

**Deacon Policy &
Procedures
Manual
First Baptist Church
Lawton, OK**

Developed: 2008

Revision 1: 2018

Revision 2: 2025

Introduction

Background: In January of 2008 at First Baptist Church, Lawton, Oklahoma a committee of deacons was elected to research policies and procedures to be included in the church Policy & Procedures manual. This committee was charged to address specific issues regarding the selection process of deacons.

Several documents and policy manuals were reviewed from other biblically-based Southern Baptist churches. Additionally, research into the exegesis of the passages outlined in the Bylaws, specifically 1 Timothy 3:8-13 were conducted. Our hope in this endeavor was to produce a document that was Biblically based and practical in helping to streamline the deacon selection process. In that endeavor we took the position that the scriptures will always outweigh the “Traditions of men” (Mark 7:8).

The office of deacon is not to be taken lightly. The word *diakonos* is defined as “one who serves at tables” or “one who renders service to another.” In the New Testament the term *diakonos* refers to the office of a deacon. The term deacon involves the basic duty of rendering service to benefit others. It is critical that every Deacon Candidate have a clear understanding of the position before accepting the position. The deacon exemplifies a lifestyle of service from a heart of love and gratitude, that is, a life filled with love and grace. A deacon chooses freely to minister to others.

In August 2024, the deacon body authorized a committee to review/revise the Deacon Policy and Procedures Manual which was presented to the deacon body and approved.

We recognize that some men in the church may not meet the Biblical qualifications set out to serve in the office of deacon. This should in no way limit their ability or desire to serve in the church. We encourage men and women to utilize their gifts and abilities in the service to God through the church.

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Section 1: Deacon Officers

A. Officers & Duties:

The Deacon body of First Baptist Church, Lawton, shall have three elected officers: Deacon Chairman, Deacon Vice-Chair and Deacon Secretary. Each shall be elected to serve in this office for a term of one year. Officers are not limited to a single term in office. While on some occasions the vice chair has also served as “chair elect” this is not required.

Chairman of Deacons: Shall meet with the pastor regularly to keep abreast of the needs of the church in relation to the deacon body. The Chairman shall plan the agenda and moderate all deacon’s meetings. The Chairman shall also serve as an ex-officio member of various committees of the church as noted in the Church Policy and Procedures Manual, Committee section. In the absence of a pastor the Chairman shall moderate church business meetings.

Vice Chairman of Deacons: Shall assist the Chairman as needed in carrying out the duties of the Chairman of deacons. In the absence of the Chairman of deacons the Vice Chair shall moderate deacon’s meetings. The Vice-chair shall oversee the deacon ministry activities. The Vice chair, at the instruction of the Deacon Chair may attend various committee meetings in an ex-officio capacity if needed.

Deacon Secretary: Shall compose the minutes of all regularly scheduled and specially called business meetings. The secretary shall present copies of said minutes for consideration at Deacon’s meetings. The Secretary shall maintain attendance at deacon’s meetings.

B. Nominations Committee

A nominating committee shall be elected to present a slate of officers or Ad Hoc Committee for consideration. The nominating committee shall be comprised of at least three deacons. They shall contact prospective nominees regarding their consent to serve if elected.

C. Officer Elections

The deacon nominating committee shall present its slate of officers for consideration at the regularly scheduled deacons meeting in March of each year. In keeping with Robert’s Rules of Order, additional nominations shall be considered from the floor. Elections shall be held for each of the respective offices. A simple majority vote is required to assume office. Newly elected officers shall assume office on April 1 following the vote.

Section 2: Deacon Selection

Biblical Qualifications of a Deacon

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (NIV) (additional language from KJV, NASB and Amplified)

Worthy of Respect (Men of Dignity)

Sincere (Not Double Tongued)

Not Indulging in Much Wine (See #1 above also Romans 14:21 NASB “It is not good to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles)

Not Greedy for money [craving wealth and resorting to ignoble and dishonest methods of getting it]

Keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

Husband of one wife

Manages his children and household well.

