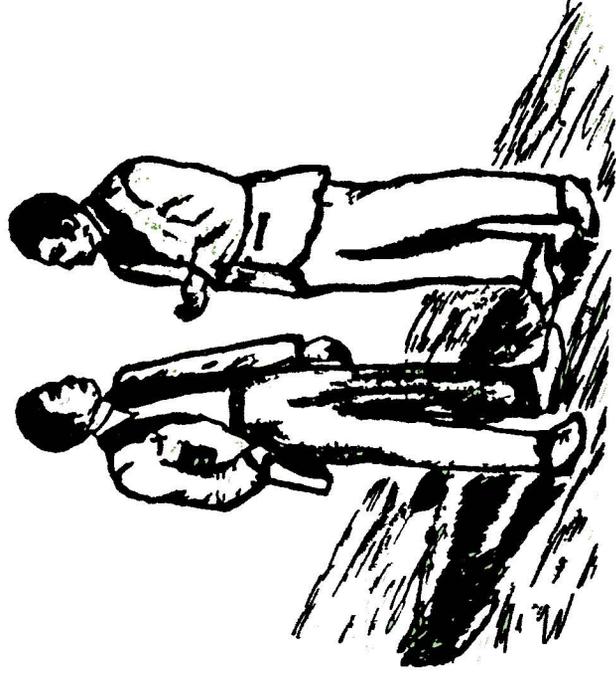


BAPTIST DEACONS:
MINISTRY BY EXAMPLE



BY JERRY HUBBARD

**BAPTIST DEACONS:
MINISTRY BY EXAMPLE**



BY JERRY HUBBARD

Service Two

BAPTIST DEACONS: MINISTRY BY EXAMPLE

Written by: Jerry Hubbard

Arrival and Choirs Singing

Congregational Hymn

Prayer

Congregational Hymn

Welcome and Recognition of All Visitors

Introduction of Deacons being Ordained and Ordination Council Members

Ordination Council Chairman's Report and Recommendation for Ordination

Special Music

Charge to the Deacons and the Church

Laying on of Hands -- by All Actively Serving Ordained Deacons and Pastors of Baptist Churches*

Members of Ordaining Church extending Handshake of Approval of Ordination of Deacons

Prayer of Dedication for Newly Ordained Deacons

Giving of Ordination Certificates

Giving of Gifts and Congratulations -- by Congregation

Prayer of Benediction

Refreshments and Leaving

*Deacons being ordained will kneel in front of congregation and spouses will stand directly behind them.

BAPTIST DEACONS: MINISTRY BY EXAMPLE

Written by: Jerry Hubbard

*Published by
Baptist Publishing House
P.O. Box 31995, 10101
Lusaka, Zambia*

*Printed by
Baptist Printing Ministry
P.O. Box 31995, 10101
Lusaka, Zambia*

SUGGESTED ORDINATION SERVICE PROGRAMMES

Following are two suggested programmes which can be used as guides for planning an ordination service for deacons.

Service One

Arrival and Choirs Singing

Congregational Hymn

Prayer

Welcome and Recognition of all Visitors

Ordination Council Chairman's Report and Recommendation for Ordination (Council chairman asks the church members of ordaining church to stand to show their approval of ordaining the new deacons.)

Special Music

Charge to the Deacons

Laying on of Hands -- by All Actively Serving Ordained Deacons and Pastors of Baptist Churches*

Prayer of Dedication for Newly Ordained Deacons

Giving of Ordination Certificates - Council Chairman

Giving of Gifts and Congratulatory - Congregation

Prayer of Benediction

Refreshments and Leaving

*(Deacons being ordained will kneel in front of congregation and spouses will stand behind them)

prayers for blessings and fruitfulness in ministry for their fellow deacons who are being ordained by the church. Perhaps there should be an opportunity for members of the church ordaining the deacons to come forward and participate in this part of the ordination service since it is the church that is ordaining the deacons and not the ordination council nor those of sister Baptist churches who have been ordained at some time in the past. See suggested Ordination Programmes on the following pages.

The local church is free to arrange the service according to their wishes, desires and needs. However, the local church should keep uppermost in mind that the ordination service is first and foremost a time of worshipping God through Jesus Christ. It is a time of worshipping God for his gift of servants in the church who follow the example of Jesus, the Servant of servants. If the service is not one of worship, then it is one of honoring man rather than our Lord God, Jesus Christ.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER **PAGE**

PART ONE: Personal Qualifications of the Deacon

- 1. The Deacon is a Spiritual Person..... 7
- 2. The Deacon is a Moral Person 8

PART TWO: Deacons: Ministering by Example

- 3. The Deacon Ministers by Example in Spiritual Growth Training..... 13
- 4. The Deacon Ministers by Example in His Personal Lifestyle 15
- 5. The Deacon Ministers by Example in His Family Life.... 18

- 6. Deacons Ministers by Example in the Business World 20

- 7. The Deacon Ministers by Example in His Place of Employment..... 21

- 8. The Deacon Ministers by Example in Accepting Spiritual Leadership Responsibility 22

- 9. The Deacon Ministers by Example in the Visitation of New Church Members 24

- 10. The Deacon Ministers By Example in Personal Evangelism 25

- 11. The Deacon Ministers by Example in Supporting the Pastor and the Church's Programme of Spiritual Ministry 27

PART THREE: Selection and Ordination of Deacons

- 12. Ordination: Baptist Belief and Practice 31

- 13. The Selection of Deacons..... 34

- 14. The Ordination of Deacons 36

PART ONE

PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE DEACON

There have been persons who have been asked by their churches to serve in the office of deacon. With the exception of the pastor, no other church leader is more prominently public than the deacon.

Even though many have served as deacons in their churches, confusion still remains about the deacon; that is, who is a deacon and what does he do as a deacon?

