HOSANNA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ECO
A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

MINISTRY TEAM LEADERSHIP
The Ordained Office of
Deacon

What Deacons Are

"Deacon" in the Bible means "servant, waiter, server of tables, minister, messenger." A Deacon is a servant of God who offers oneself to help an area of need in the congregation *willingly, consistently,* and *faithfully*. In the early church, their roles included distributing food to the hungry, serving tables in the breaking of bread, collecting financial assistance for the poor/orphaned/widowed, visiting the sick, and assisting the apostles' teaching, preaching, and healing ministry. Deacons function as those who:

1) spot and meet practical needs quickly and wisely (ACTS 6:1-7)
2) protect and promote church unity, guarding the congregation against quarrels and divisions (ACTS 6:1-7)
3) serve in support of the ministry of the Elders, enabling Elders to stay focused on teaching, praying, governing, and guiding the church-at-large (1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7; PHILIPPIANS 1:1)

In essence, the office of Deacon is an expression for all believers who are servants (*diakonos*) of Jesus Christ. Yet also, it is an expression only for this special group of servants in His body who carry a particular spiritual authority and consecration via ordination, given by the anointing of the Spirit of God for the works of ministering to His people.

Where Deacons Began

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. (GENESIS 1:28-30)

Although the word "Deacon" does not appear until the New Testament, the concept is fundamentally rooted in God's purpose from creation. Both Adam and Eve were equally entrusted with the stewardship to fulfill the role of a deacon – to be servants of the LORD by reflecting His image into creation, caring for it, ruling over it, utilizing it, multiplying His image-bearing children to fill it, and managing it well to flourish for God's glory. We were created to find our greatest pleasure in being servants (*deacons*) of the Creator instead of being slaves to creation's pleasures. In other words, godly servanthood is the means to finding lasting joy in the LORD God alone and all the goodness of His creation.

Copyright © Hosanna Presbyterian Church of North Dallas. All rights reserved.

4020 Marchant Blvd Carrollton, TX 75010
ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

Who Deacons Must Be

Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For 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 TIMOTHY 3:8-13)

If you have grown and matured in Christ, having tasted His joy in serving others, and are willing to prayerfully answer His calling to lead ministries, nurture fellowship, give care for the congregation, preach and teach the Scriptures – then the Lord may be calling upon you to be His Deacon.

According to 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13, Deacons must be:

1) **dignified** – *Deacons must be honorable exemplars of the flock who are humble, teachable, quick to repent and to forgive. They must be respected by others [dignified].*
2) **not double-tongued** – *Because Deacons will be in countless interactions with the disgruntled, complaining, and uncompassionate, their tongue must be freed from duplicity, hypocrisy, and the fear of man. They must not say things they do not mean [being insincere, two-faced, deceitful].*
3) **not addicted to much wine** – *Deacons must have self-control to minister to those out of control by alternative sinful addictions. Deacons must be under the influence of another obsessive control – the spiritual control of the Holy Spirit. Deacons must not indulge in cravings or substances that will harm their work and witness for Christ. This especially relates to alcohol/drunkenness. *The policy of Hosanna Church for all Ordained Officers is a covenant commitment to refrain from consuming any alcoholic beverages/intoxicating substances while actively in office for their term.*
4) **not greedy for dishonest gain** – *The nature of the work of Deacons will put them in contact with church finances, so they need to have integrity, not being obsessive for greater gain but rather sacrificial in their giving of tithes/offerings and works of servanthood, willing to give and to serve on the account of their own loss for the sake of another's gain. Deacons are not to get rich by cheating others [being greedy for money/profit].*
5) **hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience** – *Deacons do not just serve with their hands and without their heads. They are called to hold in their heads correct doctrine clearly, and must speak and teach it with mental clarity to those they serve. They must hold to God's revealed truths that has gifted them the faith, which is a mystery once concealed but now revealed in the truth of His Word.*
6) **first tested and proven to be blameless** – *Although there is no length or nature of the test indicated, Deacons must be proven through time and trials that the Lord has called and equipped them for His work. Through these spiritual tests of wilderness periods and trials, nothing wrong must be found in them.*
7) **faithful to their spouse in marriage or chaste in their singleness** – *Deacons are single-minded in covenant love for their spouse and family, with a home full of His joy in the Spirit. The home is the very first church to grow into practicing the office of a Deacon. Married men who are Deacons must be a "one-woman" man, devoted to their wife alone. Married women who are Deacons must be a "one-man" woman, devoted to their husband alone. The spouse of a Deacon should be able to testify of the Deacon's faithfulness to Christ. The marriage of Deacons should be undefiled, unbroken, continuously growing in intimacy, godliness, and love. Single men and single women who are Deacons must be chaste [remain in godly purity, refraining from any sexual immorality outside the boundaries*

Copyright © Hosanna Presbyterian Church of North Dallas. All rights reserved.

