

Deacon Handbook

The Deacon Ministry of
NorthRidge Church,
The ministry of First Baptist Church, Haines City, FL, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

This manual 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 NorthRidge Church.

The church has elected you to the honorable position 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).

Three passages in the New Testament are commonly cited concerning the office of deacon: Acts 6:1-7, Philippians 1:1, and I Timothy 3:8-12. The word for deacon in the New Testament originally described as servants 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.

I. THE BIBLICAL / HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF A DEACON

Acts 6:1-7 is the passage often cited for 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 grew out of this experience.

Without belaboring all of the details of the Acts 6 passage, let's look at the purpose for which these men were selected. 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).

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. They are divided into three categories:

A. SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS (ACTS 6:1-6)

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

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

1. Worthy of respect
2. Sincere (not double-tongued)
3. Refrains from use of alcohol as a beverage
4. Not pursuing dishonest gain
5. Should know Scripture well
 - Student of the Word
 - Sound doctrine
 - Well versed in Baptist Theology
 - Completed Baptist Faith and Message Class.
6. Is not a recent convert (is a maturing Christian).
7. The husband of one wife
8. 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

D. PRACTICAL QUALIFICATIONS – These qualifications serve as a tool of evaluation to determine those qualified to be a Deacon. These qualifications are merely expectations of the church member as clarified by our NorthRidge Covenant and should serve as a standard for those seeking to lead others.

1. Loyal support of the pastor and staff.(Affirmation, Prayer Support, Communication)
2. Faithful attendance at the services of the church.
3. Encouragement of and participation in the organizations of the church – Sunday School, Music, Church Training, Outreach, Prayer Room, etc.
4. To minister the gospel to believers and unbelievers;

5. To demonstrate a consistent commitment to stewardship and tithing to this Church.
6. To demonstrate Christ-like consecration, loyalty, prayer support and faithfulness to the local church program;
7. Member of the church for one year.

III. SELECTION OF A DEACON

GENERAL: The number of new deacons needed shall be determined by the Senior Pastor and deacon officers. The following provisions shall serve as guidelines for nominations for election:

- A. When new or additional deacons are needed, a deacon candidate nomination form will be distributed and collected during church services. Deacon qualifications will be publicized.
- B. The Senior Pastor will select a confirmation team consisting of three active deacons.
- C. The Senior Pastor and the deacon confirmation team will meet with candidates who are selected by the church and outline Biblical qualifications for becoming a deacon. The Deacon Questionnaire will be given to the candidates at this time.
- D. The Deacon Questionnaire must be filled out and returned to the Pastor's office within a reasonable time for one's name to be considered for election and service. (See Appendix A for Questionnaire)
- E. After the candidates have met with the Senior Pastor and a deacon confirmation team, their names will be published. Any church member with an objection to a candidate may do so in writing to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor will meet with the candidate privately to review the objection. If necessary, the Pastor will reconvene the deacon confirmation team to review the objection. Once ample time has passed, and any stated objections have been resolved, the church will then affirm these candidates through "The Unity Process."
- F. Candidates who are qualified to serve and who have not been previously ordained as deacons will be presented to the church for ordination.

IV. SERVICE OF A DEACON

- A. A deacon shall remain in active status as long as he annually indicates his desire and commitment to serve, is regular in attendance at the deacons' meetings and participates in the ministries of the deacon body. If a deacon is absent from six (6) consecutive deacons' meetings without acceptable

explanation, he will be declared inactive.

- B.** There are some instances when a deacon feels it is necessary for him to become inactive for a period of time. As long as his inactive service does not exceed two (2) consecutive years, he will be given opportunity to reactivate himself at the appropriate time.
- C.** Once a deacon exceeds two consecutive years of inactive service, he may be reinstated through the deacon nomination process.

V. 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, ministry teams, and the church membership at large.

A. Family

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 first priority in his devotion, care and ministry.

B. Relation to the Pastor and Pastoral Staff

1. A deacon should serve under the leadership and spiritual direction of the pastor and pastoral staff and be loyal to them in prayer, support, and encouragement.
2. NorthRidge Church 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 Ministry Teams

The deacon body gives counsel to, but does not have control of ministry team actions. Deacons are servants first and last. Ministry teams report to the deacon body concerning actions or recommendations for information and feedback.

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 primary

relationship of the deacons to the church is as follows:

1. **Deacons are to be problem solvers and preservers of church harmony.** Robert Naylor, former President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in his book, **The Baptist Deacon**, wrote concerning the deacon's responsibility to preserve harmony in the church: "When a man becomes a deacon, he loses the privilege, if such exists, of participating in a church row. A member of the ranks may claim that often-abused privilege, 'speaking his mind.' When a man becomes a deacon--selected and called by the Holy Spirit, chosen by the church, dedicated by personal choice--he forfeits the right 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 things 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. He determines in many situations whether he will help put out the fires of disharmony or if he will fuel the problem.