The Scriptures give both spiritual and moral qualifications for those church members who are selected by their congregations to serve in the leadership position of deacon. These qualifications are to be taken seriously because (1) they are given by God through the Scriptures for the church to follow explicitly, (2) the leadership position of deacon demands high spiritual and moral standards on the part of the person who accepts this leadership position in the church, and (3) any qualifications less demanding than these spiritual and moral values would compromise the spiritual and moral character of God who manifests himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

of the date of the formal ordination. It is also the responsibility of the church to plan the programme of the ordination service. People who are being asked to have a part on the ordination programme should be asked sufficient time in advance to prepare for their part on the programme and for arranging their schedule so that they can be present for the ordination service. If a choir from a sister Baptist church is asked to have special music in the ordination service, then the choir should be contacted enough time in advance so that they will be able to practice in preparation for their part on the programme. As soon as the date of the ordination service has been set, letters of invitation to churches, speakers, choirs, and other guests should be posted immediately. Perhaps a special emphasis needs to be made at this point concerning who ordains a deacon. Some see the ordination council as being the ordaining body. This is not correct. The ordination council simply serves as the body who interviews the prospective deacons and makes its recommendations known after the interviewing process has been completed. The chairman of the council will make a formal recommendation to the church for ordination of those who have answered the questions of the council satisfactorily. This formal recommendation is made during the formal ordination service. Therefore, it is the church, the congregation of believers from which the deacons were chosen, which ordains the deacons. The congregation shows publicly through the ordination service their confidence that those being ordained have shown mature spiritual leadership abilities in the church and its programmes of spiritual ministries. The congregation is also saying publicly that it believes that the ones being ordained will continue to show mature spiritual leadership abilities and growth as they minister as servants in and through their deacon office. The ordination service is also the public declaration of the ones being ordained that they see and understand their office of deacon as being one of ministry. It is a ministry of servanthood, not one of power and control over the congregation.

The congregation invites ordained servants from sister Baptist churches to participate in the ordination by the laying on of hands in the ordination service. The laying on of hands by fellow servants who have been ordained in no way imparts special powers and privileges to those being ordained. The laying on of hands is a special time when fellow ordained servants offer

church ministries in which they are actively participating, doctrinal beliefs, relationship with the pastor, fellow deacons and church members, their views on the work of the deacon, whether or not the deacon's office is one of a power position over the congregation or a position of ministry, ways in which they are actively sharing their faith in their home or place of work, their views on their church's participation in associational and Convention programmes of ministry and questions on Baptist polity (church government) and practices. At the conclusion of the interview the candidates are usually asked if they have some questions to ask the council about matters of which they do not have clear understanding on Baptist doctrine or practices of programmes of ministry. The setting of the interview should be informal and conducted in such a way that the one being interviewed feels at ease and relaxed during the time of the questioning by the council members.

The ordination council has the authority to make one of two recommendations. First, the council can recommend to the church which is ordaining deacons that a person who has been interviewed be formally ordained as a deacon of the church. Or, secondly, the council can recommend to the ordaining church that a person who has been interviewed not be formally ordained as a deacon of the church. An ordination council usually makes this second recommendation when a person has not given satisfactory answers to the questions and the council feels that the person is not ready to be given the responsibility of the deaconship.

The candidates who are interviewed by the council are informed of the council's decision about their ordination before the formal church service of ordination. They can be told of the council's decision (1) immediately after the interview, (2) by a letter to each one from the chairman of the council or (3) by the pastor of the church who has been given the written decision of the council concerning each person interviewed. The pastor of the church seeking to formally ordain deacons usually is invited to sit with the council during the time of the interview, although he is not an official member of the council. He serves as a resource person for the council, giving information when asked to do so by the council members.

It is the responsibility of the church to set the date of the formal service of its deacons' ordination. The church has the responsibility to inform the council members and sister churches

THE ORDINATION OF DEACONS

The ordination of deacons follows the process of selection and election. The persons who are elected to this position of leadership will need some orientation to the responsibilities of the diaconate if they are to be effective in their diaconate ministry. Those who can help give the needed orientation for the new deacons are: the church pastor, another Baptist pastor, an older, experienced deacon(s) in the church - the church developer or another missionary or conventional worker, i.e., home missionary or seminary teacher or other joint project workers of the Baptist Convention of Zambia. The orientation lessons could include such topics as: New Testament qualifications for deacons; the duties of the seven deacons in the Jerusalem congregation; why the church in Jerusalem elected the first deacons; the relationship of the deacon to his church, pastor, home, community and fellow deacons; the ministries of deacons in the church of their membership; church policies directly concerned with the ministry of the deacon, and other topics that are related to the ministry the deacon will perform in and for his church.

After the orientation lessons have been completed, a deacons' ordination council is organized for the purpose of interviewing the new deacons. The church can call together an ordaining council. Often this council is made up of pastors and/or ordained deacons from sister Baptist churches. Some churches have asked the church developer of their area to call together an ordaining council. After the council members have agreed to serving on the council, a date is set for the interviewing of the deacon candidates.

When the interviews are conducted, each candidate is interviewed separately. If the deacon candidate is married, the spouse is usually asked to sit in for the interview. Questions may or may not be asked of the spouse concerning their feelings of the spouse serving as a deacon or about conditions of their home life and spiritual ministries within the family. The chairman of the council usually leads out in the questions, but all council members take part in asking questions of each candidate. The questions asked are concerned with the candidate's salvation experience,

THE DEACON IS A SPIRITUAL PERSON

A deacon, first of all, is a person who takes living the Christ-life instead of the self-life very seriously. In Acts 6:3 the Christ-life is described as "...full of the Spirit." This means that the deacon's life is controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit just as Jesus' life was controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit.

