



# *Training for Servanthood*

*A Basic Training Guide for  
Baptist Deacons*

*Prepared and Compiled  
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# INTRODUCTION

## BAILEY'S NOTES TO YOU

This material is designed primarily for new deacons. Experienced deacons who have served with little or no training, may also find the material to be instructive.

Many deacons from churches in Virginia have helped me to continually update the content and application of this material. They have shared ideas with me in Eagle Eyrie conferences, associational training conferences, and church retreats.

Training for Servanthood is prepared to give a general overview of the total concept of the deacon ministry as it relates to Southern Baptist churches.

You can study the material in five ways:

1. Use it for self-study; be sure to do additional reading from the reference books listed throughout the material
2. Use it in a special deacon training meeting
3. Use it on deacon retreats along with the reference books listed, or with a certified deacon trainer
4. Use it in associational training conferences
5. Use it in state conference workshops at Eagle Eyrie

Please read the "Explanation Notes" at the beginning of each new section. They help to explain the material that follows.

My experience with deacons is varied. I was profoundly influenced by my father, John Chase Bailey. He was a committed Christian and a respected deacon until he went to be with the Lord. I am indebted to all the deacons who worked with me in student pastorates and full-time pastorates. From 1974 through 1989 I served as Executive Director of the Roanoke Valley Baptist Association. I am a Certified Deacon Trainer for Virginia Baptist deacons. I am most appreciative for all the deacons I have taught and from whom I have learned much about deacon ministry.

I am most appreciative of Mrs. Reva S. Hicks, my former Administrative Secretary, for her competent skills in preparing the 1989 manuscript. Special thanks go to my wife, Frances, a deacon herself, who has helped review the material. I also appreciate very much the secretarial work of my daughter, Patty Spragg, in preparing the first revised manuscript. Thanks also to Judy Koger, my friend, for help with the layout and structure of the material. This will be my final update. Thanks to Alice Rusher for preparing this update.

I hope this material will help you become the kind of ministering deacon you want to be. The Lord asks from each one of us OUR BEST!

God bless you.  
RCB/plb

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# ***I. IDENTIFYING THE DEACON***

## **A. DEACON INFORMATION FORM**

The deacon information form can be filled out by each new deacon. It has several interesting purposes:

1. The information, along with a family picture, can be placed on a main bulletin board in the church so that everyone can come by and get better acquainted with each new deacon.
2. The information, at least in part, may be published in the church newsletter and/or the Sunday bulletin. Again, this helps the congregation get better acquainted with the new deacon.
3. The new deacon's hobbies may help form new friendships with other church members who have the same hobbies.
4. The new deacon's ideas about the future of the church may help stimulate the church to new levels of spiritual growth and mission ministries.



**SAMPLE**

**DEACON INFORMATION FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES OF CHILDREN AND AGES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FORMAL EDUCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF WORK: \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES OTHER THAN DEACON: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

HOBBIES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SOME IDEAS YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR CHURCH: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **B. DEACON TRAINING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

These incomplete statements may be used either personally for meditation, or in a deacon group session for audible completion.

1. The first deacon I remember is...
2. The deacon who has influenced me the most is...
3. When I was asked to be a deacon, I felt...
4. The main Christian characteristics a deacon should have are...
5. The most important work a deacon does is...
6. My dream for the deacons of our church is...
7. The one thing I need to work on in my spiritual life to make me a better deacon is...

## **II. DEVELOPMENTS IN DEACON MINISTRY**

### **Explanation Notes:**

- \* Carefully study the scriptures on the spiritual qualifications of deacons. Each qualification listed is an example of others that can be found in the scripture relating to a particular area of our spiritual growth.

For example, I Timothy 3:8 deals with the problem of drinking wine. Paul could just as well have used the problem of gluttony, which is very much with us today. Both problems raise the question of how temperate you are as a deacon. How much self-control do you have?

- \* Each church may use the scriptural qualifications as a study guide in the selection of its deacons.
- \* The suggested duties of a deacon in Section B will vary from church to church. Each church may approve its own list of duties for deacons.

### **A. SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS INTERPRETED**

I Timothy 3:8-13

1. The qualifications listed are similar to those listed for the pastor in I Timothy 3:1-7. The standard of both character and conduct of a deacon is high and thorough. Yet no mention is made of the nature of the office nor is there a single duty suggested.
2. Deacons in the early churches of the New Testament period were selected on the basis of these Christian qualifications:
  - a. **SERIOUS PURPOSE** — "Likewise must the deacons be grave." (KJV/3:8) or, "Deacons, too, must be serious." (Williams/3:8) *Semnos* (grave) comes from the root word meaning "to reverence" or "to worship." Persons in the presence of a deacon should feel reverence for spiritual matters. This seriousness of purpose would definitely include both optimism and humor.
  - b. **HONEST IN SPEECH** — "Not double-tongued" (KJV/3:8) or, "sincere in their talk" (Williams/3:8) "Double-tongued" means saying one thing to one person and something else to another. A deacon should thus be in control of their tongue. They should not deceive anyone. They should speak out for righteous causes. They also have the responsibility for being slow to speak angrily. Their word must be honest. Gossip, talebearing, idle talking, or slander are not a part of a deacon's nature.

- c. TEMPERATE IN LIVING - "Not given to much wine" (KJV 3:8) or, "not dicted to strong drink." (Williams/3:8) The deacon should be free from any intemperance that would injure him/her and the family and make ineffective his/her Christian witness in a non-Christian world devoted to a variety of willful excesses in personal living.
- d. STEWARD OF POSSESSIONS - "Not greedy of filthy lucre" (KJV/3:8) or, "not addicted to dishonest gain." (Williams/3:8) While deacons believe that material possessions are not evil or filthy, They are not controlled by a greedy obsession to obtain all the material possessions they can. They will have a caring concern for the needs of others; and they will desire to share material possessions with others.
- e. SPIRITUAL INTEGRITY - "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." (KJV/3:9) or, "they must continue to hold the open secret of faith with a clear conscience." (Williams/3:9) This means deacons should believe sound doctrine, and should hold firm to their convictions. Their spiritual integrity is above reproach.
- f. PROVED SPIRITUAL MATURITY - "Let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." (KJV/3:10) or, "They too should first be tested till approved, and then, if they are found above reproach they should serve as deacons." (Williams/3:10) This means that they should demonstrate these spiritual qualifications before being elected. Their daily attitudes, speech, and conduct should be observed for an appropriate period by fellow Christians. "Blameless" means that no one could level a charge of wrong doing against them. Only after they have thus been tested and proved true should they be elected.
- g. WOMEN - "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." (KJV/3:11) or, "The deaconesses too (acting as official servants) must be serious, not gossips; they must be temperate and perfectly trustworthy." (Williams/3:11) The Greek word, "gune," means "a woman." When it is used in reference to a marriage relationship, it is translated, "a wife." Here in verse 3:11 it should be translated "women." Many biblical scholars hold to this translation for these reasons:
  1. The words "even so" are the translation of hosautos, which is used in the Greek to introduce a second or third in a series. Here the series is of church officials: pastor, deacons, deaconesses.
  2. There is no possessive pronoun in the Greek, which would be necessary if the women were the wives of deacons.
  3. The four qualifications (grave, not slanderers, sober, and faithful) with some variations, correspond to the first four required of deacons.
  4. This section deals wholly with church officials. This passage



(3:11) refers to women who held the office of deaconesses in the church, as Phoebe did (Romans 16:1).

5. Other biblical scholars claim the word should be translated "wives" for these reasons:
  - (a) If "deaconesses" was intended, a more specific word would have been used.
  - (b) The list of qualifications is too brief to refer to a category of officials.
  - (c) Women church officials are treated at length in 5:9-16.
  - (d) The sequence of thought is less awkward if "wives" rather than "deaconesses" is meant.
  - (e) Deacons' wives would often accompany their husbands in visitation and thus would also need to possess certain important qualifications.
6. If in doubt, consider carefully the spirit and the actions of Jesus, our living Lord, concerning women in relation to HIS concept of the church and its leaders from the time He began His ministry until His ascension. He raised the worth and role of women to a level God has always intended, but which we as church members have only begun to understand.
- h. The word GRAVE is the same word used in 3:8. The word SLANDERERS means to lead across, lead along, disgrace, accuse, defame. SOBER is the same word used in connection with a pastor in 3:2. It means to be calm, dispassionate, circumspect (attentive to all circumstances or consequences). The word FAITHFUL is used in the sense of fidelity, of being true to the trust placed by others.
- i. CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE - "Let the deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children, and their own houses well." (KJV/3:12) or, "A deacon, too, must have only one wife, and manage his children and household well." (Williams/3:12) Dr. William E. Hull interprets this to mean at least three things:

First, it demands that a deacon maintain a healthy view of the home—seeing marriage as a calling within the will of God and seeing children as a stewardship responsibility given by God.

Second, the deacon is to be a model of faithful devotion to one wife; any type of immoral or extramarital relationship is repudiated.

Third, it reminds the deacon of his commitment to the sanctity of the marriage bond which is to continue "so long as you both shall live." The scripture is silent about a single man or woman serving as a deacon. Therefore, we assume that they, too, are qualified on this point if they have this Christian understanding of family life.
3. We can only assume that the qualifications of the "seven" as found in Acts 6:1-6 may also be applied to deacons specifically referred to in I Timothy 3. The "seven" are never called deacons. A Southern Baptist authority wrote: "Their duties arose out of an emergency situation. There is no indication that they were considered (church) officers or that their role was continued after the emergency."