Confident in their faith in Christ (Able to share their faith with others)

Acts 6:1-6

Full of the Holy Spirit

Full of Wisdom

Full of Faith

Qualifications for the Wife of a Deacon (1 Timothy 3:11)

Worthy of respect

Not malicious talker

Temperate

Trustworthy in everything

Deacon Selection & Ordination Procedure:

In accordance with the Church Constitution “A periodic evaluation shall be made by the deacon body to determine the need for additional deacons to equalize the workload of the deacon body. If it is deemed that additional deacons are needed, nominations or prospective deacons may be made by any member of the deacon body. The nomination process shall be conducted during a normal deacon meeting at the discretion of the Deacon Chair and/or Lead/Senior Pastor.

The Chairman shall then appoint a Processing and Interview Committee (PIC) comprised of three (3) deacons to process and interview the nominees. The committee shall review the nominees and determine, based on church records and screenings by the financial secretary, the eligibility of nominees. If each nominee is qualified to serve under Bylaws Article II, Section 2 Deacons, criteria 3 (a deacon must be at least 21 years of age) & 4 (a deacon must have been a member of First Baptist Church of Lawton, Oklahoma, for at least one (1) year before being elected to the office of deacon. If the nominees meet the criteria of numbers three and four, the PIC shall determine of the candidate the willingness to serve as a deacon.

Individuals who have been previously ordained in another Southern Baptist church (a member of First Baptist Church Lawton for at least 1 year) shall undergo the same qualification review and interviewing process as deacon nominees. Nominees who have previously served at First Baptist Lawton shall be reviewed by the PIC to insure they still meet the qualifications for serving as a Deacon at First Baptist Church. The Deacon Discipline Policy may be consulted for additional guidelines if an issue is discovered. The PIC may at its discretion seek an in-person interview with these nominees.

The PIC shall arrange to interview the candidates in person. There shall be at least two members of the interview committee present during the interview. The interview committee should reaffirm the answers from the Deacon Questionnaire and then proceed with the interview. Please see the Interview Committee Question section for questions to use during this process. After the candidates have met with and been confirmed by the PIC and have agreed to serve, their names will be published to the church. If any church member with an objection to a candidate may do so in writing to the Pastor. The Pastor will meet with the candidate privately to review the objection. If necessary the Pastor will reconvene the PIC to review the objection. Once they are confirmed by the deacon body they shall undergo a period of orientation and training. Candidates who have been previously ordained at another church may choose to go through the orientation to familiarize themselves with the deacon ministry of First Baptist, Lawton. Candidates who have not previously been ordained as deacons shall be presented for ordination upon completion of the orientation and training.

IAW the Church Constitution, “The term of service for deacons is indefinite; however, this service may be terminated by the deacon’s resignation or removal from the office by the deacon body for reasons of a deacon’s moral misconduct and/or doctrinal heresy.”

Deacons Orientation and Training:

Confirmed deacon candidates are men who have been through the nomination process and have been interviewed but have not yet been ordained.

1. All confirmed deacon candidates shall receive some form of training/orientation at the discretion of the Deacon Chair and/or Lead/Senior Pastor.
2. During this training time confirmed deacon candidates shall attend deacon’s meetings as non voting members.

3. The Pastor & Deacon Chair shall oversee the administration of the deacon training / orientation program.
4. During the training / orientation the confirmed deacon candidate shall be partnered with an ordained deacon to assist in the Deacon Family Ministry Plan.
5. Upon completion of the training/orientation the confirmed deacon candidate shall be scheduled for ordination.

Section 3 Deacon Discipline

Removal from office of Deacon:

The following section is perhaps the most sensitive in nature and should always be approached with much prayer. The goal in any church discipline is restoration and reconciliation. That being said there are circumstances which require discipline and accountability to resolve.

The Bylaws provide that a deacon may be removed from office for reasons of moral misconduct and/or doctrinal heresy. This section seeks to provide guidance for such action when it is deemed necessary.

When an offense is discovered that falls into either of the above categories the Biblical principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 shall be the basis for action, "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Galatians 6:1-2 further states, "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ." (scriptures quoted are from the New American Standard Bible)

If a deacon is discovered to have engaged in either moral misconduct or biblical heresy the following should be observed:

1) If the person observing the offending conduct is a deacon he should privately meet with the offending deacon and prayerfully and with a gentle but firm attitude confront the individual. The goal is to seek for repentance and restoration.