A deacon is a person who uses spiritual wisdom in handling church matters and in relating to church members. Again, Acts 6:3 states that deacons are to be "...full...of wisdom ...whom we may appoint over this business." In reading Acts 6:3 it can be seen that "wisdom" is connected with "full of the Holy Spirit." This indicates to us that the type of "wisdom" the deacon is to possess and use in ministry is spiritual wisdom. This wisdom is superior to the wisdom of man. A deacon is one who allows true "spiritual wisdom and understanding" to take precedence over his wisdom and understanding as a mortal man.

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" means that a deacon is one who has sound doctrinal beliefs and convictions. It should never be said of a deacon that he is a person who is "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). The deacon should take seriously Paul's exhortation to the elders of the Ephesian church: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

the congregation would use a selection method with which they were familiar and had used in the past.

As congregations of believers who are committed to following as closely as possible the practices of believers in the New Testament era of time, Baptist congregations believe that the New Testament method of selecting congregational leaders is the process whereby the congregation collectively and individually prays, nominates and casts (bal)lots for its leaders, among whom are deacons. Therefore, deacon selection is the stewardship responsibility of the entire congregation of Baptist believers; not the responsibility of one or a few designated people who are members of the congregation. As Baptists we need to be diligent in practicing what we believe to be the New Testament way of selecting church leaders.

The needs of the congregation will determine the number of deacons selected to minister to the congregation. The Jerusalem congregation agreed upon seven deacon positions to be filled and proceeded to fill those positions with the men who were "full of the Spirit and wisdom." It may be that a congregation of today will agree upon less or more positions for deacons within their congregation. Whatever the number of deacons that a congregation feels is necessary for its deacon ministry, the church should follow guidelines which were used in the selection of the seven by the Jerusalem church. In summary, the procedures used by the Jerusalem church were as follows: First, they agreed upon the number of positions of leadership to be filled. Second, they prayed, asking God for guidance in determining who should fill the positions. Third, they nominated the names of people whom the Holy Spirit had impressed upon their minds and hearts for these positions. Fourth, they cast their (bal)lots for the people proposed to fill the positions of leadership. Through these steps, the Jerusalem congregation fulfilled their stewardship responsibility in the selection and election of its deacons.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEACON IS A MORAL PERSON

A deacon is a person who has a good reputation within the fellowship of believers who has asked him to serve as one of their deacons. Again in Acts 6:3 the request of the apostles to the fellowship of Jerusalem believers was, "...look you out among you...men of honest report." Today "honest report" means a good Christian reputation. A deacon not only talks about his beliefs and practices, he lives them out in his daily life in his personal conduct and behaviour. The good Christian reputation is to be within the fellowship of believers in particular and also among people outside the fellowship of believers in general.

A deacon is a person who is committed to Christian purposes. In 1 Timothy 3:8 Paul, in giving deacon qualifications, said "...the deacons must be grave" (serious). The word Paul used which has been interpreted "grave" (serious) had a much deeper meaning than the meaning given today to "grave" (serious). The Greek word Paul used, "semnos," means "to reverence" or "to worship." When a person is in a deacon's presence, that person should feel the deacon's reverence for spiritual matters.

A deacon is a person who is always clean and truthful in speech and conscience. Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:8,9, "Likewise must the deacon...be not double-tongued...holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Paul used the word "dilogos" which is translated two-tongued or double-tongued. "Di" means "two" and "logos" means "word" or "speaking." Putting the two together means double speaking or double words. It means saying one thing to a person and going and saying the opposite to another person. A deacon is one who is in control of his tongue rather than his tongue being in control of him. He speaks out for righteous causes consistently rather than just in times of convenience and good circumstances. He controls his temper or anger. He is always honest in what he says. Gossip, telling rumors, talking idly or with slander are not a part of the character of a deacon.

A deacon is one who does not use alcohol as a drink. Christians in the first century were eye witnesses to excessive acts of immoralities. One such act of excessiveness was that of drinking deliberately to experience drunkenness. Drunkenness always

THE SELECTION OF DEACONS

leads to acts of violence, quarrels and immorality.

It is true Paul said that "deacons must be ... not addicted to much wine..." Some try to use this as support in Scripture for use of alcoholic drinks. In the time Paul lived wine was the common drink of the people. Much of the available water was not good for drinking. Drinking the water could cause a person to become very sick, thus wine became the common drink. To drink it excessively was to become drunk. This Scripture is not a permission for drinking, rather it is an admonition for the Christian not to drink wine because of acts in which it leads one to become involved. A deacon is one who does not indulge in drinking alcoholic beverages, nor is he one who is involved in the sale of alcoholic beverages leading others into acts of debauchery. If a deacon is involved in either the drinking or the sale of alcoholic beverages, then he is not a deacon by fact but by name only.

A deacon is one who is not covetous or greedy. "Likewise, must the deacons be...not greedy of filthy lucre" (1 Timothy 3:8). Material possessions are not necessarily evil nor filthy. Paul was focusing his attention on an attitude towards material possessions. A deacon's motivation in life should be focused on doing the will of God rather than on acquiring material wealth. By the time of Paul deacons were given the responsibility of distributing collections of offerings for orphans, widows, the poor and the imprisoned. The honesty and integrity of the deacon was depended upon very much.

"The love of money is especially dangerous in one, who by his office, is placed in trust with church funds, and is concerned in the administration of them. To a man greedy of gain, the temptation would be great, if not to actual theft, yet to use the funds as might further his personal pecuniary (monetary) interests" (American Commentary, Vol. VI, p. 42). This is a solemn warning against covetousness. It will ruin the life and ministry of a deacon. Love of money is a condition of the heart. A deacon should have only one true love in his heart, his love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

A deacon is also a person who has a proven record of service. "Let these also first be proved" (1 Timothy 3:10). The one who is a deacon has proven that he is spiritually qualified to serve in the office. His test or examination is not the ability to give right answers to certain questions. Rather, he passed the examination

The selection of church members who have shown spiritual leadership abilities and growth to serve as deacons in a Baptist congregation is a stewardship responsibility of the entire congregation. It is not a responsibility of one or a few church members. It is a responsibility which involves the participation of all the church members.