4. Because of our traditional assumption, however, these scriptural qualifications are briefly explained.
  - a. HONEST - This means that the consensus of opinion about the deacon is good, both within the church and within the community.
  - b. FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - The word "full" means "covered in every part, thoroughly permeated with, complete, lacking nothing" concerning God's Holy Spirit. The deacons are completely dedicated to the presence and guidance of God's Spirit in their personal life and in their daily work.
  - c. FULL OF WISDOM - The word "wisdom" means the deacon, because of a relationship to God's Spirit, knows how to both choose and act wisely in all matters. Common sense is certainly a part of the meaning.
  - d. FULL OF FAITH - This is not specifically stated as a requirement, but is inferred from the selection of Stephen. It means the deacon should be clear in their understanding of their own faith, and they should be strong first in its proclamation, and then, if need be, strong in its defense as they carry out their responsibilities.

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#### REFERENCES:

Howard B. Foshee, The Ministry of the Deacon. (Nashville, Convention Press, 1968). Robert E. Naylor, The Baptist Deacon. (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1955).

King James Version, The Holy Bible. Clyde V. Hickerson, "The New Testament Concept of Deacons and Present Practices." The Religious Herald. March 24, 1960, pp4-5, 12-13.

W. O. Carver, "Introduction," p. 4, What Is The Church:. Editor, Duke K. McCall. (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1958).

Charles B. Williams, The New Testament. (Chicago, Moody Press, 1950). Fred D. Gealy, exegesis, I Timothy, pp, 417-418, The Interpreter's Bible. Volume 11, George A. Buttrick, Editor, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1955).

## **B. CHURCH EXPECTATIONS OF DEACONS SUGGESTED**

THIS MAY BE USED AS A GUIDE BY THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN SELECTING DEACONS.

1. The term "expectations" is used to describe a set of traits, characteristics, and duties which the church desires of persons serving in the capacity of deacon.
2. The purposes of such a set of Expectations of Deacons are:
  - a. To help deacons rediscover the office of deacon and to make new commitments to the purpose of God
  - b. To challenge deacons to grow in grace as they serve, accepting the "expectations" as goals and challenges, rather than excuses, to decline the office because they cannot fulfill all that is expected of them
  - c. To help the church and each member understand more fully the role of the deacons as the spiritual leaders, servants, and pastoral assistants
  - d. To provide a group of reminders for members to use when selecting new deacons
3. The word "expectations" is used in the overall listing since this word refers to "what is looked for or expected." It is the responsibility of the church to develop its own list of expectations or duties for deacons. It is felt, however, that deacons should meet spiritual requirements. Therefore, the title of the first portion of the listing includes the word "qualifications."
  - a. Some Suggested Expectations of Deacons That the Church May Adopt.
    - (1) Attends Sunday School and all worship services regularly
    - (2) Attends and participates in regular and special church business meetings, if at all possible
    - (3) Attends and participates in regular monthly deacons' meetings and in special meetings when needed
    - (4) Assumes responsibilities necessary to serve as a deacon officer or deacon committee member
    - (5) Serves communion on first Sunday of each month and for special services
    - (6) Takes church door assignments for speaking to members and visitors after each Sunday morning service
    - (7) Assists the pastor in helping conduct worship services
    - (8) Assists the pastor in arranging for pulpit supplies, and in obtaining leadership for revival meetings and special services
    - (9) Takes leadership assignments to conduct a regular worship service or prayer service, as requested by the pastor
    - (10) Serves as advisor to the church staff, as needed
    - (11) Takes individual or team assignments in visiting church families
    - (12) Takes team assignments in visiting prospects
    - (13) Takes individual assignments in hospital visiting

- (14) Serves as advisor to church organizational leaders or church committees, as requested
  - (15) Leads the church in handling spiritual needs in the community at large
  - (16) Makes recommendations to the church in keeping with their responsibilities
  - (17) Serves as counselor and reconciler in reference to all problems brought to their attention regarding individuals, families, or the church
- b. An analysis of the list of qualifications and duties reveals no traits or characteristics which could not be expected of any faithful Christian and church member. However, the deacon should stand out as an example of one who displays them to a greater degree in quantity and quality.
  - c. It is difficult to know, and perhaps impossible to learn, whether a deacon or candidate meets certain conditions. Different interpretations can be attached to the qualifications or duties. The listing is not designed to be specific and all-inclusive, but is established to serve as a general guide for comparison and improvement.

## C. DEACON DEVELOPMENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

### Explanation Notes:

- \* "History repeats itself," we say. Or perhaps it is more nearly the truth by saying, "We have a strong tendency to make history repeat itself!" This is certainly more accurate when we study the history of the role of deacons.
- \* All the key roles deacons have had in church history seem to go in cycles. The roles developed in the 2nd through the 5th century have both flourished and declined repeatedly. Now in our time they seem to be coming around in full cycle to flourish again.
- \* The roles that Southern Baptists emphasize today are certainly not new. We have simply put our own stamp of identity on each role.

### 1. The 2nd Through 5th Centuries:

- a. Deacons were responsible for the following areas of pastoral work:
  - (1) Charity
  - (2) Administration
  - (3) Education
  - (4) Worship
- b. Deacon family ministry was begun in the 3rd century,
- c. "Subdeacons" were used as deacon assistants during A.D. 236-250.
- d. Ordination of deacons began in the 3rd century,
- e. Deaconesses were used beginning in the 3rd century; they were probably not ordained until the 4th century.



**2. The Middle Ages: (A.D. 500-1500)**

- a. The role of deacons experienced a serious decline because they were on the bottom rung, moving up the ladder to becoming a priest:
  - (1) In the Eastern Church
  - (2) In the Western Church
- b. The role of deaconess experienced a serious decline in all churches because women were not allowed to become priests.

**3. The Reformation Period: (16th Century)**

- a. The Reformers saw the need to return to New Testament patterns for deacons.
- b. The Continental Anabaptists: the role of deacon was reaffirmed as very important to the church.
- c. The English Separatists: the charity role for deacons was re-emphasized; the role of women deacons was revitalized.

**4. England and Early America: Several important principles emerged during these years:**

- a. Deacons received their authority from God, the New Testament, and the local church.
- b. The authority given to deacons was for positive and practical purposes.
- c. Deacons are responsible to their church.
- d. The role of deacons as caretakers of the temporal and secular affairs of the church began to assume a priority it had not had before.

**5. The 19th Century: (Southern Baptists)**

- a. Deacon duties were redefined in terms of helping ministries.
- b. Rotation of deacons was begun.
- c. "Business" affairs of the church were a key role for deacons in many churches.
- d. "Executive Board" was often used to refer to deacons.
- e. Conflict was strong on the acceptability of deaconesses.

**6. The 20th Century: (Southern Baptists)**

- a. There is considerable reaction to deacons being too closely aligned with church business.
- b. Cautions were expressed concerning the misuse of authority by deacons.
- c. Deacons have spiritual duties to perform other than those related to church business and the ordinances.
- d. The concept of deacons being servants of the church re-emerged in 1950.
- e. Pastoral ministries of the deacon were re-emphasized in 1968.
- f. Deacon family ministry plan was re-emphasized in 1972.
- g. Spiritual maturity of the deacon as a church leader was given new emphasis in 1980.
- h. Women serving as deacons on the same level as men is a current trend.

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REFERENCE:

Charles W. Deweese, The Emerging Role of Deacons. (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1979).

### ***III. AREAS OF DEACON MINISTRY***

#### **Explanation Notes:**

- \* Three main areas of deacon ministry are outlined. There are many practical ways deacon groups can implement each one of these generalized statements.
- \* Know your people, and new ways to minister to their needs will continuously surface. Be Spirit-led initiators of good ideas to strengthen the church and minister to all people.

#### **A. Proclaim the Gospel to All People**

1. Better witnessing to the unsaved
2. More effective worship services
3. Leading in church and community evangelistic revivals/crusades

#### **B. Lead the Church in Accomplishing Its Mission**

1. Lead the church to understand its mission
2. Involve members and families in Bible study
3. Build and maintain the fellowship of the church
4. Involve members in ministering to one another
5. Lead members to relate to the community

#### **C. Care for People in the Church and in the Community**

1. Provide care for every resident member and family
2. Visit active and inactive members
3. Help families relate to community agencies that can help them

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REFERENCE: Charles F. Treadway, Deacon Chairman Planning Guide. Editor, Henry Webb (Nashville, Convention Press, 1978) p. 25.

## IV. ORGANIZATION FOR DEACON MINISTRY

### Explanation Notes:

- \* The concept of the Deacon Family Ministry Plan is undergoing at least four major changes:
- \* In past years, deacons have understood the plan to be a visitation ministry to church families. More recently, the plan is best understood as a caring ministry to church modern-day family units of one person or more. It includes home visitation but involves caring for each family member wherever his/her need may be expressed. The deacon may minister in the hospital, at a ball game, in the grocery store, in a church hallway, etc.
- \* Some churches are experimenting with the idea of implementing the Deacon Family Ministry Plan through the Sunday School. If your church is interested in this approach, contact the proper consultant at the Virginia Baptist Resource Center, Richmond, Virginia, for more information.
- \* If the deacon-family unit ratio is too large to manage well, note the suggestions in Number 17 of the Twenty Steps to Conducting the DFMP. Dedicated couples are being enlisted to help the deacon and his/her spouse.
- \* With more women now serving as deacons, and also since some married couples now serve together, different ways of assigning family units have become necessary.
- \* More recently some churches are using a Deacon Team Ministry Plan. It is based on the congregaton's needs and the interests and abilities of each deacon. See item B., which is the next section.