2) If the person observing the offending conduct is a church member he or she should notify the Chairman of Deacons. If the Chair is the offending party the Vice Chair should be notified. Once the Chair has been notified he and the reporting party should meet privately with the offending deacon. Once again the goal is for repentance and restoration.

3) If the offending deacon refuses to repent the Chair and Vice Chair along with the Pastor shall meet with him. If the offending deacon is a deacon officer the Pastor and one or two other deacons shall serve in this role. The goal remains to seek repentance and restoration.

4) If the offending deacon refuses to repent he shall be brought before the entire Deacon Body and the evidence of his misconduct or biblical heresy shall be presented. The Deacon Body will seek repentance and restoration at this time. If none is forthcoming the offending Deacon may be removed from the deacon body.

Note: If the offending deacon repents at either step 3 or 4 above it is in the best interest of all involved if a system of accountability is implemented to assist the repenting deacon to maintain proper conduct. Such accountability should involve mature deacons who can wisely draw alongside the repentant deacon to walk him back to a restored position. During this process the Chairman of Deacons may ask that deacon be suspended from ministering as a deacon in the ongoing ministries of First Baptist Church until such a time as it is felt he no longer has a problem with either moral conduct or Biblical heresy.

Deacon Candidate Questionnaire:

You have been nominated by someone in the church to serve in the office of deacon. Please review the Deacon Qualifications and then answer the following questions. Please return this questionnaire to the Chairman of Deacons or the church office. If you have consented to serve, you will be contacted by an interview committee.

Name _____ Age _____

Spouse's Name _____ Years Married _____

Children's Names _____ Age _____
_____ Age _____
_____ Age _____
_____ Age _____

Would you consent to serve as a deacon if selected? _____
(If the answer is No, thank you for your consideration. Please return this form to the Deacon Chair)

How long have you been a member of First Baptist Church _____

When did you make a Profession of Faith? _____

Name of the church wherein your profession of faith was made. _____

Of what churches have you been a member during the last ten years? _____

In what areas of service have you been involved at First Baptist Lawton? _____

Have you served on any committees at First Baptist Lawton? Please list them. _____

Have you ever been divorced? _____

Are you involved in, or do you own any business interest that would "tarnish" the name of Jesus? _____

Do you drink alcohol socially? _____

Do you believe the Bible is the complete Word of God? _____

Do you financially support First Baptist Lawton? _____

A deacon's wife must be willing to support her husband's role as a deacon. Is your wife willing to do so? _____

Is there anything in your life that would keep you from serving as a deacon? _____

General Questions for Deacon Interview Committee:

What do you believe about baptism of believers (Mark 1:4; Matthew 28:19; Colossians 2:12-14)

Have you read the qualifications of a deacon? After consideration of the qualifications, do you believe you fulfill these requirements? 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6

Deacons should be servants of the church body and the ministries of First Baptist Church. In what ways do you support First Baptist Church and its ministries?

A deacon should be an example to other believers in the church. The church bylaws require that a deacon be a financial supporter of the mission of First Baptist Church through practices of regular giving. The practice for years has been to require deacons to be tithers. What do you believe is the biblical requirement for church giving/tithing? Why?

Why do you think it is important to support the church by tithing?

Do you feel you set a good example in your attendance in worship and Sunday School and in other areas of the church?

Do you feel that you are willing to devote necessary time for deacon's meetings, church business as well as Deacon ministry activities? This ministry may require being involved with widows and families of the church, meeting their needs, visiting and ministering to them regularly.

Your wife is also a partner in a deacon ministry. Do you believe she likewise fulfills the requirements set out in 1 Timothy 3:11?

Have you taken any evangelism training classes?

Are you willing to share your faith and witness to others in evangelism outreach?

How would you personally share your faith with a lost person? (Ask for demonstration)

Do you feel that you are willing to devote necessary time for deacon's meetings, church business, as well as other Deacon ministry activities? e.g. serving the Lord's Supper, teaching, etc. This ministry may also require being involved with families of the church, meeting their needs, visiting and ministering to them regularly.

One of the roles of a deacon is to "pour oil on troubled waters." How do you view your ability to help to mediate conflict and help to minimize trouble?