

Deacon Handbook

The Deacon Ministry of
East Shore Baptist Church,
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Manual 414-01
Revised: 09/19/2005

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook 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 the East Shore Baptist Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

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).

Two passages in the New Testament are commonly cited concerning the Office of Deacon: Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-12. The word for Deacon in the New Testament originally described a servant 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(s) 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 probably 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 two categories:

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

- A. Full of the Holy Spirit
- B. Full of wisdom
- C. Full of faith

2. 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, giving evidence of spiritual leadership in the home and modeling the biblical family (see Article XVIII, of the "*The Baptist Faith and Message*", June 14, 2000).

III. PRACTICAL MINISTRY RESPONSIBILITIES

GENERAL: Deacons represent an extension of the Pastoral Ministry and are considered as leader-servants of the Church. According to the teachings in Acts 6:1-6, the following principles of service defines the practical duties of the Deacons of East Shore Baptist Church.

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 and Acts 6:1-6.

The **practical duties** unique to East Shore Baptist Church are the following:

1. To assist the Ministerial Staff with secondary responsibilities in order that they may spend more time in prayer and in the ministry of the Word. (For example, with the Visitation Ministry, and Church committees in administration matters, ministry to the sick & needy, evangelism among the lost, etc.).
2. To give attention to the needs of the membership, especially to widows (ref appendix A).

3. To assist in resolving problems which arise within the East Shore Baptist Church fellowship and work toward unity.
4. To be examples within the fellowship of wisdom, spirituality, faithfulness, and of good character.
5. To provide loyal support for the Pastor(s).
6. By having faithful attendance at Church services.
7. To encourage and participate in the organizations of the Church - Sunday School, Music, Outreach, Children's Ministries, Joy Club, etc.
8. To display a consistent commitment to stewardship and the giving of self.
9. To lead the Church in the achievement of its mission.
10. To provide personal evangelism among the lost, visitation of the sick, care for shut-ins, and the encouragement of the indifferent.
11. To have regular attendance at Deacon meetings.
12. To participate in men's mentoring program.
13. To participate in the Deacon of the Day duties which includes participation in the service as required and taking responsibility for securing the Church after services on Sunday.
14. To maintain a high level of confidentiality with information relating to issues which may arise within the Deacon Ministry.

IV. SPECIFIC MINISTRY RESPONSIBILITIES

The **specific duties** unique to East Shore Baptist Church fall into three categories: Family Ministry; Spiritual Leadership; and Men's Mentoring.

1. Family Ministry

Consistent with Biblical teaching, the foundational role of the Deacon is service to the needy. Today, the needy can be parties with long term needs, such as: widows, shut ins, the infirmed, or families and individuals experiencing short term needs resulting from illness, financial or family crisis. Refer to appendix A for a guide, which may be useful in determining the level of need and response level for dealing with families in your Family Ministry. To assist in these needs, the Deacon Body confidentially administers a benevolence program, in addition to active and practical service.

In addition to the care for the needy, Deacons at East Shore are called to assist in new family Church integration. In this work, Deacons are to actively seek to integrate and encourage new attendees to become regular attendees; to then move from regular attendance to members; and from membership to ministry leadership.

2. Spiritual Leadership

In that scripture, as well as the Church body, see Deacons as spiritual leaders, Deacons at East Shore Baptist Church must lead by being a visible presence at Church gatherings and services. In addition to being a visible presence, as spiritual leaders, Deacons at East Shore Baptist Church are expected to be engaged in active evangelistic service, such as: teaching, preaching, and evangelistic outreach.

As spiritual leaders, the Deacon Body at East Shore Baptist Church supports the Pastoral staff by serving as a confidential sounding board, and by providing feedback to guard Church unity. Deacons are also expected to lead through public prayer, service of the Lord's Supper, and as administrators of membership accountability.

3. Men's Mentoring

Understanding that Godly paternal leadership is critical for the spiritual health of families, the adoption of lifetime Christian principles in children, and growth of this Church, Deacons at East Shore Baptist Church are biblically called to focus on the spiritual development of men. In this work, Deacons are to mentor, encourage, and spur men in the love and care of their family; in spiritual development; and in servant-hood through participation in projects.

V. SELECTION OF A DEACON

GENERAL: The Deacon officers, as stipulated in the Church Constitution, shall determine the number of new Deacons needed. The following provisions shall serve as guidelines for nominations for election:

1. In October of each year, a “Deacon Candidate Ballot” will be distributed and collected during Church services. It will list all adult men meeting the following criteria:
 - He will be at least 21 years of age;
 - He will be a member of ESBC for at least one year; with his membership being active (i.e., actively supporting the total program of the Church);
 - He will have shown a commitment to Spiritual development by being a regular attendee (having at least a 75% attendance rate) in Sunday School classes for the past 6 months as indicated on the attendance sheets – extenuating circumstances not withstanding, i.e., health issues, military deployment, special job considerations, etc;
 - He will be physically able to perform the duties of a Deacon.