### A. The Deacon Family Ministry Plan

A definition of the plan: "It is a systematic plan for reaching every family unit in the church through personal ministry."

#### 1. **Benefits of the plan:**

- a. The entire church is strengthened.
- b. Families will be reminded that the church really cares for them.
- c. Trust in the deacons will grow
- d. Families will be able to discuss their problems with the deacon and benefit from his ministry.
- e. Programs of the church will be interpreted more clearly.
- f. Fellowship of the church is strengthened.
- g. It will lighten the load of the pastor and staff.



h. Deacons will discover the real meaning of the servant role.

**2. Organization of the plan:**

- a. Deacon-family ratio
- b. Basis of assignment
- c. Date of assignments
- d. Length of assignments
- e. Responsibility for assignments
- f. Alternate plans:
  - By Sunday School classes
  - By Deacon committees

**3. Responsibilities for the plan:**

- a. Deacon Chairman
- b. Deacon Secretary
- c. Associate Deacon Chairman
- d. Individual Deacons
- e. Other Deacon Leaders

**4. Projects of the plan:**

- a. Proclamation projects
  - (1) Sermon series discussion
  - (2) Support church revivals
  - (3) Personal witnessing visits
- b. Care projects
  - (1) Listening to needs
  - (2) Using books in ministry
  - (3) Practicing referral
- c. Fellowship projects
  - (1) Celebrating with new Christians
  - (2) Family retreat

- (3) Recognition of deacons and families
- d. Community relations projects
  - (1) Influencing community decisions
  - (2) Recognizing community leaders
  - (3) Community influence inventory
- e. Keeping records in the plan:
  - (1) Deacon family information form
  - (2) Deacon family ministry calendar
  - (3) Deacon ministry referral form
  - (4) Deacon ministry prayer list
  - (5) Deacon family ministry monthly report

## **5. Twenty Steps to Conducting the Deacon Family Ministry Plan**

1. Lead deacons to discuss and pray about beginning DFMP. Secure copies of program help, "The Deacon Family Ministry Plan." They may be ordered on undated literature order form from Lifeway.
2. After prayer and discussion, (1) lead deacons to vote to implement the plan, and (2) present the plan as a recommendation to the church congregation for their final approval.
3. Divide families of the church into groups of 10 to 15 families and assign a group to each deacon.
4. Secure copies of The Deacon Family Ministry Plan Resource Book, one for each deacon assigned a group of families.
5. Fill out family information form for each family and the twelve calendar forms. Use available information and add reference notes as the plan is conducted.
6. Lead deacons to read and discuss directions on how to use The Deacon Family Ministry Plan Resource Book, provided in each book.
7. Inform the church about the family ministry plan and how it will be conducted.
  - a. Show the video, "The Deacon Family Ministry Plan," to the entire church and give opportunity for discussion. Lead church to

- approve the plan and be committed to supporting deacons in conducting it.
- b. Provide enough copies of all groups and deacons assigned to them for each family to have a copy of all of the groups and deacons to whom assigned.
  - c. Place one or more copies of family groups in the church office and post a copy on each bulletin board.
  - d. Publish several groups in church bulletin over a period of weeks. List families for whom addresses and other information are needed, encouraging church members to share information they may have.
  - e. Complete information on each family in the books and publicize the date the plan will go into operation. (The best time to begin operating the plan is at the beginning of the church year, but may be started at any time.)
8. Lead deacons to write a letter to each family assigned to them prior to beginning operation of the plan. (A suggested letter may be found on page 87 of the book, The Ministry of the Deacon, by Howard Foshee. Another letter to new families added to the membership of the church and assigned to the deacons throughout the year is on page 88 of the same book.)
  9. Prepare a "New Member's Kit" (if one has not already been prepared) to be given by deacons to new members and families. Suggestions for the kit may be found on page 86 of The Ministry of the Deacon.
  10. Lead the deacons to keep a record of ministry actions for each family on the back of each family information form.
  11. Insist that each deacon turn in a report of ministry actions each month, using the Deacon Family Ministry Monthly Report, Form D-35. (Twelve of these forms are in each Resource Book.) If a deacon does not perform ministry actions, he should still turn in a form with the word "None" written across it, for this is a report. The deacon secretary, or another deacon assigned the responsibility, should compile the reports each month and at the end of the year.
  12. Allow time in each deacons' meeting for a discussion of the reports and for prayer about family needs.
  13. Evaluate the progress of the family ministry plan at least quarterly in the deacons' meetings. Provide for adjustments and improvements in the family groupings.
  14. Include in the deacons' report to the church information about the progress of the plan and suggestions as to how all the members may give their support.

15. Lead the church to elect more deacons as the number of groups increases. The ideal ratio is one deacon for every ten families in the church.
16. As the end of the year nears, revise and update each book, and have all the books ready to be reassigned to different deacons for use in the new year. (Some churches may prefer to make assignments of books for more than one year.)
17. Involve the spouse of deacons in working alongside them in ministering to the families in their groups. Some churches encourage each deacon to enlist a deacon in reserve or a capable layperson to serve as a yoke-fellow to work with the deacon in ministering to his/her families. A more recent method is to enlist two couples living in each deacon's assigned area to help the deacon in this ministry.
18. Provide training opportunities for deacons in developing their skills in ministering.
19. Lead church members to become aware of needs of fellow members and to become involved in ministering to each other.
20. Undergird all efforts to minister with prayer and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: Current trends requiring changes in administering the plan

- (1) More women are being elected as deacons than we have had in the past, especially in Virginia. (See my survey report)
- (2) Married couples often are elected to serve at the same time.
- (3) Tight schedules at work, at home, at school for many parents, at church, and at civic community organizations for every active and able family member affects the time that many deacons can devote to DFMP.
- (4) Many deacon couples are both employed outside the home, and each of them finds it very difficult to minister to the traditional number of assigned family units.
- (5) The definition of a modern-day family unit has drastically changed the way a unit is assigned.
- (6) Some churches are now using elders as well as deacons. (See my survey report)

These are the most obvious trends. Research on these trends is in order. Experimentation needs to be done by deacon fellowships to effectively deal with much-needed changes in the DFMP.

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REFERENCES: The Deacon Family Ministry Plan Revised (Nashville, The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1972. Revised 1977). The Deacon Family Ministry Plan Resource Book.



## **B. The Team Ministry Plan**

A definition of the plan: It is a systematic plan for ministering to individual or group needs in the church through a volunteer caring ministry.

### **1. A List of Possible Teams:**

- Newcomers Visitation
- New Member Orientation
- Hospital Caregiving
- Nursing Home/Shut-ins or Homebound
- Benevolence and Crisis or Casseroles
- Widows and Widowers Transportation
- Small Repairs or Small Jobs or Helping Hands
- Prospect Visitation/Witnessing or Evangelism
- Neighborhood Canvassing/By Phone on In Person
- Inactive Member Recovery
- Church Ordinance
- Deacon emeritus
- Celebration
- Prayer
- Teacher Equipping
- Bereavement
- Home Health Care
- Crisis Intervention
- Pastoral (to retired Ministers/Missionaries)
- Jail Ministry
- Public Relations/Church Greeters and Guides
- Staff Support
- Age Groups
- Member Visitation or Telecare (By Phone each quarter)
- E-mail Communication
- Add Your Own

\*Note: Some churches use only deacon ministry teams. Church committees are disbanded. Other churches use a combination of deacon ministry teams and church committees. Do what is best for your church.

### **2. Composition of the Ministry Teams:**

- a. Persons on each team need to have the gifts necessary to meet the specific need.
- b. Special tests to help each member discover one's spiritual gifts are suggested.
- c. Deacons may compose the membership of the team or organize as in "d".
- d. A deacon will serve as team leader while other members of the team are volunteers from the congregation. (Suggestion: after a special worship service, let the congregation go to a particular table and sign up to serve on a specific ministry team that will utilize their gifts. Some churches do this without using the nominating committee.) Usually when a church member volunteers, they are more committed to do the work.

- e. Allow a team member to change to another team if they feel led of the Lord to serve another way.

**3. Duties of the team leader:**

- a. Set a good example
- b. Lead the team in writing out the team goal and responsibilities
- c. Follow up on team member assignments
- d. Train the team as needed
- e. Report to the deacons in their meetings

**4. Duties of the team members:**

- a. Take training when it is offered.
- b. Work with team leader to write out the team goal and responsibilities (The goal should answer this question: "How will this team make a difference in our church?")
- c. Take assignments and follow through on meeting the specific need of the individual or a group.
- d. Make a report to the team leader.
- e. Make suggestions to the team leader of how to improve the team's work
- f. Change to another team as you feel the need to do it.
- g. Disband when the team is no longer needed by the congregation.

**5. Disadvantages of the Deacon Team Plan:**

- a. All families in the church will not have a specific deacon to minister to them,
- b. Finding deacon team leaders who are highly motivated
- c. Provides a place for some deacons to "hide" from ministry.
- d. There may be a tendency to have too many teams causing some of them to lose interest when their team does not have much to do.

**6. Advantages of the Deacon Team Plan:**

- a. Every member of the church family, over time, will receive a need ministry from one or more teams.
- b. The plan can include volunteers from the church family as team members instead of only deacons being used.
- c. The plan gives both deacons and other church members opportunities to use their spiritual gifts and abilities in a meaningful ministry to others.
- d. Some teams can be continued from year to year, while others can be dropped or added as needs change.
- e. The plan provides the opportunity for high motivation both of the deacon and volunteers to do a good job because they actually want to provide a ministry that really will help others in their faith journey. The team has a sense of "divine call" to serve.
- f. The Team Plan provides the Pastor with a wider scoped support system to help meet the needs of the church and community.

