates and present their names to the church for consideration as deacons.

The minister and the deacon selection committee should talk with each person who is to be ordained, along with the candidate's spouse, having an understanding both will give full cooperation to the full program of the church.

In a church conference let the church select by vote those it wishes to ordain as deacons.

Set the ordination service at a regular service, possibly an evening service.

**Use no outside help!**

**The minister will have charge of the service and it should be a dedication service for the entire church.**

**Let the church know the seriousness of the service.**

**Remind the church they are the ones setting the candidates aside.**

**Let the church know they have a responsibility to these candidates.**

At the close of the ordination service, have the candidates kneel at the front of the church with their spouses standing back of them. Let the deacons and other ordained ministers lay hands on these men or you may ask every member of the church lay hands on them.

**Close with a prayer led by the minister.**

The younger church members and children should be schooled ahead of time. The entire church laying hands on these deacons will have an effect upon the church that will long be remembered.

They will feel the church set them aside, and the church will feel the same way.

After all, is it not the church that is setting these deacons aside?  
Is it not the church that is setting them aside for service the scriptures teach is their responsibility?

### **Ordination Service for a Deacon**

The ordination of deacons differs from that of a minister in several ways.

First, more than one deacon is often ordained at the same time, while ordinarily only one minister is ordained at a time.

Also, other churches and ministers of the local association are usually involved in the ordination of a minister.

But the ordination of a deacon is usually a local Church event.

### **The Ordination Council**

This council, usually composed of deacons from the particular local church, meets prior to the ordination service to examine the candidates.

#### Order of the Service

The election of officers:  
a moderator to preside,  
a questioner to examine the candidates,  
a secretary to record the actions of the council.

The questioning of the candidates, which should last between thirty and forty-five minutes, is led by the person elected to examine the candidates.

The questions may be alternated among the candidates:

Tell of your conversion experience.

What is the role and responsibility of a deacon?

What is the mission of the church?

What does the Bible teach about Christian stewardship?

Tell of some person you have led to Christ.

Present the plan of salvation.

Share what you believe about the Bible.

Questions are then welcomed from other members of the ordination council.

If the council is satisfied with the examination, a motion to recommend ordination to the church is made and approved.

### **The Ordination Service**

Hymn of dedication Prayer

Testimony by each candidate

Recommendation of the ordination council to the church

The church votes on the recommendation to ordain

Special music

A message of challenge to the church and a charge to the deacons

The laying on of hands –

The candidate(s) kneels at the altar and ordained ministers and deacons walk by, lay their hands on his head, and offer a prayer or a word of encouragement to him.

Prayer of dedication

Presentation of ordination certificate signed by the pastor

Hand of fellowship is given to new deacons and their spouses by the church

A reception honoring the new deacons and their families

### **DEACON ORDINATION SERMON CHARGE TO THE CANDIDATE(S)**

The highest honor a layperson can ever receive is to be elected a deacon by the church. However, no one should look upon the office as a position of honor only. One preacher said of his deacons, "We made an in-depth study of our deacons and discovered that half of them were too heavy for light work and half of them were too light for heavy work. So none of them are working."

It's a sad day when the office of deacon becomes a place of honor instead of a place of service. The responsibility to discharge one's duties in this office is perhaps as great as that of a minister when the matter is reduced to its final analysis.

What are the duties of deacons? In the Bible, the primary emphasis is given to what a deacon is to be, not what a deacon is to do. The inference is, if a person is what he ought to be, he will do what he ought to do.

Commonly, the functional service of the deacons has been traced to Acts 6: 1- 7. From this passage we get a glimpse of three things deacons are to do:

Be assistants to the pastor  
Be servants to the church  
Be witnesses to the world

### ***Killing the Pastor***

First, deacons are to be assistants to the pastor. One problem with the ministry today is over-busyness. Pastors are pulled in so many directions they don't have time to pray and preach as they should.

J. Sidlow Baxter said, "I believe when most Southern Baptist churches call a new pastor, the people band together and say, 'Behold, a new pastor; come, let us kill him.'"

