

LESSON1

DEACON AND MINISTER 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 can 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 been...
5. The most important work a deacon does is...
6. My dream for the deacon 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 deal 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.

SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS INTERPRETTED

I Timothy 3:8-13

1. The qualifications listed are like those listed for the pastor in 1 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 be deacons be grave” (KJV/3:8) or, “Deacons too, must be serious.” (Williams 3:8) Sermons (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 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, tale bearing, 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 addicted 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 excess in personal living.
 - d) **STEWARDSHIP 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 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 wrongdoing 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. “Game,” 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 “woman” Many biblical scholars hold to this translation for other reasons:
1. The words “even so” are the translations of *housos*, 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 pronouns in the Greek, which would be necessary if the women were the wives of deacons.
 3. The four qualifications (grave nor 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 SLANDERS 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. Williams E Hull interprets this to mean at least three things:

1. 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.
2. Second, the deacon is to be a model of a faithful devotion to one wife: any type of immoral or extramarital relationship is repudiated.
3. Third, it reminds the deacon of his commitment to the sanctity of the marriage bond which is to continue “so long as you 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.
4. Because of our tradition 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 certainly a part of the meaning.
 - 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.

- 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.

REFERENCE: James E. White and Robert L. Sheffield, Authors-Compilers, *Equipping Deacons to Confront Conflict* (Nashville, Convention Press, 1987).

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) Make 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.

Here are some 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 Rolen 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.

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 steward ship, 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.

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 otherwise 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.

l. 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 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: _____

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.

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.

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.

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.

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,