NOTE: A good number of churches have provided information on their ministry plan. I greatly appreciate their assistance.

## C. Methods of Selecting Deacons

### Explanation Notes:

- \* Use a method that will not embarrass anyone who may be nominated, such as nominating two persons for each vacancy.
- \* Involve the congregation as much as possible.
- \* Encourage your minister to preach on the biblical qualifications for deacons.
- \* Encourage the congregation to remember that electing deacons is not a popularity contest.
- \* Do not hesitate to find out how other Baptist churches elect their deacons; share ideas on the best methods.

This outline includes some basic methods of selecting deacons. There are many variations of these methods being used.

#### 1. Nomination by Deacons:

- a. Deacons discuss need for more deacons.
- b. Deacons make nominations to the church.
- c. There are advantages and disadvantages.

#### 2. Nomination by Pastor:

- a. The pastor needs to be involved in deacon selection.
- b. There are advantages and disadvantages.

#### 3. The Nominating Committee:

- a. The committee should have good knowledge of those best qualified to serve.
- b. The committee presents to the congregation only as many names as are needed for election.
- c. There are advantages and disadvantages.

#### 4. Nomination by the Congregation:

- a. The congregation nominates by ballot the number of deacons needed.

- b. A committee is assigned to visit each person receiving the most ballot nominations.
- c. Those willing to serve are officially elected by the congregation.
- d. There are advantages and disadvantages.

**D. Ordination Service for Deacons**

**Explanation Notes:**

- \* One change is taking place in deacon ordination services. More churches are encouraging other members of the congregation to participate in the "laying on of hands" after all ordained persons have shared with each candidate.
- \* You will notice that in Item "j" emphasis is given to putting the deacon ordination certificate in a frame, ready for hanging. That is a good gesture for the church and a meaningful one for a new deacon.
  - 1. This event should be a genuine worship experience for all participants.
  - 2. The entire service should be carefully planned.
  - 3. It is suggested that these elements may be included in the service:
    - a. Appropriate musical selections: hymns, choir selections, etc.
    - b. Appropriate scriptures and prayers
    - c. Selected responsive reading
    - d. Charge to the deacons
    - e. Charge to the church
    - f. Introduction of each candidate
    - g. Testimony by each candidate
    - h. Sermon
    - i. Laying on of hands
      - (1) By all ordained persons present
      - (2) By all others in the congregation
    - j. Framed certificate presented to each new deacon



4. The pastor and/or the chairman of deacons should inform each candidate what to expect and what he/she is to do during the ordination service.

## **E. Duties of Deacon Officers**

### **Explanation Notes:**

- \* The number of deacon officers should be determined by the need of your size church. Elect only those officers that are needed. Combine some duties, if necessary.
- \* Deacon training is essential. A separate officer is needed for this, or another officer needs to be assigned this important responsibility.

### **1. Duties of the Chairman:**

The duties will include the following, regardless of the size of the church or the number of deacons:

- a. Lead the deacons in planning, conducting, and evaluating all of their work.
- b. Plan, conduct, and evaluate deacons' meetings.
- c. Provide deacons with adequate training and resources for their work.
- d. Guide deacons in organizing and conducting a ministry to families in the church.
- e. Serve as a member of the church council. Interpret deacon work to the council and provide deacons with information about the total work of the church.
- f. Participate in all deacon work, including ministering to a group of families in the deacon family ministry program.
- g. Report regularly to the church on the work of the deacons.
- h. Give guidance to the pastoral ministries of the church when it is without a pastor.

### **2. Duties of the Associate Chairman: (as needed)**

- a. Serve as moderator for deacons' meetings in the absence of the chairman.
- b. Assist the chairman in fulfilling his/her responsibilities as assigned.
- c. Participate in all deacon work, including ministering to a group of families in the deacon family ministry program.

**3. Duties of the Secretary:**

- a. Keep accurate minutes and records of deacon work and prepare deacon ministry reports.
- b. Prepare and revise notebooks or resource books for deacons' use in family ministry.
- c. Compile and submit to the deacon chairman monthly reports of deacons' family ministry actions.
- d. Participate in all deacon work, including ministering to a group of families in the deacon family ministry program.
- e. Order and maintain a supply of deacon ministry materials for deacons to use in their work.

**4. Duties of the Family Ministry Associate: (as needed)**

- a. Organize family ministry groups and coordinate the Deacon Family Ministry Plan.
- b. Assist the chairman in fulfilling the responsibilities for deacon ministry.
- c. Participate in all deacon work, including ministering to a group of families in the deacon family ministry program.
- d. Keep the church aware of deacons' ministry to families.

**5. Duties of the Proclamation Leader or Committee:**

- a. Discover opportunities for deacons to witness and preach.
- b. Lead in planning and implementing witnessing and preaching activities.
- c. Lead in planning and implementing deacon involvement in revival meetings.
- d. Enlist deacons to participate in witnessing and preaching activities.
- e. Secure resources for witnessing and preaching activities.
- f. Report regularly on work to the deacon body.

**6. Duties of the Care Leader or Committee:**

- a. Discover opportunities for providing care for families and for individuals.
- b. Lead deacons in providing care for individuals and families in times of crisis.
- c. Lead deacons to give counsel to individuals and families with specific problems.
- d. Lead deacons to provide vocational guidance.
- e. Lead deacons to provide benevolent care for individuals and families in need.
- f. Secure resources for family care activities.
- g. Report regularly on work to the deacon body.

**7. Duties of the Fellowship Leader or Committee:**

- a. Discover opportunities for improving church fellowship.
- b. Lead in planning and implementing activities for improving communication among church members.
- c. Lead in planning and implementing activities to increase church members' concern for discipline.
- d. Enlist deacons to participate in activities to improve church fellowship.
- e. Secure resources for fellowship improvement activities.
- f. Report regularly on work to the deacon body.

**8. Duties of the Community Relations Leader or Committee:**

- a. Discover opportunities for strengthening church and community relationship.
- b. Lead deacons and other church leaders to study community needs.
- c. Lead in planning and implementing deacon involvement in moral action in the community.
- d. Lead in planning and implementing deacon involvement in civic responsibilities.

- e. Lead in planning and implementing deacon activities to improve church and community relations.
- f. Enlist deacons to participate in community relations activities.
- g. Secure resources for community relations activities.
- h. Report regularly on work to the deacon body.

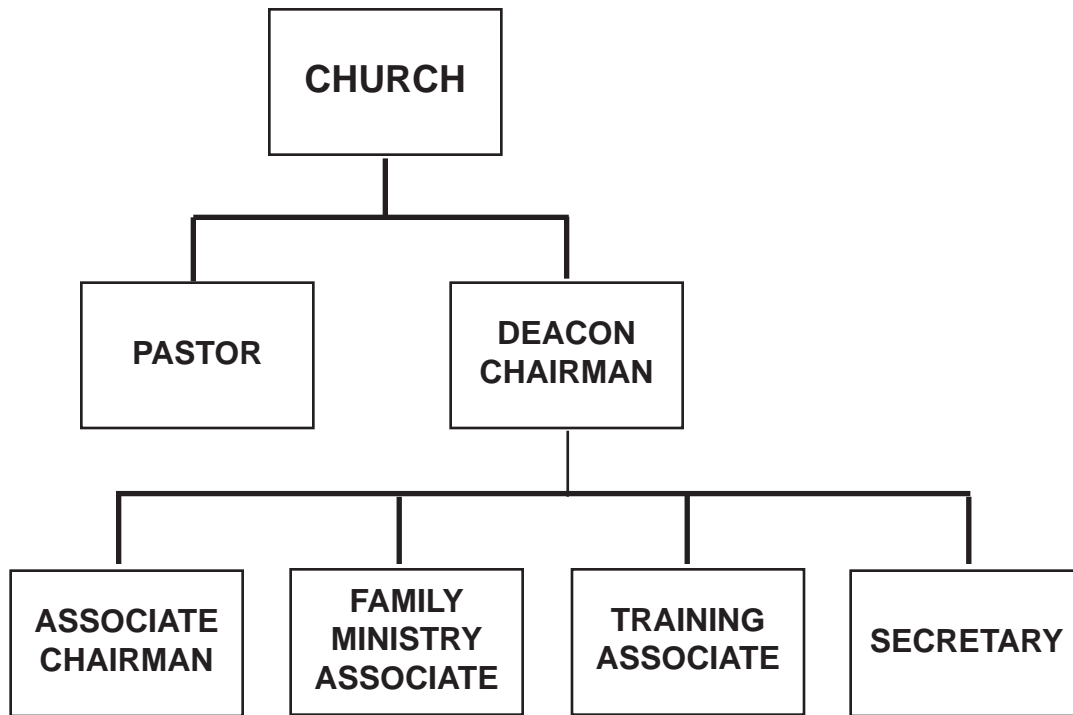
**9. Duties of the Training Associate: (as needed)**

- a. Work with the Discipleship Training Director in providing training opportunities in deacon ministry for all church members.
- b. Provide training events and opportunities for training in deacon ministry for deacons, pastor, and staff members and their spouses. These include group and individual study; church retreats; associational, state, and national deacon ministry conferences.
- c. Keep record of deacon ministry training.
- d. Participate in all deacon work, including ministering to a group of families in the deacon family ministry program.

In some churches, the work of the associate chairman and the family ministry associate may be combined. In others, the associate chairman may also be in charge of deacon ministry training. The best organizational structure for deacons in any church is the one that works most effectively.