4020 Marchant Blvd Carrollton, TX 75010
ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.

of a godly marriage]. Single Deacons must remain pure before Christ and others in their character and conduct.

8) **not slanderers** – *Deacons must not speak evil of others [slander] or negatively of others while they are not present [gossips].*
9) **sober-minded** – *Deacons must be self-controlled [sober] in godly character.*
10) **faithful in all things** – *Deacons must be trustworthy and honest in everything.*
11) **if married with children, able to manage their children and their own households well** – *Deacons must be godly managers of their children and own families. Their children should evidence a sincere love and submission to their godly parenting. Their children should evidence a fruitful nurture and spiritual growth under their parental Deaconship and shepherdship. Their children should not be rebellious and in a state of irreconciled relationship. All members of the household should be baptized and those children who have grown to a conscious faith should be confirmed in the faith.*
12) **great confidence in the faith** – *Deacons must carry godly boldness and assurance, being very confident in their faith in Christ Jesus.*

In addition to the biblical qualifications, for the sake of a unified spiritual order in the church, the Deacon must also be:

1) baptized and confirmed in the faith (if infant baptized), and received into the congregation as a covenant partner
2) proven to have a personal testimony of salvation
3) actively involved in the communal-spiritual life and activities of the congregation
4) in agreement with ECO's *Essential Tenets, Polity, and Rules of Discipline & Confessional Standards*
5) proven to be faithful in sacred giving of tithes and offerings
6) examined and passed by pastoral evaluation in: (6a) an ability to minister in smaller group settings of the congregation – life groups, ministry groups, etc; (6b) a proven life of prayer; (6c) a proven teachable spirit/godly submission to ordained pastoral authority
7) elected by two-third's majority vote of the covenant partners of the congregation
8) committed to a term of one year; may re-commit annually without re-election. *It is critical to finish the covenant term of one calendar year to honor the Lord's ordination and installation to this office. The covenant term cannot be nullified unless under the following biblical circumstances: (a) unforeseen move of residence to a location that makes holding the office inoperative; (b) dissolution of the Session and the church by false teaching and corruption; (c) pastoral approval for early end to term due to a change of calling to another approved church's ministry team leadership via transfer in good standing and blessed commissioning by the congregation.
9) committed to Ministry Team Leadership gatherings once-every-two-months, and ongoing communications weekly, as needed.

Deacons who finish three consecutive terms are encouraged to be candidates for the office of Elder, as many of the Elder roles overlap with the Deacon and mature the Deacon into greater avenues of service and Kingdom multiplication.

Those who reach the age of 65 and have served seven or more full one-year Deacon terms will be honored with the title "Distinguished Ministry Leader Emeritus."

What Deacons Gain

For 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 TIMOTHY 3:13)

Copyright © Hosanna Presbyterian Church of North Dallas. All rights reserved.

1) Good Standing – Deacons gain a good standing and reputation before others. This is not to promote their own glory or service, but rather for others to see the good deeds of Deacons and glorify their Father in heaven, inspiring them to glorify God in like manner. Therefore, stepping into the Deacon role will make the testimony of the gospel brighter for everyone, including yourself and the gift of a godly reputation before others.
2) Great Confidence – Deacons gain great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. When the work of a Deacon is done willingly, consistently, faithfully, and effectively, God pours His confidence into the heart that the spiritual labor of His love is not in vain, strengthening steadfastness and immovability in the faith.
3) Spiritual Health – No church can be healthy without an effective group of godly Deacons, who are the army of God's servants working in harmony with the vision of the Pastors and Elders, accomplishing His Kingdom purposes. Where Deacons flourish, the whole congregation flourishes to greater health.

Where Deacons Serve

Deacons are not confined to any area of ministry, although their service usually is characterized as more practical and logistical, facilitating and coordinating rather than overseeing or governing. Example areas of service include: *worship service coordinating, ushering, presiding, worship team member, worship tech/media member, cleanup/setup team, collecting and counting offering, keeping records, visiting the needy, facilitating/coordinating/shepherding smaller group meetings, Christian Education – preschool, children's, youth ministry volunteer or teacher/assistant teacher, facilities management etc.*

Copyright © Hosanna Presbyterian Church of North Dallas. All rights reserved.

4020 Marchant Blvd Carrollton, TX 75010
ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.