In Acts chapter six the Apostles instructed the congregation of believers in Jerusalem to "choose seven men from among you who are full of the Spirit and wisdom" (v.3 NIV). The writer continues in verse 5, "This proposal pleased the whole group." The congregational group of believers carried out its stewardship responsibility of selecting the men who would serve as its deacons. Under the leadership guidance of the Holy Spirit they fulfilled this stewardship responsibility collectively and individually. Collectively they acted as a unified body; individually they contributed to the selection process of choosing deacons.

The writer of Acts does not go into detail as to the method used by the congregation in selecting the seven men. The method they used could have been by consensus for each deacon individually or for the group as a unit. However, it seems more likely that the congregation may have used the method for the selection of the seven which they used for the selection of Matthias as Judas Iscariot's replacement, that is, praying, nominating and casting of lots (ballots). "They proposed two men; Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. They prayed . . . then they cast lots and the lot fell to Matthias . . ." (Acts 1:23, 24, 26). Since this was the method used by the congregation in the process of filling the apostolic vacancy, it seems reasonable to think that they might have employed this method again in the selection and election of the seven deacons -- praying, nominating and casting lots (ballots).

Even though there is some "scriptural silence" in the method employed by the Jerusalem congregation in the selection of the seven men, the Scripture is not silent on the method employed in the selection of Judas' apostolic successor. Therefore, in the selection of the seven deacons, it seems reasonable to think that

ceremony for the deacon.

In the case of an ordained pastor feeling God's call to leave the church which has ordained him and move to another church to serve as pastor, the pastor is not ordained again by the church which has called him to be its pastor. The ordination ceremony of the sister church is considered to be valid.

Looking at ordination in this way and in light of the teachings of the New Testament church, ordination becomes very serious and meaningful for the churches who ordain pastors and deacons as well as for the individuals ordained. For both the churches and the individuals, ordination reaffirms the will of God for the individual ordained as well as for the congregations carrying out the ordination.

in the Christian manner in which he conducted himself daily in deeds and speech. He has proven his spiritual maturity. He has been tested and found true in all areas of his lifestyle, not by his good personality, apparent zeal, secular position, or social standing.

The Kingdom of God is built on the principle of testing. Roman Christians were instructed by the Apostle Paul to prove (test) the will of God in their lives. In Galatians 6:4 every man is to "prove (test) his own work." Jesus invited all who heard him to prove (test) what he (Jesus) had said in his (each man's) own heart and life experience before reaching a final decision. If proving (testing) is the principle upon which God has built his kingdom, it cannot be less for church leaders, and deacons especially, in places of leadership in the churches. The more prominent the place God gives anyone, the more blameless should be his life, because many observe him.

PART TWO

DEACONS: MINISTERING BY EXAMPLE

Jesus is the example Christians are to follow in their lives. Jesus, for the believer, becomes the pattern of living life in its fullness unto God. Truly, Jesus has shown us how to live life in its completeness of abundance and fulfillment when a life is given over without reservation to the will of God, the Father.

Church leaders provide a ministry of example to Christians because of the position of leadership they have in a local congregation. The pastor is involved in a ministry of setting a high ethical and spiritual standard (example) for the people of God as well as for people who are not a part of the fellowship of believers. The deacon is another church leader who is involved in a ministry of being an example.

Perhaps the deacon's ministry of example has more impact or influence upon the people of the church and community than that of the pastor. Pastors are usually thought of as being more spiritual and religious than the church member because he, the pastor, has a special calling from God. On the other hand, the deacon is a church leader who is considered to be on a spiritual level close to that of the church member. Deacons are selected from the church membership, but a pastor often comes from another church rather than from the church membership where he pastors. Because of the close identification of the deacon with the "people of the benches" in a church, deacons are in a special position for influencing the people in a ministry of example. There are several areas in which the deacon greatly influences other church members in a ministry of example.

In the following chapters we will examine some of the areas of influence that a deacon has through his example.

Lord's Supper. The New Testament provides this view of ordination and church practice.

Ordination, that is "the laying on of hands," does not give a person special power nor does it confer greater spirituality before God. In 1 Timothy 1:14 Paul urged Timothy, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift you have, which was given to you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you". The council refers to the group who commissioned Timothy to the ministry in which God had called him. The same commissioning can be seen in the selection of the seven (Acts 6:1-6) and in the sending out of Paul and Barnabas by the church at Antioch in Syria (Acts 13:1-3).

The spiritual gift Paul refers to is that which was given to Timothy by the Lord. The gift was not given by the council of the elders, nor was it the ceremony of laying on of hands which bestowed the spiritual gift of ministry.

During New Testament time, people were ordained for specific purposes of ministry by a local congregation of believers. The seven in Acts 6 were chosen to minister to the needs of the Christian Greek-speaking widows who were being neglected in the distribution of food. These seven were the historical forerunners of deacons.

Paul and Barnabas were "ordained" by the "laying on of hands" in the church in Syria prior to their leaving on the first missionary journey.

The ordination of pastors and deacons in Baptist churches today is just as solemn and serious as it was in the time of the New Testament. The services are just as serious and memorable for the church as for the ones being ordained. The ordination of pastor or deacon carries with it a recommendation to other Baptist churches. However, it must be remembered that one's ordination does not give him authority over others.

