

Deacon Selection Criteria

The Deacon Ministry of River Bend Baptist Church Fulshear, Texas

AUTHORITY

I. Church constitution and by-laws

The church shall elect deacons by ballot at business meetings of the church. There may be one deacon elected for every eight to ten church families. Any man who meets **the scriptural qualifications for deacons (I Timothy 3:8-13)**, and **has been a member of this church for at least one year** shall be eligible for election to the office of deacon. **Prior to the election, he must affirm by interview, that he is willing and able to serve, and that he meets the qualifications recorded in the Holy Scriptures.** Any unordained man newly elected must be ordained as soon as possible.

Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis with no less than six serving at any one time. Each year the assigned term of office of thirty-three percent (33%) of the number of deacons shall expire, and an election shall be held to fill vacancies and to add to the deacons such numbers as the church size warrants. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term. After serving a three-year term, **a deacon shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one year.** The church may recognize a deacon ordained in another church but is under no obligation to assign him as an active deacon.

In accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. **Their task is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministry tasks of (1) leading the church in the achievement of its mission; (2) proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers; and (3) caring for the church's members and other persons in the community.**

QUALIFICATIONS

II. Qualification requirements based on Acts 6:2-6 (NKJV)

"Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them."

- a) **"Seek out from among you"** – church members, in like faith and order. Deacons selected for service at River Bend Baptist Church must be members in good standing, at least 21 years old, and qualify under the requirements established by Scripture and the church constitution and by-laws.
- b) **"Men of good reputation"** – attested character and repute among those inside and outside the church.
- c) **"Full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom"** – displays personal devotion and gives evidence of spiritual growth, displaying their particular gift along with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). Wisdom is born in a relationship to God (James 1:5).
- d) **"Whom we may put in charge of this task"** – deacons serve under the direction of the spiritual leadership of the church and are called upon to perform many and varied functions in the church.
- e) **"The saying pleased the whole multitude"** – approved by the church body; someone the Church can be pleased with and whose personal actions are motivated by his saving faith.
- f) **"they laid hands on them"** – the church leadership (the apostles) ordained these men for service.

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III. Qualification requirements based on I Timothy 3:8-13 (NKJV)

"Likewise, deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless. Likewise, *their wives must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

- g) **"Likewise, deacons"** – In the same manner as or just like the bishop or elder in I Timothy 3:1-8.
- h) **"Must be reverent"** – Reverence for spiritual matters, serious, mature character, dignified, venerable or honorable. Implies a right relationship with God making them men who are respected in the church and community.
- i) **"Not double-tongued"** – An honest, consistent, truthful man who avoids deception and can be trusted with confidential information. Not a person who says one thing to one person and something else to another.
- j) **"Not given to much wine"** – Judgment not clouded by drugs, alcohol or other dissipations. A temperate and vigilant man living beyond reproach.
- k) **"Not greedy for money"** – A man who sees money as a tool for the benefit of ministry and the welfare of others, not something to be hoarded for himself. This is a condition of the heart that rejects dishonest gain of all kinds.
- l) **"Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience"** – Men selected as deacons should be growing in a clearer and stronger faith and possess a conviction that God has something for each of us to do.
- m) **"Let these also first be tested"** – There is to be an ongoing evaluation of a deacon's character and service by the church, an active accountability. A man's life needs to be examined beyond a simple good personality or apparent zeal. "Let each one examine his own work" – Galatians 6:4, RBBC **believes that a candidate for deacon must be a member of RBBC for at least one year as a minimum examination period.**
- n) **"Being found blameless"** – A man must have no charge of wrongdoing that can be brought against him. He must be a man above reproach. It does not mean that he is a perfect man.
- o) **"Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things"** – *Reverent* – the deacon's wife should be serious in mind and character, not flippant. *Not slanderers* – the deacon's wife must not be a gossip, nor malicious in her speech. *Temperate* – the deacon's wife must be an alert, watchful, vigilant, clear-headed person. *Faithful in all things* – a deacon's wife must be trustworthy in all her ministry activities.
- p) **"Let deacons be the husbands of one wife"** – Literally a one-woman man. This reflects the character of a man who is morally and sexually pure, free from pornography or extramarital interests, devoted totally to his own wife, second only to his devotion to God. He believes in the sanctity of marriage as created by God. **RBBC believes that some men with divorce in their past can serve as a deacon as outlined in the Bible. These exceptions include cases when the wife committed adultery (Matthew 19:3-9) or abandoned the marriage (I Corinthians 7:10-15), or the divorce occurred when the deacon candidate was not a believer (II Corinthians 5:17). Should you be nominated with any of these circumstances you will need to speak with the Pastor.**
- q) **"Ruling their children and their own houses well"** – The deacon must manage the affairs of his house in an exemplary manner, demonstrating strong leadership and good judgment in all areas. As evidence of this his children should be obedient and respectful evidencing a genuine faith. It does not mean he is a perfect household manager with perfect children.
- r) **"Served well as deacons"** – Those who have taken their responsibilities as deacons seriously knowing that they have received them from God.
- s) **Obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Jesus Christ** – Here the impact and reward of the deacon is seen. His good service is evident to all including the Lord and gives him great boldness in the church and community as he presents Christ to those around him.