

# DEACONS

*The deacon is one of only two church offices described in the New Testament (1Tim. 3:8-13; Phil. 1:1). Because of the deacon's honorable position as servant to the church, and his impact on the continued growth and unity of the congregation, the scriptures lay out particular qualifications for men who are selected for this office.*

## DIGNIFIED

The Greek word translated "dignified" (semnos) refers to something that is honorable, respectable, or esteemed. The deacon must be characterized as a person who is honored and respected by those who know them.

## NOT DOUBLE-TONGUED

People who are "double-tongued" (1 Tim. 3:8) say one thing to certain people but something else to others, or they say one thing but mean another. They are two-faced or insincere. Their words cannot be trusted, and thus they lack credibility. Deacons therefore, must be the type of people who are careful with their tongues, not saying what they should not, being faithful to the truth in their speech.

## NOT ADDICTED TO ALCOHOL (1TIM. 3:8)

An individual is disqualified for the office of deacon if they are a drunkard. Such a person lacks self-control and is walking in the flesh (Gal. 5:21). The abuse of alcohol is a problem in most cultures and often results in ruined lives, marriages, and ministries.

## NOT GREEDY (1TIM. 3:8)

Greed is a sure sign of a heart that is discontent with what God has provided. It often leads to immoral or unethical behavior. The love of money is a serious problem because a man cannot love God and material wealth (Matt. 6:24). Deacons should be free from the love and controlling influence of money. They are supposed to be servants of the church.

*A deacon ministers in a position of dignity and honor as he faithfully serves God and others. Scripture says, "Those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 3:13). In other words, a deacon who follows God's plans gains a good standing or respected reputation as a servant in the church. He gains boldness in the faith, which in turn evokes even greater service.*

**NOW IN THESE DAYS WHEN THE DISCIPLES WERE INCREASING IN NUMBER, A COMPLAINT BY THE HELLENISTS AROSE AGAINST THE HEBREWS BECAUSE THEIR WIDOWS WERE BEING NEGLECTED IN THE DAILY DISTRIBUTION. AND THE TWELVE SUMMONED THE FULL NUMBER OF THE DISCIPLES AND SAID, "IT IS NOT RIGHT THAT WE SHOULD GIVE UP PREACHING THE WORD OF GOD TO SERVE TABLES. THEREFORE, BROTHERS, PICK OUT FROM AMONG YOU SEVEN MEN OF GOOD REPUTE, FULL OF THE SPIRIT AND OF WISDOM, WHOM WE WILL APPOINT TO THIS DUTY. BUT WE WILL DEVOTE OURSELVES TO PRAYER AND TO THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD." AND WHAT THEY SAID PLEASED THE WHOLE GATHERING... (ACTS 6:1-5)**

## SOUND IN FAITH AND LIFE

Deacons are to hold firm to the true gospel without wavering. They must have strong doctrinal beliefs unlike those who suffered the shipwreck of their faith (1Tim. 1:19), or those who seared their consciences (1Tim. 4:2). But this qualification is not merely about beliefs, it extends to their behavior. "Holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience" indicates that theological knowledge must be accompanied with appropriate behavior.

## TESTED (1 TIM. 3:10)

Although Paul does not specify what type of testing is to take place, at minimum, the deacon candidate's personal background, spiritual health, moral reputation, and theological positions should be examined. The church should also consider the person's actual service in the church. A person with a deacon's heart is one who looks for opportunities to serve.

## HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE (1TIM. 3:12)

The deacon must be faithful to his wife in a monogamous relationship. There must be no other woman in his life to whom he relates emotionally or physically. This qualification would include the prohibition of polygamy, promiscuity, and homosexuality. He must honor, love, and be devoted to his wife and her alone.

## MANAGES CHILDREN AND HOUSEHOLD WELL (1 TIM. 3:12)

A deacon must have respectful, obedient children, because they become a reflection of the dedication and commitment the individual has of training them.

# THE ROLE OF DEACONS

*Based on the New Testament, the role of the deacon is mainly a servant role. Deacons are needed in the church to provide logistical and material support so that the elders can concentrate their efforts on the Word of God and prayer. Deacons are not responsible to teach or spiritually lead the congregation, but instead provide oversight in the service-oriented functions of the church. At this time in the life of Gospel Peace Church, the pastors believe that deacons are needed for the proper and healthy functioning of the ministry.*

*Below are some ways deacons could potentially serve:*

## Hospitality & Fellowship

## Ordinance Logistics (Baptism & Communion)

## Mercy & Compassion

## Benevolence & Care

## Encouragement & Community Care

## Acts of Service

## Sunday Logistics

## Service Technology

# OUR CONSTITUTION ON DEACONS

*The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The church shall recognize, nominate and elect those who are scripturally qualified and given to the service of the church. These shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.*

*New deacons shall be nominated by the congregation, screened for qualification, ability, and desire by the pastor/elder(s) and then voted upon by the congregation at a regularly scheduled members' meeting. The number of deacons at Gospel Peace Church shall correlate with the need as determined by the pastor/elder(s), and the availability of able, qualified, and willing individuals. A deacon shall be elected to a two-year term. A deacon may be reelected for consecutive terms as long as both the deacon and the pastor/elder(s) concur with the unbroken extension. There may be times when the best interests of the church and/or the deacon's family are served by sabbatical rest. In such cases, reelection would be declined by the pastor/elder(s) and/or the deacon for at least one term*

*Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and serve the church in ways that promote and benefit the ministry. They shall disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the pastor/elder(s) at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements.*