The position of ordained deacon does not carry with it the automatic position of being a deacon in another Baptist church when a deacon leaves a Baptist church and moves to another Baptist church. The Baptist church to which the deacon has moved may, after a time of observing the deacon's life and attitude of service, ask him to serve as one of its deacons. Usually, the church will accept the ordination ceremony of the sister church as being valid and will not call for another ordination

ORDINATION: BAPTIST BELIEF AND PRACTICE

Misunderstanding about some Baptist beliefs and practices is common among some Baptist church members. Ordination is one of the areas where Baptist belief and practice is sometimes misunderstood. Pastors and deacons are the two church officers who were ordained in the first New Testament church as found in the book of Acts and the epistles of the Apostle Paul.

There are five statements which summarize the Baptist position or belief concerning the ordination of pastors and deacons.

First, ordination is a public affirmation by a local congregation of believers that a person has been gifted by the Holy Spirit for the particular ministry of a pastor or deacon.

Second, it is the local congregation giving the person authority to exercise the work of ministry for which the Holy Spirit has gifted him.

Third, it is a time of prayer support for the person in his ministry and a pledge of prayer support for him in his ministry.

Fourth, ordination of pastors and deacons is the responsibility of the local congregation or group of congregations of like or same doctrinal beliefs and practices.

Fifth, while ordination affirms the person's spiritual gifts of ministry and sets him apart for special ministry, ordination has no validity or authority beyond the local congregation calling for the person's ordination.

Baptists, historically and traditionally, have rejected the teaching that ordination raises the one ordained to a class of "holy men." Baptists do not believe that the one ordained is more spiritual than the man who has not been ordained.

Baptists also reject the teaching that ordination means only the one ordained is to approach God and administer the two ordinances of the church, the Lord's Supper and baptism.

Baptists believe that all men are priests before God and can come before God's presence without going through ordained people. Baptists also believe that the local congregation can authorize anyone of its membership to baptize new believers and serve the

THE DEACON MINISTERS BY EXAMPLE IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH TRAINING

A pastor was talking to the deacons of the church. The discussion came around to that of the importance of attending the church programme for spiritual growth. One deacon, in his feeling of discomfort for not attending Sunday School, said, "When I was chairman of the deacons, pastor, I did attend Sunday School." The pastor replied, "Yes, you did attend that year." At the time of his being chairman of deacons, the deacon had felt a need to be attending and participating in his church's programme of spiritual growth. He dropped out of the programme when he was no longer chairman of the deacons. Did he need spiritual growth less now that he was not the deacons' chairman?

Even though the deacon was no longer chairman, he still functioned and served as a deacon in his church. His position of leadership as a deacon was still the same. He just had less responsibility among his fellow deacons. His ministry of example in spiritual growth training was still as valid as the time of his being chairman of the deacons.

In the book, *The Baptist Deacon*, Dr. Robert E. Naylor says that there would be great shock among church members if all the deacons of the church were to begin attending and participating in the spiritual growth programme of their church. Dr. Naylor goes on to say if this were to happen each deacon "would find that he had influenced many other people to see their responsibility in training for the church membership" (*The Baptist Deacon*, Robert E. Naylor, p.99).

Deacons need to realize that their example in spiritual growth training can be either positive or negative. If spiritual growth training is important enough to the deacon that he is enrolled and in attendance in the programme, then others will follow his example by enrolling and attending classes of spiritual growth. The opposite is also true. If the deacon fails to attend his church's spiritual growth classes, then others will fail to see its importance for them. They are but following the leader, the deacon.

In the spiritual growth training programme of the church no one carries more influence by example than the deacon. Deacons are

PART THREE

SELECTION AND ORDINATION OF DEACONS

A congregation should select and ordain its deacons with seriousness and with a sense of God's leadership.

The selection of deacons is asking church members to assume a role that is second only in importance to that of the leadership position of a pastor. It is a responsible leadership role in the church and its programme of spiritual ministry.

Ordination is the church affirming in a formal worship service its confidence in those selected as deacons to act with spiritual maturity in fulfilling their leadership responsibilities in the church. It is also the deacons affirming in the public service their resolve to fulfil the responsibilities of the office of deacon. Ordination is a public declaration of service unto the people of God inside the church and unto people who do not know God as Father who are outside the church. It is the church affirming its servant role and the deacons affirming the role of servant in their lives.

selected for their office because of spiritual maturity and training. If these church leaders indicate a need for further spiritual growth, this becomes an example to other church members that they too need spiritual growth training. Deacons failing to support the spiritual growth training programme of the church are responsible for the church's failure to enroll its members in spiritual growth training. Support for spiritual growth training is evidenced or affirmed by the deacon in his attending the programme as a learner. Without attendance there is no support. Members and non-church members want to see a deacon's "walk" match his "talk."

Dr. Naylor says further of the deacon, "The first names of the enrolment list... should be those of the deacons. The first group on hand... on Sunday... should be the deacons. The first persons to be in their places (in weekly training sessions) should be the deacons. Likewise, even when home study or associational training opportunities are presented, the deacons should be the first to respond" (*The Baptist Deacon*, p. 98).

Just to be enrolled and in attendance of the spiritual growth programme of his church does not mean that is all there is for the deacon to do in this programme. To fully support the programme the deacon will (1) promote the several opportunities for spiritual growth in his church. (2) He will actively encourage others to participate in opportunities for spiritual growth. (3) He will be a leader in the programme when called upon to be a teacher or administrator. (4) He will put into practice any training he receives so others can experience spiritual growth through his leadership. "Once a man is elected as a deacon, he no longer has a choice as to 'whether' he will set an example in training - the only decision that he can make concerns the 'kind' of example it will be" (Sam Brents, *The Deacon Sets An Example* - Compiled by L.J. Newton Jr.).

