

Deacon Handbook
March 13, 2023

Purpose

Relieve Elders of operational tasks (see Acts 6).
Give members of the body a clear way to engage in an area of service.
Provide a point of contact for:
Elders
Body
Service Area Members

Alignment with Cole Community's Vision and Values

Be Transformed by Jesus' Love
Receive and Give Grace
Share the Gospel with a Broken World
Live In Community

Qualifications

1 Timothy 3:8 - 13

8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued or given to much wine or greedy for money. 9 They must hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 Additionally, they must first be tested. Then, if they are above reproach, let them serve as deacons. 11 In the same way, the women must be dignified, not slanderers, but temperate and faithful in all things. 12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife, a good manager of his children and of his own household. 13 For those who have served well as deacons acquire for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus

Dignified

Deacons must be mature, of sound mind and character.

Not Double Tongued

Deacons must demonstrate verbal consistency. They must not be prone to saying one thing to one person and something else to another.

Not Given to Much Wine

“One who sits long at his wine.” A deacon is one who avoids overindulgence in anything that might cause loss of control of his senses or behavior. It prohibits the addiction to any substance.

Not Greedy for Money

“Greedy of base gain.” Not desiring gain that is improper or disgraceful and would make one feel ashamed. Both motive and method are in view here. This can be seeking prominence or status too.

Hold to the Mystery of the Faith with a Clear Conscience

Deacons must have a sound knowledge of Christian truths and a lifestyle in accord with them. They must not be easily swayed from the truth. Their desire to hold the position of Deacon should spring from a motive of service to the Lord and the Body of Christ.

Must first be tested

Deacons must prove, over time, they are faithful and there is credible vetting by Christ's church of the candidate's character and competence.

Above Reproach

Deacons must display a lifestyle free from ongoing patterns of Scriptural disobedience.

Not Slanderers

Does not make false and malicious statements or reports which damages the reputation or well-being of others.

Temperate

“To be calm, dispassionate, watchful, vigilant.” This man is clear headed. He is mentally alert and able to make sound judgment in spite of circumstances or pressure. A man who has a clear perspective on life and a correct spiritual orientation.

Faithful

Loyal, worthy of trust, accurate and truthful.

One spouse

The issue is not the man's marital status (married or single), but it is the issue of moral character in relation to his wife if he has one. “A one woman man,” or “a one woman kind of man.” A man who is totally committed to his wife. It includes faithfulness to one's wife in thought and action. Does your wife feel like you are totally committed to her? Are you committed to the struggle against sexual lust in your thought life?

Good manager of their children

Deacons must have a healthy family life and well-behaved children (still under the authority of their parents).

Good manager of their own household

The home is a proving ground for leadership. The way a man manages his domestic life should be such that others would be attracted to it. Paul doesn't

mention how a man manages his business but his home. The church is more like a family than a business. If a man is committed to the task of being a good steward of his household. he will most likely be that way in the Church as a deacon.

Biblical basis for men and women to serve as deacons

Romans 16: 1-2 – Phoebe

“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Christ. I ask you to receive her in the in a way worthy of His people to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a benefactor of many people, including me.”

Refer to the Cole Community Church Constitution Article VIII, Section 4 Qualifications of Office members of the governing board and the executive director of an auxiliary shall be approved by the Council of Elders. Such person should meet the qualifications of a deacon which we interpret to represent both men and women. (1 Timothy 3:18-12)

Some qualification descriptions were used with permission from Christ's Community Church in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Characteristics

Servant of the physical needs of the body.

Buffer

Unifier

Peacemaker

Problem Solvers in order to safeguard unity

See a problem

Wants to safeguard unity

Thinks creatively

Solves the problem

“Deacons, then serve to care for the physical and financial needs of the church, as they do so in a way which heals divisions, brings unity under the Word, and supports the leadership of the elders. Without this practical service of the deacons, the elders will not be freed to devote themselves to praying and serving the word to the people. Elders need deacons to serve practically, and deacons need elders to lead spiritually.” From *Deacons* by Matt Smethurst

Responsibilities

Spot and meet tangible needs.

Protect and promote church unity.

Serve and support the ministry of the elders.

Define the roles and responsibilities of the ministry.

Provide a point of contact for those serving in an area of ministry.

Provide a point of contact for those who see a need.

Make decisions within the guidelines agreed to with the elders.
Organize members of the body in the ministry to accomplish the tasks at hand.
Provide a point of contact for the elders:
 Respond to the needs of the elders.
 Provide regular status updates.
 Seek counsel on decisions.
 Bring escalations which require elder input or decisions.

The Deacon Council

Deacons from the areas of ministry will form the Deacon Council.
There will be overlaps between areas of ministry. The Deacon Council will provide a way to communicate and meet needs which overlap.
They will meet regularly to discuss needs which overlap different areas of ministry.
This this will also provide a way to engage each other in a “real time” manner when necessary.

Comparison to other roles in the body

Differentiation of Elders and Deacons

Elders must be able to teach.
Elders serve by leading; Deacons lead by serving.

Differentiation of Pastors and Deacons

Pastors have the gifts of teaching and shepherding.
Deacons do not necessarily have these gifts.

Differentiation of Staff and Deacons

Paid position
Staff can serve as a deacon.

Areas of Ministry

Structure

There are several approaches to structure the body of deacons. This approach groups the current ministries according to a theme. The boundaries of each ministry are flexible in order to encourage cooperation and integration between the areas of ministry. A deacon of one area of ministry can participate in another area of ministry.

Worship

General Definition

Anything which happens before, during and after the service on Sunday morning. This area of ministry has many responsibilities and will require more than one deacon.

Sunday Worship

Music

Technology

- Service Content
- Announcements
- Rites (Lord's Supper distribution, Baptisms)
- Sunday Logistics
 - Ushers
 - Greeters
 - Coffee
 - Bulletins
 - Sunday Prep / Cleanup
 - Facility
- Security (future)

Note: May transition to a Worship pastor assistant in the future.

Fellowship

- General Definition
 - Coordinate gathering of groups for fellowship or meeting practical needs.
- Events
 - Fellowship Gatherings
 - Weddings
 - Funerals
- Kitchen Maintenance
- Supper for Six
- Couple's Night Out
- Prayer Meetings

Support

- General Definition
 - Meeting practical needs which require physical and financial resources.
- Service for the body
 - Moving
 - Home Maintenance
 - Emergencies (automotive)
- Service for facility
 - Outdoor Maintenance
 - Mowing
 - Spring / Fall Cleanup
 - Garden

Communication / Administration

- General Definition
 - Coordinate communications of the elders and deacons to the body efficiently and articulately.
- Education Class promotion
- Website
- Bulletin

Email
Prayer Requests

Discipleship

General Definition

Coordinate groups which are dedicated to teaching. May transition to a ministry assistant if a pastor is in place in the future.

Growth Groups

Women's Bible Study

Men's Bible Study

Men's Breakfast

Men's Retreat

Pure Desire

Educational Classes

Local Outreach

General Definition

Coordinate efforts to support those who are reaching out to those inside and outside the body.

Local

Food Cupboard

Crisis Meals

Library

Glocal

Refugees

Garden

Community

VBS

Harvest Party

Easter Egg Hunt

Global Outreach

General Definition

Care for and support international workers and long term workers.

Field Staff

Long Term Workers

National Workers

Elders

Fellowship Funds

Church Finances

Note: These areas should be managed by the Elders, not deacons.

Selection Process

Elders appoint candidates for the role of deacon.

Church body gives feedback on their qualifications.

Terms / Length of Service

Three year terms

Encourage mentorship