A killing workload is no new thing. The New Testament church, following Pentecost, experienced great growth. The generosity of people like Bamabas (Acts 5) was unbounded. So great were the needs of the congregation and so generous were the gifts, that the apostles became so occupied in the distribution of food that they were neglecting what they regarded to be their primary responsibilities of prayer and preaching -their spiritual ministry .

They led the church to select the first deacons to take some of the practical responsibilities from the shoulders of the apostles so they would have time to pray and prepare and preach. Thus, the deacon was and is to be an assistant to the minister.

### **Kicking Up Dust**

Second, deacons are to be servants to the congregation. What is the nature of the service of a deacon? The nature may vary from church to church and from time to time. However, it should include such things as: ministering to the sick; ministering to the bereaved; visiting the unsaved; visiting the unaffiliated; building the Christian fellowship; welcoming new members; performing acts of benevolence; administering the ordinances; promoting family worship.

The Greek verb *diakoneo* from which the noun "deacon" comes meant "to serve." The word literally meant "through dust." Although the origin of the word is unknown, the concept of raising dust suggests a servant hastening to serve or wait on his master.

The deacon is a servant. He will do whatever needs to be done.

### **Keeping Them Happy**

Third, deacons are to be witnesses to the world. The selection of the first deacons "pleased the whole multitude." A church that was in conflict was suddenly happy again. A church on the verge of splitting was reunited in love and purpose. And as a result, many were added to the church because of the witness of these good men.

The importance of unity cannot be overstated. The Lord cannot work effectively in a church that is at civil war. Baptists are notorious for their fights and deacons are noted for being the center of controversy. I remind you, you were elected to solve problems, not create them.

As a result of what happens here, may the pastor have an assistant, the congregation have a servant. and the world have a witness.

## **DEACON ORDINATION SERMON CHARGE TO THE CHURCH**

George Bernard Shaw once said, "Power does not corrupt a man; fools, however, if they get into a position of power, corrupt power. "

Any person ordained in any position of the church needs the wisdom not to abuse power, but rather to use it as a means of serving God and serving his people.

As a deacon has a responsibility to the church, the church also has a responsibility to the deacon. The church's obligation to its deacons is three-fold:

To pray for them

To encourage them

To follow them.

### ***You Can Depend on It***

First, the church should pray for its deacons. The New Testament church was born out of prayer.

Following the ascension of our Lord,

the disciples, 120 in number, gathered in the upper room and began to pray. They prayed until the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. As a result of the moving of the Spirit of God, Peter preached and 3,000 souls were added to the church that day.

As the church was born out of prayer, so it goes forward on the wings of prayer. There is nothing more important you can do for a person, especially a deacon, than to pray for him.

Someone has said, "If you depend on organization, you get what organization can do; if you depend on money, you get what money can do; if you depend on education, you get what education can do; if you depend on promotion, you get what promotion can do; if you depend on prayer, you get what God can do."

We desperately want what God can do. Pray for these deacons.

### ***You Can Live on It***

Second, the church should encourage its deacons. Being an assistant to the minister, and a servant to the church, and a witness to the world is not an easy or even an enviable responsibility. They will spend long hours fulfilling their responsibilities. They will wrestle with hard problems in the congregation. They will receive criticism. And, they will need your encouragement.

One of Satan's primary tools in ministry is discouragement. If he can drive the wedge of discouragement into our Christian commitment and service, he has won a major victory .

Mark Twain once said, "I can live three months on one good compliment." There is enough discouragement in the world without our adding to it. May God grant that all of us will be encouragers.

*You Can Act on 11*

Third, the church should follow the leadership of its deacons. The deacon is a servant leader. They have no authority except that which is given to them by the church. And we are not to follow anyone blindly. But when they offer a proposal, we should give it prayerful and careful consideration. We should understand they have access to facts we may not have. Usually they have discussed and prayed over the matter thoroughly. Most of the time they will be right. And we should follow their recommendation.

Some of God ' s gifts to his church are gifted leaders. A church is blessed to have a deacon body that loves and serves him as well as the congregation. Our duty is to pray for them, encourage them, and follow them.