2. **Deacons are to be active in ministry** that will enable the pastor to feed the flock faithfully and to be able to spend the necessary time in prayer for God's direction and inspiration in leading the church.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DEACON

In accordance with the meaning of the word of the New Testament, deacons are to recognize their roles as ministering servants of the church. They are to be members of this church whose character and qualifications shall be as specified in I Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-6, and Titus 1:6-9.

Responsibility: The deacon body shall serve under the leadership of the senior 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:

- A. Expectations of the Deacon that is an expectation consistent among all Deacons
 - (1) Deacon of the Week duties – assignment during service (pray, etc.), Welcome Center greeter
 - (2) Praying with and for the Pastor
 - (3) Deacon Family Ministry Plan - Touch base with families quarterly – be available to minister to them in time of need.
 - (4) Attend Monthly meeting of the Deacons

- (5) Distribution of the Lord's Supper
- (6) New Member Assimilation
- (7) Attend Annual Orientation

B. Expectations of the Deacon that is specific to groups that the Deacon may be assigned within the Deacon Body.

- (1) Hospital Team
- (2) Baptismal Team
- (3) Lord's Supper Preparation
- (4) Evangelism Team

VII. DEACON EMERITUS

When a deacon is unable to regularly participate in the meetings and activities of deacon service due to age or health restrictions, he may request a "Deacon Emeritus" status, which exempts him from regular duties without affecting his participation in deacons' meetings.

VIII. DEACON MEETINGS AND STRUCTURE

Regular meetings will be determined by the Deacon officers in consultation with the Senior Pastor. Meetings of the deacon body will be scheduled no less than once a quarter.

Deacon officers and structure will be determined by the deacon body in cooperation with the pastoral staff.

IX. ORDINATION OF A DEACON

The ordination of a deacon is designed to be a meaningful time of commissioning to faithful service. I Timothy 3:10, states that a man first be "tested" before serving as a deacon. It is customary before ordination for a man to submit to a time of questioning. The subjects that will likely be dealt with are included in Appendix B.

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!

Deacon Questionnaire

DEACON HANDBOOK APPENDIX A

The Deacon Ministry of
NorthRidge Church,
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APPENDIX A
DEACON QUESTIONNAIRE

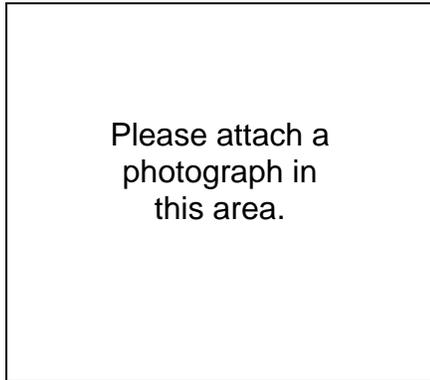
Name: _____ Date: _____

Birth date: _____ Date Joined NorthRidge Church: _____

Joined by: Letter Statement Baptism Other

Upon completion return this form to:

NorthRidge Church
2250 S.R. 17 S
Haines City, Florida 33844
ATTN: Senior Pastor



Please briefly describe your salvation experience and name of church where you were baptized.

Have you ever been ordained as a deacon? Yes No

If yes, give name of church: _____

Do you feel you can conscientiously support the total church program? Yes No

Are you willing to serve as a deacon? Yes No

Have you read the qualifications of a deacon and a deacon's wife in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3? Yes No

Has your wife read these Scriptures? (Please read them carefully together). Yes No

Are you faithful in your stewardship by tithing to NorthRidge Church? Yes No

Do you currently have a regular quiet time? Yes No

Will you be able to actively participate in the outreach ministry of NorthRidge Church? Yes No

If not, why? _____

Are you willing to abide by the church constitution and bylaws? Yes No

Would you be willing to give a testimony before the church and submit to the questioning of an ordaining council? Yes No

Would you object to this questionnaire being reviewed by the Deacon Confirmation Committee? (Your response will be kept confidential by this committee.) Yes No

Do you adhere to the central doctrines accepted by The Baptist Faith and Message of 2000 as far as you know? Yes No

Can you be faithful in attendance at the regular deacons' meetings? Yes No

One of the responsibilities for a deacon is to be available to assist the pastor in receiving new members at the worship services. Would you make yourself available to assist the pastor after being trained? Yes No

Would your wife? Yes No

Have you ever been trained to share your faith? Yes No

If yes, what training did you receive?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four Spiritual Laws | <input type="checkbox"/> Romans Road |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism Explosion | <input type="checkbox"/> FAITH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing Witnessing Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Power Band |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Marked New Testament |

Would you be willing to “Deacon of the Week” assignments as outlined in the manual? Yes No

Do you personally feel that you provide loving, godly leadership for your home, and that you are committed to managing your children with Christ-like principles? Yes No

Have you ever been divorced? Yes No

Please list below the areas where you feel you are spiritually gifted, are serving or desire to serve in the life of our church: (e.g. worship service, Bible Study, praise team, outreach, etc.)