THE DEACON MINISTERS BY EXAMPLE IN HIS PERSONAL LIFESTYLE

Should the congregation that has ordained a deacon expect more of that deacon in personal commitment than it expects from other members of the congregation? The Apostle Paul gives the best answer to this question in his first letter to his spiritual son, Timothy. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Set the believers an example" (1 Timothy 4:12). No one would deny that this admonition applies to all Christians, but it especially reinforces the need for the deacon to be an exemplary example. People of all ages are looking for lifestyles which serve as an example to follow. In a Baptist congregation the deacon is one of the first people to whom members of the congregation look toward for the example of Christian lifestyle, that is, the manner or way in which a Christian lives day by day.

The deacon who sets before others an example of Christian living to follow is showing what the Christian life is really like. He is also showing that those who selected him to be a deacon were not wrong in their choice of him to serve in the deaconship of the church.

Paul, in writing to Timothy, gave a list of the areas in which an example is to be set before the people. The areas are: "In speech and conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." All of these areas touch the personal life of an individual.

"In speech"

The words which a person speaks with his mouth reflect the inner being of the person. The words or language used by a deacon in his daily activities reflect the kind of person the deacon really is in his heart. The deacon can enjoy things which are humorous but not participate in stories that are vile and vulgar, that is, wicked and immoral.

The deacon should be pleasant in his speech, using language which is respectful, pure and moral. His language should be what he knows the Lord Jesus Christ would use in like circumstances, events and places. The kind of language the deacon uses in everyday activities, circumstances and situations is the

The deacon also sets a worthy example of church loyalty and support by actively supporting the total programme of spiritual ministry of the church. The Baptist church is democratic in its organization. Deacons are instrumental in making plans and policies for the congregation. They should discuss issues that are of vital concern to the church, but they should also have a willingness to be open to other opinions. The welfare and best interest of the congregation should be of the utmost importance in decision making.

Deacons are team members even though there are individual duties which they will do personally. Working together as a team is a characteristic of a spiritually progressive church. Harmony among deacons will set the example before other groups in the church and will promote harmony within these groups. A deacon with a dislike for a certain programme in the church will weaken the effectiveness of the deacon body in its promotion of the total programme of ministry in the church.

Conclusion:

The New Testament church in Acts grew in numbers as well as in spiritual maturity because of the unity which was found in the congregations. The church of today is challenged to be strong and united in Christ as it faces the challenges of many opportunities for ministry. The deacons of the churches of today face the tremendous challenge of ministering by example. People are watching the deacons of the church. The deacon's conduct, good or bad, will be significant and permanent. A genuine love for Christ and his church will be the foundation of a deacon's ministry which is characterized by leading by example.

THE DEACON MINISTERS BY EXAMPLE IN SUPPORTING THE PASTOR AND THE CHURCH'S PROGRAMME OF SPIRITUAL MINISTRY

The ordination ceremony of the deacon has a special significance for a man unlike any other life experience which he experiences. The ceremony is simple, meaningful and unforgettable. After all the formalities of the ordination ceremony have finished, the deacon goes forth as an example in Christian leadership by supporting his pastor and the programme of spiritual ministry of his church.

The responsibilities of the pastor are many. Unfortunately the demands on the pastor have become so many, that most pastors do not have the necessary time to prepare adequately for the hour of preaching the Word of God to the congregation on Sunday morning. In trying to meet all the demands placed upon him, the pastor becomes overburdened physically and emotionally. The deacon can help relieve some of these demands upon his pastor. Two ways of helping are meeting with committees and visiting members who are sick on behalf of the pastor. This is not to say that the pastor should neglect visiting the sick, attending committee meetings and doing other things which he, the pastor, should do. It is saying that by doing some of these things from time to time on behalf of the pastor, the deacon will be providing his pastor with more time for praying and giving himself to the study of God's Word as he prepares to speak God's message to the people on Sunday morning. Isn't this why the Seven were chosen in Acts 6? Should not deacons of today help their pastor in the same way?

The deacon will also give an example of support to his pastor by regularly and consistently praying for his pastor. The pastor feels a special spiritual freedom when he knows that his deacons are regularly and consistently praying for him. Deacons who are praying for their pastor's physical, emotional and spiritual needs will look for ways to help meet these needs.

measurement people will use to measure his integrity as a deacon. *"Action" or "Conduct"*

In his actions the deacon must be above reproach, that is, he is to be found blameless. The people of a church and particularly of the community where the deacon lives and the place where he works are always observing the way in which the deacon conducts himself. Questions which people are consciously or unconsciously asking about the deacon are these: Does the deacon give good work in his employment? Is the deacon faithful to turn up at his employment? Does the deacon who is a businessman use Christian principles in his business with his customers and employees? Does he treat his employees with Christian integrity? Does the deacon choose recreational facilities and activities which are morally and ethically acceptable for a Christian? Does the deacon treat his family with respect and honour? (Respect and honour means more than providing them with a house in which to live, food to eat and clothing to wear. It means looking upon each family member as being of worth as a person.)

"In faith"

The deacon's personal life gives a true reflection of his faith. Whether or not the deacon is living by faith is manifestly observable in his life. If one is not living "by faith" in his personal spiritual life, then there is no way he can be an example of "living by faith" unto others with whom he has contact. The deacon is to live life believing that God is in control of life, events and circumstances. The deacon manifests his faith by consistently talking with God in prayer. When hard times arise for him, the deacon will be able to go through the difficult times because of his genuine faith in God and in his knowledge that God is working all things together for good. This genuine faith on the part of the deacon is in complete agreement with the hymn writer who wrote. "Have faith in God, he's on his throne; Have faith in God, he watches o'er his own; He cannot fail, he must prevail, Have faith in God, have faith in God."