If the church has a large group of deacons in service, the officers shown in the diagram on the following page may be needed. These leaders may serve on a continuing basis or only temporarily when there is need for added emphasis and activities in proclaiming the gospel, ministering to church families, improving church fellowship, and relating to and influencing community affairs. Each of the four leaders will be sensitive to needs in his assigned area and give guidance in planning and implementing appropriate activities. In churches where deacons are conducting the Deacon Family Ministry Plan, the four leaders can give support and encouragement to deacons as they minister to their groups of families.

F. Diagram of Deacon Organization



This is a sample deacon organization pattern. You design the pattern that best fits your size church and the number of deacon officers needed.



## **G. Deacon Meeting Agenda**

### **Explanation Notes:**

\* If the deacons' meeting agenda looks radically different, it is because it is based on the deacons being servant ministers and not a board of managers for their church. When the concept of what deacons do is changed, so does the agenda change.

\* The time schedule is flexible; however, each meeting usually should last long enough to include adequate time for all of the eight items.

\* Item No. 3 in the agenda may be done in small groups, especially if the deacon fellowship is large in number. This is now being used by some large churches.

1. Devotion, prayer requests, prayers (5-8 minutes)
2. Reading and approval of minutes (5 minutes)
3. Sharing Family Ministry or Team Ministry reports (25-30 minutes)
  - a. Hear reports
  - b. Discuss special needs, concerns
  - c. Pray for church members and families and special concerns
4. Training period - See section on training for suggested topics (25-30 minutes)
5. Discussion period - Items listed in priority order (15-20 minutes)
6. Pastor's period - Matters of special interest and concern to deacons (5-10 minutes)
7. Information period - Reports from church staff, church council, and other leaders about areas of church life; for information only, not for review or action (8-15 minutes)
8. Prayer

Total Time: One and one-half to two hours

## **H. A STUDY OF WOMEN DEACONS AND CHURCH ELDERS**

This research survey is limited to present practices of women deacons and elders serving in churches related to the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

While serving more than twenty-five years as a deacon trainer, I have made three research studies on women deacons serving here in our state. In 1984, my study revealed that 150 churches had women deacons. Another 25 churches were committed to electing women deacons even though, due to rotation, none were serving at the time of the survey. Again, in 1990, there were 242 churches with active women deacons. At least 38 additional churches were committed to electing women deacons. Finally, the 1999 study revealed 363 churches reported having women deacons. Another 37 churches were committed to electing woman deacons. Churches having women deacons are located in rural, suburban, city and innercity geographical locations. The membership size of these churches range from some of our smaller churches to some of our largest.

The churches having women deacons are located in 38 district associations and all 6 Kingdom Advance Field Strategy Regions. Only 5 associations have not had any churches to ever elect women deacons.

To elect or not elect women deacons to serve is exclusively a local church decision. This is in accord with Baptist belief in the autonomy of the local church.

Basic scriptures used by churches concerning women deacons are; I Timothy 3:8-13 (especially verse 11) and Romans 16:1. Biblical scholars have provided us with differing interpretations of these and other scriptures used in a study of women deacons. For additional information I refer you to your personal library, your church library, college, university, or seminary libraries, and the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. These resources also apply to more study on elders.

The 1999 research also revealed some churches are now using elders. In some cases elders are used exclusively. In other cases deacons are used in conjunction with elders. Currently, there are 13 churches with elders. These churches are located in 8 of the 43 district associations. At least 3 to 5 more churches identified in this study are considering the use of elders. It is too early to say that the use of elders is a trend, but it does deserve future study.

Churches having elders generally identify themselves as being contemporary churches. They focus primarily on reaching unchurched people. Leadership structure does not follow denominational church organization. Neither do they use traditional Baptist church terminology. They use the terms "shepherd" and "sheep" when referring to the church body. Sheep have to be led. Part of that leadership includes elders, and in some churches deacons too.

Who can be an elder? An elder is any man church member (or in a few cases any woman) who is considered qualified to lead the church. The quality of leadership gifts and skills is based on the person's present life style and Christian work being done. Such leaders are considered "called" and in some churches are not even "elected." The churches using only men as elders give this reason: elders support the pastor (also an elder) by close relationships. They provide accountability, communication, and encouragement. Elders are accountable not only for what the pastor does, but for who he is. This relational authority should be man to man. For this reason the elder team in these churches consists of men only.

What are the basic qualifications of elders? (1) They must be of good character based on I Timothy

3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9; (2) They must show evidence of spiritual leadership. (3) They must be committed to the Lord and the work of their church. (4) They must be able to give supervision, encouragement, and instruction to those needing their attention. (5) They must be able to motivate the congregation to carry out the mission of the church. (6) They must be able to lead the church to avoid conflict; but if it occurs, elders must be able to lead in quick resolution of the conflict.

What is the role of elders? This varies from church to church in specifics. All of them do give attention to certain basics. (1) Oversee the spiritual management of the church. (2) Assist the senior pastor and staff in providing an annual strategy recommended goals for church-wide growth. (3) Deal with conflict management as needed. (4) Give overseer leadership to key divisions of church ministries. (5) Report on their activities and make necessary recommendations to the congregation as needed, and especially in the annual church membership meeting.

How many elders serve at a time? The number varies from one (the pastor) to as high as twelve. Some serve three years and rotate off for one year before being eligible to serve again. Others serve for five years. A few churches allow them to serve indefinitely.

How are elders selected? The process varies. (1) Some churches encourage individual church members to nominate a lay person to be an elder. The elders interview the nominee and carefully study the person's qualifications. If all is well, the elders recommend the person be elected by the congregation. (2) In other churches new elders are nominated by the serving elders to the congregation for election. (3) In one church the elders are chosen by the pastor because they have already demonstrated that they are spiritual leaders. They have been "called" and therefore, they do not need to be "elected." (4) Another church uses ballots, nominating committees, deacon interview, and investigation, and a final vote by the congregation.

What scriptures are used in defense of elders? The key scriptures are I Timothy 3:1-7;, Titus 1:5-9; and I Peter 5:2-3. Many other scriptures concerning elders are used in printed materials of the churches. What about the use of deacons in these churches? At least four use deacons and elders. In these churches women also serve as elders as well as deacons. Deacons serve in administrative roles much like the "7" in Acts 6:1-7. This allows the pastor and other elders to give their attention to the spiritual matters of the church. They also serve in a caring role. Deacons advise and assist the pastoral staff in matters relating to specific needs or concerns of church families such as: praying for and visiting the sick, outreach visitation, grief support, counseling, discipling, and training others.

Some personal observations conclude this article. (1) In over 50 years of ministry I have observed many changes in deacon ministry here in Virginia. Election of women deacons has been evolving for a long time. The new deacon team concept for ministry has rushed to the forefront within the past ten years. All reports indicate it is working well. Based on these facts, a word of caution on the use of elders seems in order. Let us not pre-judge unnecessarily this new change. It may be that at least some of what is being done now in these churches will be necessary if our churches are to effectively reach the multitudes of unchurched people living in every community. (2) Pastor search committees and pastors planning to make a change will need to know where they and the church stands on the issues of women deacons and elders as they make their decisions on a new pastor or a different church. (3) Thanks to the Directors of Missions, pastors, and church staff who have willingly helped me collect the data, and understand the spoken word and printed material provided.

## V. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR DEACON MINISTRY

### Explanation Notes:

- \* Each deacon, as a growing Christian, needs to have some plan for daily personal devotions. Many devotional materials are available for this purpose. Choose one that interests you.
- \* For scripture study, it may be helpful to use several different translations or versions of the Bible.
- \* When you study the scripture, consider using meditation suggestions made in an unusual devotional book by William Clemmons. Try them as you read and study Psalm 139 from the King James Version.
- \* Another passage of scripture in which the word "deacon" appears is in Philippians. For a tremendous devotional experience, read a portion each day, or read the entire book of four chapters in one sitting. Better still, do both. Leaving out a few words, read it like this:

"Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the . . . deacons; Grace to you"  
Paul is at his best in this moving letter to his fine Christian friends who still need to grow spiritually, and that obviously includes deacons.

### A. How to Meditate and Pray

1. CENTERING DOWN -- Spend some time in "silence" trying to get in touch with your innermost self.
2. Now, SELECT A PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE and apply the "five Ps" listed as follows:
  - a. PREPARING -- Write down any thoughts you have about the passage. Enter into a vital dialogue with Christ under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
  - b. PICTURING -- Use your imagination and intellect. Remember all you can about this passage. Relive it as if you are in the events happening.
  - c. PONDERING -- Imagine you are in the presence of Christ. Dr. Clemmons suggests that you ask the question, "Jesus, what do you have to say to me through this word of scripture?" Write it down. This is spiritual confrontation at its best.
  - d. PRAYING -- Now you reply to Him. But do not forget to listen to Him! Praise Him. Intercede for persons depending on you to pray for them.
  - e. PROMISING -- Out of your conversation with God that seems to have spoken to the deepest level of your life today, make a promise. You can say, "As a result of this conversation today, I promise ..."

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REFERENCE: William P. Clemmons, Discovering The Depths. (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1976), pp. 27-28.