Please briefly give your views on the following and include Scripture references:

State your belief about salvation and what you believe about the security of the believer:

What do you believe about the authority and inspiration of the Scripture?

In your opinion, what is the mission of the church?

What do you believe the Bible teaches about the deacon's responsibilities to the home?

Briefly explain who the Holy Spirit is, and what He does for believers and what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Remarks or comments on any of the previous questions:

Signature _____

Date _____

THE DEACONSHIP

The word "deacon" means servant or minister and came to be used by the church to designate a special position in the church. The deaconship, therefore, signifies a position of special Christian service. Both the Scripture and the dignity of the office demand a person of the highest spiritual, moral and practical qualifications:

I. SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS (ACTS 6:1-6)

- A. Full of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Full of Wisdom.
- C. Full of Faith.

II. MORAL QUALIFICATIONS (I TIMOTHY 3: 8-10, 12-13)

- A. Worthy of respect
- B. Sincere
- C. Not indulging in much wine
- D. Not pursuing dishonest gain
- E. The husband of one wife
- F. Manages his children and household well

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

- A. Worthy of respect
- B. Not malicious talker
- C. Temperate
- D. Trustworthy in everything

E. PRACTICAL QUALIFICATIONS – These qualifications serve as a tool of evaluation to determine those qualified to be a Deacon. These qualifications are merely expectations of the church member as clarified by our NorthRidge Covenant and should serve as a standard for those seeking to lead others.

- 1. Loyal support of the pastor and staff.(Affirmation, Prayer Support, Communication)

2. Faithful attendance at the services of the church.
3. Encouragement of and participation in the organizations of the church – Sunday School, Music, Church Training, Outreach, Prayer Room, etc.
4. To minister the gospel to believers and unbelievers;
5. To demonstrate a consistent commitment to stewardship and tithing to this Church.
6. To demonstrate Christ-like consecration, loyalty, prayer support and faithfulness to the local church program;
7. Member of the church for one year.

IV. PRACTICAL DUTIES

- A. Expectations of the Deacon that is an expectation consistent among all Deacons
 - (1) Deacon of the Week duties – assignment during service (pray, etc.), Welcome Center greeter
 - (2) Praying with and for the Pastor
 - (3) Deacon Family Ministry Plan - Touch base with families quarterly – be available to minister to them in time of need.
 - (4) Attend Monthly meeting of the Deacons
 - (5) Distribution of the Lord's Supper
 - (6) New Member Assimilation
 - (7) Attend Annual Orientation
- B. Expectations of the Deacon that is specific to groups that the Deacon may be assigned within the Deacon Body.
 - (1) Hospital Team
 - (2) Baptismal Team
 - (3) Lord's Supper Preparation
 - (4) Evangelism Team

I have read the spiritual, moral qualifications and practical duties for being a deacon. Believing that those qualifications and duties are Scriptural and reasonable; I pledge myself to do all within my power to bring honor to this high office and glory to the name of Christ by striving to meet them.

Signature

Did your wife also read the qualifications for being a deacon? If she is in agreement with the qualifications and supportive of you if elected, please have her sign below.

Signature

YES, my wife and I will attend the deacon orientation sessions together.

Signature

DEACON HANDBOOK APPENDIX B:

SAMPLE DEACON ORDINATION QUESTIONS

It is customary for a potential deacon to be questioned in regard to his doctrinal beliefs in certain areas prior to ordination. While these questions are not exhaustive, they will be helpful in the preparation of a deacon's ordination procedure. Sample questions are found below.

- A.** What is your view of the Bible? (II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:20)
- B.** Do you believe in the security of the believer? Cite supportive Scripture references. (Ephesians 2:8, John 3:16, I John 5:11-13)
- C.** What is the mission of the church? (Matthew 22:36-40, 28:19-20, Ephesians 4:12-13)
- D.** What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22-25)
- E.** Do you believe in spiritual warfare? Cite a scripture reference for guidance. (Ephesians 6:10-18)
- F.** Are you faithful in your stewardship by tithing to NorthRidge Church?
- G.** Would you share your personal testimony?
- H.** Is your wife in full support of your service as a deacon?
- I.** Have you read together the qualifications of a deacon's wife, found in I Timothy 3:11?

**DEACON HANDBOOK APPENDIX C:
NEW DEACON TRAINING CHECKLIST**

Deacon Name: _____

Deacon Mentor: _____

This checklist should be completed within the first 6 months of a new deacon's tenure.

Date/Place Testimony Given: _____

Assisted with Homebound Lord's Supper _____

Assisted with Worship Lord's Supper _____

Assisted Sunday Visitor Contact _____

Assisted with a Hospital Visitation _____

Evangelism Training? _____ What Method? _____

Mentoring:

1. Pray with and for the new deacon regularly.
2. Make sure he has information on how to get in touch with you.
3. Model faithfulness in Sunday School, worship, etc.
4. Leaders produce leaders.
5. Be positive about the church and her ministers and staff.