"In purity"

The moral integrity of the deacon must always be above reproach or accusation. If the deacon's life is less than that of moral integrity, there is no way in which he can set a worthy example

before the people of his church and community. The true sense of the idea of purity is found in the hymn line, "Be clean and pure without, within; let others see Jesus in you." There is no place in the deaconship of a church for a deacon who compromises morality. If a deacon compromises his Christian morality, that one should be dismissed immediately from his office with the church declaring publicly that it has withdrawn the deacon's ordination. The church which ordains a deacon has the authority and right to retract one's ordination. Immorality is grounds for such a retraction of ordination.

1:12; Acts 4:19; Acts 16:30,31; Ephesians 2:4,5; 8-10; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2; Romans 1:16-17. These Scriptures can be used in the order in which they have been given for a plan of salvation in witnessing to a non-believer. There are other Scriptures which can also be used in sharing one's faith in Jesus Christ.

No deacon should be satisfied with anything less than being the best soul-winner he possibly can be for the sake of Christ, the Lord. By setting such an example before other church members, the deacon will be an inspiration for other church members to become soul-winners.

THE DEACON MINISTERS BY EXAMPLE IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

That deacons are to be personally involved in evangelism cannot be better illustrated than in the life of the deacon, Philip. "Philip ran to him (the Ethiopian eunuch). . . and beginning with the Scripture (Isaiah 53:7,8) he told him the good news of Jesus" (Acts 8:30, 35). Philip, the deacon, led the Ethiopian eunuch to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Philip, it will be remembered, was one of the seven men chosen by the Jerusalem church for the spiritual ministry of service in the church. He, along with the six other men, was set aside for this special ministry by the Apostles as the Lord's servants in the church.

Philip was honest, filled with the Holy Spirit and was wise in decision making. Undoubtedly he was also compassionate toward others, exercised openly his faith in Jesus, was enthusiastic about his faith in Jesus, and was truthful. He knew Jesus Christ personally, people and the Word of God; and he was always ready to share a witness of his Lord and faith with others.

Philip's example as a deacon involved in soul-winning has always been a challenge for deacons to follow. His example is a testimony that deacons are to be examples to other church members to be involved in personal evangelism. No deacon should be satisfied with giving support to personal evangelism with the words of his mouth only. His satisfaction should be in his personal involvement in evangelism, that is, sharing his personal knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Word of God with people. Although it is not an absolute requirement that the one being set aside to the office of deacon be a soul-winner, the one being set aside should have a good report among the church membership as being one who consistently and deliberately shares his faith in Jesus Christ with non-believers. In sharing his faith, the deacon will use the Word of God to show the non-believer his present standing (the non-believer before God) and how he can be reconciled to God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Some Scriptures which can be used in personal soul-winning are: John 20:31; 1 Timothy 1:15; John 3:15-21; Romans 6:23; John

THE DEACON MINISTERS BY EXAMPLE IN HIS FAMILY LIFE

The home life of a deacon is a very serious matter. In 1 Timothy 3 it is very clear from the qualifications for deacons given by Paul that the home life of the deacon is to be exemplary. This applies to the home life of one being considered for serving as a deacon, and an exemplary home life is to be carried over after one is ordained as a deacon. In what ways is the home of a deacon to be exemplary?

One way is that the deacon accepts the responsibility for and begins a programme of family worship in his home. The deacon, knowing that God is to be honoured with worship in the home as well as in the church, will lead his family in regular times of devotional worship in the home. If there are no devotional helps available to give guidance in family worship, the deacon can read passages of Scripture to his family and then lead the family in a time of prayer.

The time for family worship will depend upon the schedule of activities for the family. Some families will find the morning to be good for them while others will find the evening to be best for their time of family worship.

A deacon leads his family to worship and minister in the local church. Families need cooperate worship as well as family worship. The deacon's family is no exception to this need. Involving his family in worship and ministry in the church's programme of worship and ministry will bring about a closeness in the family that is not possible in any other way. It will bring about a spiritual unity bonded by the grace of God in a family. By involving his family, and especially the children in cooperate worship and ministry, the deacon is teaching the family that worship and ministry with a local congregation is important and necessary for their spiritual growth. This will help the children to accept spiritual values for themselves personally rather than just accepting and going along with the spiritual values of the parents.

The deacon realizes that the home life his children experience will be very influential in the way his children will live when they become adults and establish their own families. Stability in the

marriage of the deacon provides a wonderful background for his children to experience stability in their marriages later on in life. Children from Christian homes usually establish Christian homes for their families.

The importance of a Christian home life in the home of a deacon cannot be over emphasized. Deacons are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. Deacons are to encourage and admonish their children in the Lord Jesus Christ. By doing these and other things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the deacon sets an exemplary standard of Christian home life.

CHAPTER 9

THE DEACON MINISTERS BY EXAMPLE IN THE VISITATION OF NEW CHURCH MEMBERS

In all churches a part of the Sunday morning worship service is welcoming visitors to the worship service. Visitors are told how welcome they are in the worship service. Some return and become members of the church. But, sometimes, the friendliness and feeling of welcome becomes cold.

A very important need in churches is that of helping new church members feel they are a part of the church family. Deacons can have an effective ministry in the area of new church members becoming a part of the family of the local congregation. Deacons can help in this spiritual ministry by being involved in a new members visitation programme. By being involved in this type of visitation programme, deacons are meeting New Testament standards, aiding the pastor, strengthening their own confidence in ministry and strengthening the church family. By adding his visit to the new church member with those visits of the pastor and other church members, the deacon is setting a proper Christian example of care and concern for the individual.

Because the deacon is a mature Christian, he will be able to minister to the needs of the new church member. He can answer questions about Baptist beliefs, practices and doctrines, the organizational structure of the Baptist church and opportunities of ministry which are available to the new member in the church's programme of spiritual ministry. He is able to share with a new member how he will be benefited by actively participating in the total church programme. Making a new member feel totally free in his new church home is necessary and important. The deacon is in a position to help a new church member feel that he truly has a church home and is a vital part of the church family.