## **B. Bible Study**

### PSALM 139(KJV)

- 1 O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.
- 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off.
- 3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.
- 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.
- 7 Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
- 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.
- 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
- 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
- 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.
- 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee: but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
- 13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
- 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works: and that my soul knoweth right well.
- 15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
- 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.
- 17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!
- 18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.
- 19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me, therefore, ye bloody men.
- 20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.
- 21 Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
- 22 I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies.
- 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts;
- 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

## **VI. PARTNERS AND PEACEMAKERS IN DEACON MINISTRY**

### **Explanation Notes:**

- \* Deacons work as partners with all paid staff and all volunteer church-elected leaders.
- \* Deacons are to work as team players. They are not to be dictators or church bosses.
- \* Deacons need to understand the mission of their church and help the church to both understand it and fulfill it.

### **A. Shared Ministry Concepts**

#### **1. Deacons minister with others in the church:**

- a. Understand your role in relationship to that of other partners in ministry. What is your main role?
- b. All partners are equal in responsibility, though not in gifts and skills,
- c. You are to be a role-model leader in your ministry.
- d. Remember you are responsible to God and the congregation who selected you as a deacon.

#### **2. Deacons minister with the pastor:**

- a. The pastor is expected to be first among equal partners as the church leader.
- b. Deacons are to work as a support team alongside the pastor in ministry, both to the church and unchurched.
- c. Deacons also minister to their pastor and his family,
- d. Deacons need to be visibly supportive of the pastor.
- e. Deacons should work cooperatively with their pastor in worship opportunities.

#### **3. Deacons minister with other staff (if your church has paid or volunteer persons who serve as staff):**

- a. Deacons should work at cultivating personal friendships.
- b. Deacons are to work cooperatively with their staff partners.
- c. Deacons also need to be visibly supportive of the programs administered by the staff.
- d. Deacons need to help interpret to the congregation the roles and ministries of each staff person.



**4. Deacons minister with volunteer church leaders:**

- a. Deacons should work cooperatively with program organization leaders. Know what these organizations do for the congregation.
- b. Deacons should work cooperatively with church committees. Know the purpose and functions of each committee.
- c. Deacons should work cooperatively with mission ministries. Know how to help your church to reach out and minister to others in their needs, especially in their need to know Christ, the Lord.
- d. Deacons should work with the volunteer church leaders to develop good personal relationships that are mutually supportive.

**5. Deacons minister with the congregation:**

- a. Deacons should help lead the congregation to understand their God-given mission.
- b. Deacons should help lead the church to develop specific priorities, goals, and plans of action to fulfill their mission.
- c. Deacons should help the individual members discover their gifts and skills that God can use in the mission ministries of the church.
- d. Deacons should help the members to grow spiritually in their relationship to God and to one another. Remember, they look to you as an example.

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REFERENCE: Henry Webb, Compiler, Equipping Deacons as Partners in Ministry. (Nashville, Convention Press, 1985).

**B. Developing Ministry Skills**

**Explanation Notes:**

- \* Deacons need continuous update training in how to minister to church family units in any situation calling for caring help.
- \* In training, deacons may help train themselves by sharing their reading of training materials and their caring experiences; church members with special skills, or community resource people, may be invited to lead in training.
- \* Deacons need to learn when to refer any member of their assigned families to other persons professionally trained to handle difficult situations. Notice the list of needs prepared by the deacons of one church. As new needs develop in our society, they may be added to the list. New deacons also can share such a pamphlet with their family units as they begin the Deacon Family Ministry Plan assignments.

**1. Jesus developed His skills**

- a. Mark 1:29-31 - Simon Peter's mother-in-law was sick. Jesus developed His skills in ministering to the sick.
- b. Luke 10:38-42 - Mary and Martha were in conflict. Jesus developed His skills in dealing with family conflict.
- c. Luke 8:40-56 - Jairus' daughter had died. Jesus developed His skills in helping families deal with grief.

**2. Identify personal and family needs and take training to meet these needs**

- a. Please see the list one group of deacons used to minister to their congregation. The list follows in section C. Identify Ministry Needs.
- b. Ask your church to supply sufficient quantities of booklets bearing the titles of key personal and family needs. They can help you communicate genuine caring. "Help" organizations can provide these.

**3. There are other needs that require ministry skills**

- a. Get the necessary training that will enable you to witness to the lost, both those in your assigned family units and those in the community but not affiliated with any church.
- b. Remember that your own Christian lifestyle is basic to being winsome. Sometimes you are conscious of your witness; at other times you are not aware of your Christian influence on a person.
- c. Help new Christians to develop and mature, especially those belonging to your assigned family units. They can be encouraged by you to participate in a class provided by the church and designed to meet this need. Or you can take materials, such as the Survival Kit for New Christians, and work with the person yourself.
- d. Help other Christians, especially in your assigned family units, to identify, use, and develop their own gifts and skills for ministry to be used in the church; in community missions; in associational missions; and in state, home, and international missions, as God leads and calls them to serve.

**4. Be an encourager to the ministerial staff, the congregation at large, and to other deacons.**

- a. Barnabas is a good biblical example:
  - \* Sold a plot of ground and gave the proceeds to the church (Acts 4:36). This was an encouragement to the whole church, both in commitment and in Christian stewardship.

- \* Spoke up for Saul (Acts 11:25-26). He stood by to help a new staff member until he gained acceptance from the church in his own right.
- \* Stood by John Mark (Acts 15:36-39). He did all he could to encourage a young person who had been a disappointment in his commitment. Barnabas helped him grow and mature until John Mark became a valuable servant of the Lord. Later, John Mark made a lasting contribution to the church by writing the gospel that bears his name.

**5. Know when and how to refer**

- a. Refer to another deacon any family assigned to you with whom you are having trouble relating.
- b. Refer any personal or family need to your pastor when needed or when his/her skill for the particular situation exceeds yours.
- c. Refer persons to Sunday School classes, as needed, especially the sick, shut-ins, new prospects, etc.
- d. Refer persons to a professional counselor, with the help of your minister, when an individual or a family needs that kind of help. Your association may provide a local listing of Christian counselors and local Baptist ministers who have had proper training and would be willing to help a person or a family on a limited basis.
- e. Refer persons to community helping agencies. Learn who these agencies are, what they do, the cost (if any), and where they are located. Help the persons who need special care to get it as soon as possible.
- f. Refer everyone in need, including yourself, to the Lord in daily intercessory prayer.

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REFERENCES: Henry Webb, Compiler, Terry A. Peck, editor. Equipping Deacons in Church Growth Skills. (Nashville, Convention Press, 1982).

Homer D. Carter, Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills. (Nashville, Convention Press, 1980).

Robert L. Sheffield, Author-compiler, Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills. Volume 2. (Nashville, Convention Press, 1988).

### C. Identify Ministry Needs

1. The deacons and the pastor have discussed ways in which they, as the spiritual shepherds of our church, can be of service to you. The primary responsibility of the deacon is to share with the pastor the personal ministry to the membership.
2. Each member of our church is assigned to the special care of a deacon who will assist the pastor in expressing concern and offering help in every way possible to those in his keeping. You are urged to keep your deacon informed about your personal needs and to discuss with him/her any aspect of our corporate life within the fellowship. You are urged to inform your pastor of any occasion when he may serve you.
3. Some people have the idea that the services of a pastor should not be sought except in times of critical illness or when death claims a loved one. This is a very limited view of the ministry, for there are many other times in life when a pastoral call can be of help.
4. Although the most obvious part of a minister's work is the conducting of the worship services of the church, his most crucial work is done through personal contacts with individuals. Your pastor has had some professional training in counseling and in meeting the common problems of life. He, with your deacons, is available at any time. You do not have to shoulder your concerns alone.
5. In order to give you a larger picture of the pastoral ministry, your pastor and your deacons have prepared the following statements which suggest the kinds of situations that warrant the support of your spiritual leadership:
  - a. **WHEN YOU ARE CONSIDERING JOINING THE CHURCH**

Church membership is a serious matter, whether one comes upon profession of faith or by letter. Your pastor and deacons stand ready to discuss with you your church, its policies, and beliefs. They will genuinely seek to guide you in making the right decision.
  - b. **BEFORE BEING HOSPITALIZED**

If you are to receive surgery or to be admitted to the hospital for any reason, your pastor would like to know this before the experience, to express (through prayer) the Christian's confidence in the presence and healing power of God. If there is illness in your home and you telephone your doctor, telephone your deacon and your pastor too.
  - c. **AT THE BIRTH OF A BABY**

Your church always likes to know when a baby is expected or an adoption considered, for there are helpful materials available to instruct the family in anticipating this event. When the baby arrives, notify the pastor and your deacon immediately, for they will want to call at the hospital and will want to invite the entire church to

rejoice with the family. We will want to offer prayers asking God's blessing upon the baby, and the pastor will plan a service of dedication for the parents as they accept the responsibilities of parenthood.

d. WHEN THERE IS A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

The Christian faith has a confident word to speak about death, and the church can offer considerable consolation when death takes a loved one. No matter how strong your faith, there is always pain at this time. Your pastor and your deacon will want to share with you in this hour to discuss the significance of what has happened and to read helpful passages of scripture and offer comfort and strength through prayer. Call upon your pastor to assist you in making funeral arrangements. The funeral is a worship service of the church, thus the church is the appropriate place for the funeral.

e. IF THERE IS A LENGTHY PERIOD OF GRIEF

It is perfectly natural for us to be grieved at the death of someone we love, for death requires a new adjustment to life and it means a temporary separation from someone we have loved. However, a prolonged time of grief is often an indication that a person needs help in making this adjustment. Your pastor will be able to help you emerge from "the valley of the shadow" if you request his aid.