Note: Previously Ordained Deacons – *in good standings* – will receive automatic consideration.

The “Deacon Candidate Ballot” will contain a notice instructing members with strong objections to any particular candidate to present their concern to a Pastor(s) or the Chairman of Deacons.

2. The Chairman of Deacons will collect and tally the “Deacon Candidate Ballots” and report the results to the Deacon Body.
3. The Deacon Body and Church Pastor(s) will examine the results, and approach candidates that meet the above qualifications, in consideration of the wishes of the members as reflected in their nominations.
4. Prospective candidates who have not been ordained, or have been ordained in another Southern Baptist Church, will be required to complete a Deacon Questionnaire (ref appendix B).
5. The Pastor(s) and Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Deacons will meet individually with prospective candidates described above. At this meeting candidates will be advised of the outlined Biblical and East Shore Baptist Church ministry responsibilities for service of a Deacon.
6. Prior to the end of November, the Deacon Body and Pastor(s) will prayerfully select men for service as Deacon and report results to the Congregation and those who have not been previously ordained as Deacons will be presented to the Church for ordination.

VI. ORDINATION OF NEW DEACONS

An Ordination Service will be scheduled as soon as practical to ordain any men elected to the Deacon Body who are unordained.

1. Unordained Deacon candidates will be examined by an Ordination Council composed of East Shore Baptist Church to affirm their calling.
2. A Pastor or the Chairman of Deacons will chair the Ordination Council.
3. During the Ordination Service, the newly elected Deacons will share their personal testimony and their calling to serve as Deacon.
4. East Shore Baptist Church shall present a copy of the Certificate of Ordination and a gift to mark the occasion.

VII. SERVICE OF A DEACON

A Deacon shall remain in active status for 3-years and is eligible again for Church nomination to active service after 1-year.

VIII. TERMINATION OF DEACON SERVICE

1. His personal resignation, or;
2. His transfer of membership from East Shore Baptist Church, or
3. His removal from such office by action of the Deacon Body.

IX. RELATIONSHIPS OF A DEACON

The Deacon's primary relationship is to the Lord, and without this vertical relationship being what it ought to be, his horizontal relationships will be distorted. The principle concern of a Deacon is their walk with God. Next in importance, is the Deacon's knowledge and understanding of his role in relation to his family, Pastor(s), Church ministries, and the Church membership at large.

1. Relationship to the Deacon's 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.

2. Relationship to the Pastor(s)

- A. A Deacon should serve under the leadership and spiritual direction of the Pastor(s) and should be loyal to the Pastor(s) in prayer support, encouragement and fellowship.
- B. The families of East Shore Baptist Church look to the Pastor(s) for giving overall leadership and administration to the Church and its ministry. The Church therefore expects the Deacons to respect the office of Pastor(s) and to welcome the unique opportunity to learn from and serve with the Pastor(s). As a Deacon functions in the practical ministry of the Church, the Pastor(s) are freed to give attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

3. Relationship to Church Ministries

Nowhere in the New Testament is there even a hint that the Deacon Body is to function as a board of directors, or as administrators of the Church's business affairs. Deacons are servants first and last. As spiritual and servant leaders, the Deacon Body is available for council, guidance, and accountability for Church ministries. Out of courtesy, ministry leaders may consult with the Deacon Body concerning actions or recommendations, for information, and for feedback. The Deacon Body may indicate support or give counsel, but not instruct ministry leaders as to what they can or cannot propose to the Church for official action.

4. Relationship to Church Members

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:

- A. **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."*

As an example, 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.

- B. **Deacons are to be active in ministry.** This will enable the Pastor(s) 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.

X. DEACON MEETINGS

The meetings of the Deacon Body shall be restricted to the Pastor(s) and the active Deacons of the Church, unless otherwise requested by the Deacon Body and or Pastor(s). The Deacon officers, in consultation with the Pastor(s), will determine regular meetings. Meetings of the Deacon Body will typically be scheduled once a month.

XI. ORGANIZATION

The officers of the Deacon Body shall be composed of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Scribe.

1. The officers are to be elected in December of each year to assume their duties effective at the January Deacon meeting of the next year.
2. The Chairman of Deacon will preside over the nomination of officers for the coming year. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

The Benevolence Committee, a subcommittee of the Deacon Body, will be composed of Deacons, the number as agreed upon by the Deacon Body, with a separate Chairman.

XII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEACON OFFICERS

A. Chairman:

The chairman is elected yearly by the Deacon Body at the December meeting of the Body and may serve, if elected, for up to three years.