“Deacons’ visitation of new church members follows the biblical example. It fulfils a spiritual ministry. It aids the pastor. It motivates the deacons. It makes an otherwise cold church seem warm with true Christian fellowship.” (W. M. Severance, *The Deacon Sets An Example*, compiled by R. V. Newton, Jr.)

of their church's programme of ministry other than just being a deacon. A deacon could serve as a Sunday school teacher, be active in one or more committees of the church, serve as a general officer in the church such as church chairman, treasurer, secretary or Sunday school superintendent. He can be a leader in the men's programme or serve as a section leader of the church. When deacons refuse to serve in other areas of their church's programme of ministry, there should be serious questions about their being deacons.

Deacons should be willing to serve wherever their talents and gifts of ministry may be used and needed. They have the necessary spiritual qualifications and convictions to do these jobs well. There should always be a willingness on the part of deacons to be servants in the church wherever they are needed in leadership.

The spiritual advancement of the association and the Convention is directly related to the quality of leadership found in the local church. Without quality leadership in the local church, everyone suffers -- the church, the association and the Convention. Deacons should be at the forefront in setting the example of leading the way toward Christian maturity by providing quality Christian leadership in the local church's programme of spiritual ministry.

CHAPTER 6

DEACONS MINISTER BY EXAMPLE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

The deacon who is a businessman has a special opportunity of bearing a true witness of his salvation in Jesus Christ. The business world is dominated by people who try to acquire as much wealth as possible. Some will use whatever means are available to them to acquire wealth. They use people as objects in any way to accumulate more wealth for themselves. These people who are hungry for wealth have no compassion for anyone who may suffer as a result of unfair prices, inferior products, improper working conditions and abuse of labour laws.

The deacon who is a businessman finds himself in an area of life where a Christian witness is often not lived or verbally expressed. The deacon businessman who has experienced salvation in Jesus Christ knows the value which God places on people, and he knows the moral ways and means of conducting his business. He also knows what is right and just in the treatment of those whom he has employed in his business. The deacon who is a businessman must be fair and just in pricing his product, and he must treat his employees with justice, respect and integrity. If he fails to do these things, then his credibility as a Christian is nothing. The deacon businessman should acknowledge Jesus Christ as the true owner of his business and himself as the steward. If this is the case, then there will be no occasion for any unjust and unfair accusations to be brought against him.

The deacon who is a businessman can and must be different in his business dealings from the businessman who is unfair and unjust in his business practices. The business world desperately needs the witness of Jesus Christ. Who is in a better position to give such a witness to the business world and its customers than the businessman who is a deacon? In using Christian ethics in all aspects of his business the deacon businessman is assured of the promise found in Colossians 3:24, "Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ."

THE DEACON MINISTERS BY EXAMPLE IN HIS PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT

The Apostle Paul sets forth a principle in Colossians 3:22-25 which applies to the Christian who is employed at a job. Although the passage is not directly addressed to deacons, it does apply to them in their employment. Paul encouraged Christians to work at their employment as if they were working for the Lord Jesus Christ instead of an employer.

The deacon who is employed has an opportunity not only of witnessing to his faith on the job but also to set an example to his fellow workers of a Christian approach to his job. This means that the deacon will always make an effort to do his best on his job. He will not loaf on the job. He will give his employer one hundred percent effort and attention to the job during the working time. In other words, the deacon will honestly earn his salary by doing the good quality work which his employer is paying him to do. The Christian layman, especially the one who has been selected by his fellow church members to the office of deacon, can best carry the good news of Christ into the factories, stores, shops, engineering firms, banks, government offices, and other working places. The deacon has experienced the good news of Christ. He personally knows Jesus Christ and can speak of him with authority. Deacons in the work force are well equipped to bear witness of Christ in this vital area where false gods compete for the allegiance of people who need to come to know the true God, Jesus Christ.

A quietly spoken word of the assurance of the presence of Christ in a time of crisis from the deacon to a fellow worker in the company canteen or while sitting together on the tea break can often open the door of the heart of a fellow worker who is a non-believer in Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, foul language, failure to do the work required, lying about sickness or funerals to have extra time off will lead the deacon's fellow workers, who are non-believers, to conclude: His standards are just the same as mine; he is just cheating.

THE DEACON MINISTERS BY EXAMPLE IN ACCEPTING SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

Deacons are expected to attend deacon's meetings, help serve the Lord's Supper, help with baptism services in some instances, help in funeral services, weddings, counsel new church members as well as counsel in some other matters of the church's programme of ministry. In light of all the assigned and unassigned responsibilities of the deacons, should the church expect a deacon to accept other responsibilities in the church which are not directly related to the office of the deacon? Does being a "deacon" provide grounds for refusal to accept other responsibilities in the church?

The New Testament does not answer all the questions which have been asked about the first deacons. However, there are three things about the first deacons which the New Testament makes very clear: (1) the highest Christian standards were used in the selection of the first deacons; (2) the service or ministry of the first deacons was carried out in a spirit of humility; (3) the ministry of the first deacons was a spiritual ministry as well as a service ministry.

Each member of the church is accountable for the way in which a church uses its deacon body. If the deaconship has become a ruling body over the congregation, then this has been allowed to happen because of spiritual laziness on the part of the church's membership. Even though the deacon body in conjunction with the pastor is to give spiritual guidance and counsel to the congregation, the church and the deacon body must realize that the main ministry of the deacons is that of ministering to the deep spiritual needs of the church. If churches give the office of deacon to someone on the basis of personal popularity rather than on Christian leadership abilities and character, then an examination needs to be made as to why such a situation has been allowed to happen and exist.

When a person accepts the responsibility of being a deacon, he accepts the responsibility of giving spiritual leadership. Deacons need to be willing to accept places of responsibility in other areas