f. BEFORE BEING MARRIED

If you are contemplating marriage, you will want to speak with your pastor about this long before setting the date for the wedding. He will have materials available to help you with such questions as: How well are we fitted for each other? What does our love mean to us? Do we really know each other? Your pastor will want to share with you helpful books on marriage and will want to arrange a series of pre-marital counseling sessions with both of you. Marriage is one of the most important decisions of life and should never be entered into impulsively, lightly, or unadvised. The appropriate place for a Christian marriage is in the sanctuary of the church.

g. WHEN THERE IS CONFLICT WITHIN THE FAMILY

Of course, this does not mean that every family argument is an occasion to summon the pastor! It does mean, however, that you should seek counsel when there is a serious breach in personal relationships. Marital difficulties can often be resolved through the help of another. Marriage has its beginning in the taking of sacred vows; if these vows are taken seriously, you will want to discuss your problem (in the light of these vows) before engaging a lawyer to dissolve the relationship. Your pastor has resources available that speak to the multiple occasions of conflict that are likely to arise within the family circle and is able to put you in touch with additional professional guidance, if needed.

h. WHEN YOU ARE FACING A MAJOR DECISION

Whenever you are confronted with the necessity of making a major decision that has life-determining consequences, it is natural to want to consult someone else about it. What vocation should I enter? Ought I to change my job? Am I ready for marriage? God did not intend for us to face decisions by ourselves. Through the fellowship of the church, we find encouragement and guidance. Often another person can shed new light on the matter or can suggest other wise alternatives. Your pastor and deacon will be happy to consider such problems with you, in confidence, and to offer prayers for divine direction.

i. WHEN YOU LEAVE HOME

Your church wishes to maintain a close contact with you when you leave home to begin your college career, to enter the armed services, or to undertake any new task. Your pastor and deacon can be helpful in directing you to good schools, and in informing you of spiritual resources available. You will want to keep the church informed of your accurate address so that we may keep in touch with you and assure you of our prayers and interest.

j. WHEN ALCOHOL (DRUGS) IS A PROBLEM

Alcoholism is one of the most prevalent problems of our society. Nearly every family has a relative or a friend who has lost control of his life due to excessive drinking. Such persons are critically ill and need sympathetic concern and professional guidance. They are not hopeless sinners but desperately sick people. The alcoholic problem is exceedingly difficult to solve, but your pastor, with your deacon, will be able to provide assistance that could lead to complete recovery

k. WHEN YOU CANNOT FIND A SATISFACTORY ANSWER TO A THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

Life presses in upon us in such a way that we must wrestle with very big questions. What is the meaning of life? Why are we here? Why must men suffer? What happens to us when we die? How can I be sure that there is a God? How can I deal with my doubts? Questions like these should not be suppressed, but adequate answers should be sought for them. Your pastor has had special training in philosophy and religion, and he has many excellent books on these subjects that he would be pleased to share. Bring your questions to him.



I. WHEN YOU ARE SPIRITUALLY EXHAUSTED

Even the great saints of the church testify to those periods in life when God seems far away and life seems to lose its zest. Help is available when such seasons come. You make a mistake when you struggle with your spiritual depression all alone. God intended for us to hold each other up and to be mindful of one another in our prayers. Your pastor or your deacon may not be able to give you a quick panacea, but he will stand by you and try to lead you to a renewal of life. Often such dark nights of the soul afflict us when we have fallen into temptation or when we have betrayed our better selves. The Bible suggests that it is sometimes helpful to confess our sins to one another. Your pastor will seek with you the assurance of God's forgiving love and restoration.

m. WHEN YOU MOVE TO A NEW COMMUNITY

Always notify your church when you are faced with the necessity of moving to a new community. Your pastor may be able to suggest churches in the town to which you go where you will find a wholesome ministry. Do not ask to take your church letter with you in transit. First find a church home and then request the clerk of your new church to request your letter for you. It is best to transfer your membership as early as you can after moving. You cannot be an effective member of a church that is far from you. This church will be happy to retain you on its mailing list for as long as you wish so that you may keep abreast of the friendships you are leaving behind.

n. WHEN A NEW FAMILY MOVES INTO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

An alert church is always eager to welcome new people and to invite them into its fellowship. Go out of your way to welcome them and to invite them to your church. Let your pastor know of any new residents who would appreciate a visit.

o. WHEN LEGAL HELP IS SOUGHT

When legal counsel is needed, there is usually the need for moral counsel as well. While your deacon and pastor are not legal advisors, they can be of help to you in looking at the total picture. Whether it relates to wills, teenage difficulties, or accidents, your pastor and deacon will want to stand with you and lend their moral and spiritual support.

p. IF YOU KNOW OTHERS IN NEED OF SPIRITUAL HELP

Often persons who are in greatest need of help are hesitant to seek it. You may render a valuable service to another by alerting your spiritual leadership to a situation where help is wanted. Everything that you tell your pastor or deacon about yourself, or about anyone else, will always be kept in the strictest of confidence.

The deacon fills in this information; the family is requested to keep this material on the telephone table for quick reference.

Your Pastor is: _____
Church Phone: _____
Home Phone: _____
Your Deacon is: _____
Address: _____
Home Phone: _____
Business Phone: _____

**D. Learning to Manage Church Conflict**

**Explanation Notes:**

- \* Conflict is a fact of life, as the New Testament attests. Church conflict can be handled destructively or redemptively. Deacons can be a major factor in determining which it will be.
- \* Conflict, if handled redemptively, can bring spiritual growth to deacons, church staff, and the whole congregation.
- \* Deacons can help the church avoid destructive conflict. Study carefully what they can do.
- \* A definition: Church conflict occurs when two or more members CLASH in disagreement, or in opposition to each other.

**1. The deacon needs to understand church conflict.**

A study of scriptures dealing specifically with church conflict needs to be made. Several key scriptures are list as follows:

- a. Acts 6:1-7 deals with conflict between two groups of widows.
- b. Acts 15:1-25 deals with conflict on the issue of circumcision.
- c. Acts 15:36-41 deals with interpersonal conflict between church leaders, Paul and Barnabas, over young Mark.
- d. I and II Corinthians deal with conflict over such issues as stewardship, immorality, lawsuits, marriage, liberty, the Lord's supper, spiritual gifts, the resurrection, integrity of the minister, etc.
- e. Galatians gives an account of the church conflict dealing with doctrines Paul believed they were perverting.

**2. Deacons need to understand the causes of church conflict.**

- a. Conflict is caused by stress that is personal or that is within one or more groups in the church.
- b. Conflict is caused by confusion over what the underlying problem really is.
- c. Conflict is caused by use or misuse of power by the ministerial staff, elected leaders, or self-appointed leaders.
- d. Conflict is caused by changes within the church and within its community.
- e. Conflict is caused by the diversity within the membership in areas such as age, length of membership, difference in gifts, and differences in doctrinal beliefs.
- f. Conflict is caused by poor communication, both verbal and non-verbal.
- g. Conflict is caused by unmet needs of members, whether the needs are real or imaginary.
- h. Conflict is caused by fear which can intensify one's emotional involvement in any issue.

**3. Deacons need to understand what conflict does to the deacon and to the church.**

- a. The deacon needs to understand his/her own history of conflict and his/her own feelings and beliefs about conflict.
  - b. Conflict can cause members to become discouraged; to be critical; to stop giving, etc.
  - c. Conflict can cause ministerial staff to have to leave the church.
  - d. Conflict can cause members to drop out.
  - e. Conflict can cause members to start hunting another church, even a church of another denomination.
  - f. Conflict can cause a church to split.
  - g. Conflict can cause the church to seriously damage its witness in the community.
4. The deacon needs to know what to do when there is church conflict.
- a. The deacon needs to have the Christian spirit.
    - (1) Love is the overarching need in confronting conflict.
    - (2) Patience must be practiced.
    - (3) Integrity must show through as the deacon seeks the truth about the conflict.
    - (4) Kindness must be practiced toward everyone involved.
    - (5) Endurance must be practiced because settling conflict is hard work and takes time.
  - b. The deacon needs to learn how to resolve conflict.
    - (1) The conflict may involve the following: between a deacon and the pastor; between the deacons and the pastor or other staff; between deacons and deacons; between church members and the pastor or other staff; between church members and church members.
    - (2) Efforts to resolve conflict may include these actions:
      - Try to discern what the real issue is.
      - Learn to listen to the opposition with sensitivity.
      - Talk with the person or persons with whom there is a conflict.
      - Talk with the person or persons in the presence of a mediator.

- Make sure that both sides have equal opportunity to discuss the reasons for the conflict, without interruptions.
- If a business meeting is necessary, make certain that proper parliamentary procedure is used by the moderator or a person invited in to mediate.
- Negotiate by offering alternative solutions to solve the conflict.
- Agree on a compromise solution acceptable to both sides.
- Practice Christian forgiveness.
- If no agreement can be reached, there must be some plan arranged for dissolving the relationship.

## **5. The deacon can help keep conflict under control**

- a. Be familiar with the church constitution and bylaws concerning regulations and proper procedures.
- b. Be familiar with Baptist polity as to how the church is organized and how it is to operate.
- c. Use the Deacon Family Ministry Plan or the Team Ministry Plan to keep in close touch with the church families concerning their relationship with the staff and the church.
- d. Be a patient listener to church members concerning what they want to share about the church.
- e. Deal promptly and redemptively with conflict as soon as it becomes evident.
- f. Be an accurate and effective interpreter of the programs and ministries of the church to the membership.
- g. Help members to be willing to become actively involved by using their gifts and skills in the life of the church.
- h. Help establish or be supportive of a church Personnel Committee.
- i. Be a model-type church member who demonstrates Christian maturity and consistent loyalty to the Lord through the life and ministry of the church.

