

## SOUTH SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH - DEACON TRAINING MANUAL

Deacons handbook

Defined

What unites deacons? They are the tip of the spear in service.

The point men.

How to become one

Requirements

Be one in some stages of life and perhaps not.

We are engaged in the service of the church.

Meetings are celebrations of service & calls to service

A more complete picture.

Prayer groups.

Like poker... come play. No other way.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Congratulations and welcome to your new role as a deacon in South Spring Baptist Church. You have been elected to the position of deacon by the church in recognition of your faithfulness and devotion to the Lord and to His 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 materials related to the office of deacon and the particulars of the deacon ministry of South Spring Baptist Church.

### **BIBLICAL / HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

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 probably grew out of this experience.

There are primarily three reasons for the selection of deacons in the Acts 6 passage. These men were asked to meet a need that would directly serve the apostles so that they would be able to “give full attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” (verse 4). The second reason these men were chosen to serve was so that they could literally distribute and serve food to widows in the congregation. Finally they were utilized to bring peace (shalom) between frustrated groups within the church.

*So based on the story deacons:*

1. Served the Apostles
2. Served the widows (some of the most vulnerable in the church)
3. Brought peace

In general this is your role as a deacon. You will be serving the leadership of the church as they shepherd us all. You will be serving those in the church who need it most. And finally, you will be actively involved in bringing peace and harmony within the congregation. In doing these three things, you will be helping the church to live out its mission.

The deacon body is a diverse group. While the deacon body may be meeting as a group regularly, your particular area of service might not look like any other member. You are already serving in the church by virtue of the fact that you have been chosen. In many ways recognizing you as a deacon is simply proclaiming something that you already are. Now we simply want the church to recognize that you are in a servant/leader role.

### **SERVANT LEADERSHIP:**

*Servant leadership* might sound like a contradiction but in God's economy a better word to describe this role might be "mystery." Jesus taught his disciples repeatedly

- "26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must also be your servant," - **Matthew 20:26**
- "11 The greatest among you shall be your servant." - **Matthew 23:11**
- "26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him." – **John 20:26**

As Jesus taught his disciples to serve one another he was teaching them how to *lead* by *servicing*. This is the greatest task before you as a deacon. You will lead as a servant. You will model how to serve, how to love, how to sacrifice, how to forgive. As a deacon the church will look to you for leadership as a servant. At times your leadership might come with words but primarily it will come with actions. To be a servant leader is to lead by example.

But make no mistake. In everything you are a servant, "doing nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interest but each of you to the interests of others." (Phil 2:3-4)

For additional insight Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3 also speak to the qualifications and characteristics of a deacon.

#### ***Acts 6: 1-6***

1. Men of good reputation
2. Full of the Spirit
3. Full of wisdom

#### ***1 Timothy 3:8-13***

1. Worthy of respect
2. Sincere
3. Not indulging in too much wine
4. Not greedy for money
5. Holding and keeping to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience
6. The husband of one wife
7. Faithful to his wife
8. Manages his children and household well.
9. Willing to be tested regarding such qualifications

In many ways these are outward appearances that provide evidence of an inward life. As such let us encourage you to maintain the source of your service. The source of your service and every other aspect of life should flow from a relationship with your Heavenly Father.

## **THE RELATIONSHIPS OF A DEACON**

The deacon's primary relationship is to his Lord. Without that vertical relationship all other relationships will be disordered. Next in importance is the deacon's knowledge and understanding of his role in relation to his family, pastor, leadership board, and the church membership at large.

**Family:** The primary ministry of every Christian is to his/her family and this is especially true for deacons. A deacon should give his family first priority in his devotion, time, care and ministry.

**Pastor:** 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.

**Leadership Board:** The deacon body gives counsel to, but does not have control of leadership board actions. Deacons are servants first and last. Out of courtesy reports from the pastor and leadership board are presented to the deacon body for recommendations, information, and feedback. The deacon body may indicate support or give counsel, but not instruct the pastor or the leadership board as to what they can or cannot propose to the church for official action.

**The Church Membership:** A deacon is to be active in ministry to the church family, promoting peace, harmony, and a spirit of cooperation among the membership. Peace in Hebrew (*Shalom*) does not simply mean the absence of conflict. Shalom means not only peace, but wholeness, completeness, prosperity, welfare, tranquility, and harmony. As a deacon your role is to bring "shalom" to the congregation. You are to bring "shalom" between members and God as well as bringing "shalom" between members of the church.

## **PRACTICAL DUTIES OF DEACONS**

1. Prayerful support and respect for the pastor, staff, and leadership board
2. Faithful attendance at the services of the church
3. Encouragement of and participation in the organizations of the church – Sunday School, Life Groups, Music, Discipleship, Ministries, Outreach, Special Events, etc.
4. A consistent commitment to stewardship by tithing to the church

5. Regular attendance of deacon's meetings
6. Personal evangelism among the lost
7. Assistance with visiting and caring for shut-ins and the sick
8. Assistance with visitor outreach and new member assimilation
9. Assistance with various aspects of Sunday morning worship, Wednesday night Bible Study and special events

**A FINAL WORD:**

We look forward to serving alongside you. What an exciting thing to take the words of Jesus seriously! In being a deacon you are literally fulfilling the teachings of our Lord. By choosing to serve the least of these you are serving Christ (Matthew 25:44). By choosing to take up your cross and losing your life you will find it. (Matthew 6:25)