Responsibilities:

1. Moderates all Deacon meetings.
2. Oversees all Deacon Ministries.
 - a) See that each ministry is staffed and functioning.
 - b) Assist whenever needed in planning and promoting ministries.
3. Serves as a member of the Leadership Team
 - a) Furnish the Leadership Team and Church Office with a planned yearly calendar of

Deacon activities, which involve use of East Shore Baptist Church facilities.

- b) Serves as liaison between Deacon Body, Ministerial staff, and the East Shore Baptist Church.
- 4. Presents Deacon budget requests to the Budget and Finance Committee.
- 5. Cooperates with all East Shore Baptist Church leadership in working toward unity, harmony, spirituality and growth of the East Shore Baptist Church.
- 6. Assists the Pastor(s) by placing a follow-up phone call to a visitor during the week after the pastor(s) have contacted them.
- 7. Sees that each Deacon that loses an immediate family member (spouse, parents, children, etc.) receives a Bible signed by the other Deacon or another suitable memorial gift.

B. Vice-Chairman:

Elected yearly by the Deacon Body at the December meeting of the Body and may serve, if elected, for up to three years.

Responsibilities:

- 1. Moderates Deacon Meetings in the absence of the chairman.
- 2. Assists the chairman as needed in all Deacon Ministries.
- 3. Serves as timekeeper for Deacon Meetings.

C. Scribe:

Elected yearly by the Deacon Body at the December meeting of the Body and may serve, if elected, for up to three years.

Responsibilities:

- 1. Moderates Deacon Meetings in the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
- 2. Keep the minutes of all meetings.
- 3. Keep the roll of Deacons present and absent.

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 experiences in your walk with the Lord.

Acknowledgement: With gratitude this handbook was drawn from the "Deacon Handbook" of First Baptist Church, Garland Texas.

Deacon Family Ministry Responsibilities

A GUIDE FOR DETERMINING THE LEVEL OF NEED AND RESPONSE LEVEL IN THE DEACON FAMILY MINISTRY

Level 1 Family

(New Member or Prospective Member Family/Person)

- Introduce yourself when assigned and survey level of service expected by family.
- Seek out at weekly services to say “hello,” lead by spirit to see if they need to talk, or if more follow-up may be needed.
- Contact when the family has not been in Church for several weeks, checking on welfare and offering help as needed.
- Contact when known issues arise in the family, such as the death of a loved one, marital separation, loss of job, birth of child, moving to new home, etc.
- Keep family in prayer when known issues arise.
- Visit as needed by family.
- Be alert for distance and or disconnects between the family and Church or with other Church members and seek to bring reconciliation.
- Seek ways engage families into Church activity, service, and spiritual growth.

Level 2 Family

(Widow with some need or family with short term issue)

Level 2 support includes same information listed in Level 1 support; therefore it is not re-listed here.

- Contact/Telephone the family as necessary to check on welfare and current spiritual need.
- Keep family in daily prayer
- Visit the family at an interval mutually agreed by the family and Deacon.
- Seek support of other groups within the Church for additional support, such as, Joy Club, Sunday School Teacher and class, Youth, Impact Kids, etc.
- Consult with Deacon Body at least once a year to determine if an elevation or lowering of level is appropriate.
- Seek permission of family to provide Level 3 support, as needed, upon consultation with the Chairman, or Vice Chairman, and/or Pastor(s).

Level 3 Family

(Needy widow or Family with longer term issue)

Level 3 support includes same information listed in Level 1 support; therefore it is not re-listed here.

- Contact/Telephone the family at about once a week to check on welfare and current spiritual need.
- Keep family in prayer
- Visit the family at an interval mutually agreed by the family and Deacon.
- Seek support of other groups within the Church for additional support, such as, Joy Club, Sunday School Teacher and class, Youth, Impact Kids, etc.
- Consult with Chairman/Vice-Chairman and/or Pastor(s) in his absence, monthly while at this level to determine if an elevation or lowering of level is appropriate.
- Meet with Deacon Body at least every 6-months to determine if direct pastoral counseling/ministry may be needed or if we may need to seek outside support.
- Seek permission of family to provide Level 4 support, as needed, upon consultation with the Chairman, or Vice Chairman, and/or Pastor(s).

Level 4 Family

(Major crisis family with primary out service)

Level 4 support includes same information listed in Level 1 support; therefore it is not re-listed here.

- Deacon provides support level (1, 2, or 3) as mutually agreed by family, Deacon, and Chairman/Vice-Chairman, as Pastor(s) and/or outside party or parties provide primary support.
- Keep family in prayer.