## **VII. SPECIAL CONCERNS IN DEACON MINISTRY**

### **Explanation Notes:**

- \* Because all Southern Baptist churches have inactive church members, deacons should be concerned.
- \* Inactive church members are hard to reactivate if they have been inactive for a year or more.
- \* The church emphasis needs to be on preventing members from becoming inactive.
- \* Remember, no church or church leader has a definitive answer to this inactive problem.

### **A. Reclaiming Inactive Church Members**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

- a. Deacons are elected to be ministers/servants in their local church.
- b. Deacons are to be ministers/servants to all the members in their local church.
- c. Deacon's spouses have a key role as supportive ministers in the church.

#### **2. WHO ARE INACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERS?**

- a. The statistics concerning inactive church members
  - (1) In the United States
  - (2) In the Southern Baptist Convention
  - (3) In your church
- b. Identifying inactive church members based on attendance, giving, and participation
- c. Biblical examples of inactive church members
- d. Our attitudes toward inactive church members

#### **3. WHY ARE THEY INACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERS?**

- a. Possible reasons persons move toward inactivity
  - (1) Facing a crisis in one's life
  - (2) Possible crises a person may face



- b. Warning signals of one dropping out
  - (1) Attendance decreases
  - (2) Giving is less frequent
  - (3) Participation drops off
  - (4) Verbal signals of dropping out
  - (5) Non-verbal signals of change in behavior

**4. HOW CAN WE RECLAIM THE INACTIVE CHURCH MEMBER?**

- a. Visit the inactive church member
  - (1) Learn to communicate
  - (2) Learn to care
  - (3) Learn to listen for clarity and understanding
  - (4) Learn to listen for feelings
  - (5) Learn to listen nondefensively
  - (6) Learn to listen with the heart
- b. Learn to use the ten principles of effective listening
  - (1) Take the initiative
  - (2) Give attention
  - (3) Stop talking
  - (4) Remove distractions
  - (5) Allow emotion
  - (6) Allow silences
  - (7) Withhold judgment
  - (8) Be patient
  - (9) Keep confidences
  - (10) Avoid advice and problem solving
- c. Qualifications needed by potential visitors

**5. WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP PREVENT CHURCH MEMBERS FROM BECOMING INACTIVE?**

- a. New members orientation by a one-on-one family deacon follow up
- b. New member orientation through a special "on going" Sunday School class
- c. Church-wide emphasis on spiritual growth as well as evangelistic growth
- d. Meeting the needs of members through small church groups: Sunday School class, home studies, age group activities, etc.

**B. Deacon Leadership During Pastoral Transition**

**Explanation Notes:**

- \* Every church goes through pastoral changes, some more often than others.
- \* Deacons need to know their role, and how to help the church during this transitional period.
- \* Use the transition period as a time to evaluate church/pastor relationships, using "outside" resource persons if necessary.

**1. Understand time frame for getting a new pastor**

- a. Your church's past experience
- b. Normal time frame
- c. Possible prospect rejection
- d. Possible church rejection of the prospect

**2. See the wisdom of possibly having an interim pastor**

- a. Helps provide pastoral leadership
- b. Keeps the church from experiencing harmful decline
- c. Church may need a reasonably long interim in order to do a self-study of the church, its present needs, its future ministries, its spiritual health, etc.
- d. Help the church understand the role of an interim pastor

**3. Know the role of the pastor search committee**

- a. Lead the church in the selection of the committee.

- b. Know the duties of the committee.
  - (1) Discover what the church expects in a new pastor.
  - (2) Discuss what each committee member is expecting in a new pastor.
  - (3) Collect resumes of prospective pastors from available resources.
  - (4) Share copies of resumes with committee members for study and personal prayer.
  - (5) Select top several choices and get additional information on each one both from the prospect and from other legitimate sources.
  - (6) Study and discuss the additional information.
  - (7) Narrow the choices to the ones the committee wants to interview and hear preach.
  - (8) Make the visit to each one.
  - (9) Made a decision on the person to be recommended to the church.
  - (10) Contact the person to obtain his willingness to be recommended.
  - (11) Make the presentation of information on the prospect and on the terms of the agreement with him.
  - (12) If the church approves, make arrangements to move the new pastor and his family to the church field.

**4. Know the responsibilities of the congregation**

- a. They approve of the pastor search committee.
- b. They pray for the committee and the church.
- c. They have the opportunity to suggest names of prospects.
- d. They share with the committee their expectations of a new pastor.
- e. They vote on an interim pastor.
- f. They vote on the prospective pastor when recommended by the committee.
- g. They should continue to be faithful in their support of the church as the Lord's work continues to be done.
- h. They should begin praying for the new pastor.

## **5. Continue your deacon responsibilities during the interim**

- a. Be supportive of and available to counsel with the pastor search committee
- b. Help the congregation to understand the work of the pastor search committee.
- c. Continue your regular duties, especially visiting the sick and families in need.
- d. Assist or lead in the worship services and prayer services as necessary.
- e. Assist the interim pastor in ways he may need your help.
- f. Remain faithful to the church programs and ministries.
- g. Help the church prepare for the arrival of the new pastor and family.

## **6. Be alert to potential problems**

- a. Conflicts
- b. Discouragements
- c. Statistical declines
- d. Strong leader personalities

## **C. THE ROLE OF DEACONS IN MISSIONS**

### **Explanation Notes:**

- \* I firmly believe that deacons do have a vital role in the mission work of their church.
- \* Each deacon should be involved, as often as possible, in their church's "hands-on" mission projects.
- \* Deacons should lead the church in both mission support and mission participation.

### **1. Local Church Missions**

- a. Know your community.
- b. Determine mission needs you and your church can meet.
- c. Plan for mission ministry.

### **2. Local Associational Missions**

- a. Lead your church to cooperate with other local churches to do missions in the local association.
- b. Lead your church to encourage volunteers to help another local church or mission for several months to a year or more, as needed.
- c. Lead your church to participate in "hands on" mission partnerships supported by your association.

**3. Virginia Baptist Resource Center, Richmond**

- a. Contact the Glocal Missions Team
- b. Contact the Courageous Churches Team

NOTE: These two teams will provide information on the current missions opportunities.

- c. Contact Woman’s Missionary Union for information on their current mission projects.

NOTE: All three can be reached at (804) 915-5000, Toll Free 1-800-255-2428  
 Web sites: [www.vbmb.org](http://www.vbmb.org) or [www.wmu-va.org](http://www.wmu-va.org)

**4. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**

- a. For information about adult volunteer mission opportunities
- b. For information about youth volunteer mission opportunities

NOTE: In Virginia (804) 213-0412 - Richmond  
 (540) 361-1335 - Fredericksburg

**5. Southern Baptist Convention**

- a. North American Mission Board (770) 410-6000
- b. International Mission Board (804) 353-0151

***VIII. RESOURCES FOR DEACON READING AND TRAINING***

**Explanation Notes:**

- \* The books and materials listed on the following page are the reference sources used to prepare this manual— Training for Servanthood
- \* The other books and materials are additional sources of valuable information for you.

- \* No prices have been listed because they change from time to time. Lifeway Christian Stores will give you the latest prices.
- \* You should check with your associational office about videotapes, modules and other materials that may be available in the media library.
- \* The resource materials that I used to prepare this manual are available for research in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society on the campus of the University of Richmond.

**A. These Resource Materials Were Used in This Book:**

1. The Ministry of the Deacon, Howard B. Foshee
2. The Baptist Deacon, Robert E. Naylor
3. What Is The Church?, Duke K. McCall. Editor
4. The New Testament, Charles B. Williams
5. The Interpreter's Bible, Volume 11, George A. Buttrick, Editor
6. The Emerging Role of Deacons, Charles W. Deweese
7. Deacon Chairman Planning Guide, Charles F. Treadway
8. The Deacon Family Ministry Plan Revised
9. The Deacon Family Ministry Plan Resource Book
10. Discovering The Depths, William P. Clemmons
11. Equipping Deacons as Partners in Ministry, Henry Webb
12. Equipping Deacons in Church Growth Skills, Henry Webb, Compiler; Terry A. Peck, Editor
13. Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills, Homer D. Carter
14. Equipping Deacons in Caring Skills, Volume 2, Robert L. Sheffield, Author-Compiler
15. Equipping Deacons to Confront Conflict, James E. White and Robert L. Sheffield, Authors-Compilers
16. The Ministry of Baptist Deacons, Robert L. Sheffield, Editor It is an update of book No. 1 by Foshee.

17. Deacon Ministry Planning Guide Revised, Robert Sheffield
18. Deacon Retreat Planning Guide, James E. White
19. Virginia associational directors who assisted me with my survey studies.  
Baptist churches who shared deacon ministry materials.

**B. Here are other sources for the most recent information and materials available on Deacon Ministry.**

1. Virginia Baptist Resource Center  
Jeff Cranford 804-915-5000 ext. 344 or 1-800-255-2428  
e-mail: jcranford@vbmb.org

NOTE: Training for Servanthood, Revised 2004, by Rolan C. Bailey is available from this office

2. Lifeway Christian Stores in Virginia
  - Chesapeake 757-420-3778
  - Northern Virginia 703-569-0067
  - Richmond 804-965-9485
  - Roanoke 540-362-3739

3. Lifeway Christian Resources  
127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, Tenn 37234  
615-251-2000

NOTE: These sources can provide up to date information on new books, new manuals, new modules, new CDs, new cassette tapes, new videos & DVDs, The Deacon Magazine, etc.