Deacon Questionnaire

The Deacon Ministry of
East Shore Baptist Church,
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Form 414-02
Revised: 03/01/2005

AN OVERVIEW OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF AN EAST SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH DEACON

BIBLICAL / PRACTICAL QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

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:

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

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

2. 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, giving evidence of spiritual leadership in the home and modeling the biblical family (see Article XVIII, of the "*The Baptist Faith and Message*", June 14, 2000).

PRACTICAL DUTIES

GENERAL: Deacons represent an extension of the Pastoral Ministry and are considered as leader-servants of the Church. According to the teachings in Acts 6:1-6, the following principles of service defines the practical duties of the Deacons of East Shore Baptist Church.

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The **practical duties** unique to East Shore Baptist Church are the following:

1. To assist the Ministerial Staff with secondary responsibilities in order that they may spend more time in prayer and in the ministry of the Word. (For example, with the Visitation Ministry, and Church committees in administration matters, ministry to the sick & needy, evangelism among the lost, etc.).
2. To give attention to the needs of the membership, especially to widows (ref appendix A).
3. To assist in resolving problems which arise within the East Shore Baptist Church fellowship and work toward unity.
4. To be examples within the fellowship of wisdom, spirituality, faithfulness, and of good character.
5. To provide loyal support for the Pastor(s).
6. By having faithful attendance at Church services.
7. To encourage and participate in the organizations of the Church - Sunday School, Music, Outreach, Children's Ministries, Joy Club, etc.
8. To display a consistent commitment to stewardship and the giving of self.
9. To lead the Church in the achievement of its mission.
10. To provide personal evangelism among the lost, visitation of the sick, care for shut-ins, and the encouragement of the indifferent.
11. To have regular attendance at Deacon meetings.
12. To participate in men's mentoring program.
13. To participate in the Deacon of the Day duties which includes participation in the service as required and taking responsibility for securing the Church after services on Sundays.
14. To maintain a high level of confidentiality with information relating to issues which may arise within the Deacon Ministry.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

The **specific duties** unique to East Shore Baptist Church fall into three categories: Family Ministry; Spiritual Leadership; and Men's Mentoring.

1. Family Ministry

Consistent with Biblical teaching, the foundational role of the Deacon is service to the needy. Today, the needy can be parties with long term needs, such as: widows, shut ins, the infirmed, or families and individuals experiencing short term needs resulting from illness, financial or family crisis. Refer to appendix A for a guide, which may be useful in determining the level of need and response level for dealing with families in your Family Ministry. To assist in these needs, the Deacon Body confidentially administers a benevolence program, in addition to active and practical service.

In addition to the care for the needy, Deacons at East Shore are called to assist in new family Church integration. In this work, Deacons are to actively seek to integrate and encourage new attendees to become regular attendees; to then move from regular attendance to members; and from membership to ministry leadership.

2. Spiritual Leadership

In that scripture, as well as the Church body, see Deacons as spiritual leaders, Deacons at East Shore Baptist Church must lead by being a visible presence at Church gatherings and services. In addition to being a visible presence, as spiritual leaders, Deacons at East Shore Baptist Church are expected to be engaged in active evangelistic service, such as: teaching, preaching, and evangelistic outreach.

As spiritual leaders, the Deacon Body at East Shore Baptist Church supports the Pastoral staff by serving as a confidential sounding board, and by providing feedback to guard Church unity. Deacons are also expected to lead through public prayer, service of the Lord's Supper, and as administrators of membership accountability.

3. Men's Mentoring

Understanding that Godly paternal leadership is critical for the spiritual health of families, the adoption of lifetime Christian principles in children, and growth of this Church, Deacons at East Shore Baptist Church are biblically called to focus on the spiritual development of men. In this work, Deacons are to mentor, encourage, and spur men in the love and care of their family; in spiritual development; and in servant-hood through participation in projects.

EAST SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH DEACON QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Date: _____

Birthdate: _____ Date Joined East Shore: _____

Joined by: Letter Statement Baptism Other

Please attach a photograph
in this area.
(Optional)

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 in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 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 East Shore Baptist Church?

Yes No

Do you currently have a daily quiet time?

Yes No

Will you be able to actively participate in any Outreach Ministry of East Shore Baptist Church?

Yes No

If not, why? _____

Are you willing to abide by the Church constitution/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 *"Baptist Faith and Message"* adopted in 2000 by the Southern Baptist Convention as far as you know?

Yes No

Can you be faithful in attendance at the regular monthly Deacon meetings?

Yes No

One of the responsibilities for a Deacon is to be available to assist the Pastor(s) in receiving new members at the worship services. Would you make yourself available to assist the pastor(s) 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?

Four Spiritual Laws

Roman Road

Continuing Witnessing Training

Marked New Testament

Evangelism Explosion

Power Band

Other _____

Would you be willing to accept "Deacon of the Day" assignments as outlined in the Deacon Handbook?

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

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, choir, outreach, etc.)

