



A Few Guidelines for a Conversation with a Potential Deacon

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Open the meeting with Prayer:

- This will set the tone for the meeting and also let the prospective Deacon know that our communication line with God (prayer) is of utmost importance.
- This will also calm him down, for many men (young and old) this can be intimidating meeting with the Pastor to have a life changing conversation.

Biblical Qualifications of a Deacon:

- In Paul's first letter to the young Timothy, he clearly explained what was expected of the two offices in the New Testament Church.
 - First, he addressed the qualifications for a **Pastor** in 1st Timothy 3:1-7.
 - In **1st Timothy 3:8-13** Paul gives the qualification for a **Deacon**.
 - '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.'
- ***So, what are the qualifications according to this text?***
 - ***Being an honorable man with a good reputation.***
 - 'Deacons likewise must be dignified,'
 - The word 'dignified' in the ESV is translated from a greek word 'Semnos', **σεμνός**.
 - Occurring 4 times in the NT, this word means to be honorable, reputable, serious and dignified.

- A deacon must be an honorable man with a good reputation.
- ***Do not take part in deceitful speech.***
 - ‘not double-tongued,’
 - This means to not say one thing to one person, and then a totally different thing to another.
 - To not be double tongued is to not gossip and seek to sow deceit with his tongue.
 - ***Sadly, over the course of Baptist History the office of Deacon has garnered more negative attention than positive due to the double tongued nature of many.***
 - A man cannot serve as Deacon of FBCG if they break confidence in any manner, and if they are known to try to sow discord in the congregation and or the community, with their words.
- ***Do not drink alcohol.***
 - ‘not addicted to much wine,’
 - While the text is clear that one must not be addicted to alcohol (meaning occasional drinking is not prohibited in the text), at FBCG we require that Deacons ***not*** drink alcohol.
 - Here’s why:
 - ***For centuries alcohol has destroyed families and has hurt the Gospel witness of believers who have fallen into the trap of alcohol.***
 - Alcohol is similar to fire. If you play around with it enough, you will get burnt.
 - One cannot be a Deacon and drink alcohol at FBCG (whether occasionally or not) because we do not want to possibly lead others astray.
 - A Deacon is to be a good example of a Godly man. Even if the Deacon doesn’t have an alcohol addiction, it could negatively affect someone else.
 - ***Cannot be a Manipulator.***
 - ‘not greedy for dishonest gain’
 - ***As Jesus said Himself in Matthew 6:24, a person cannot love both God and money.***
 - A Deacon cannot swindle others or manipulate them in a way to gain an advantage. Whether socially or financially.
 - ***This does include that if Gambling is a part of one’s life and they choose not to repent, they cannot serve as a Deacon at FBCG.***
 - ***Have a Strong Grasp of the Gospel.***
 - ‘They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.’

- ***One of the main distinctions between Deacons and Elders (Pastors) is that Deacons are not required to teach.***
 - ***But, they must have a good grasp of the Gospel and how God's plan to bring salvation to mankind starts in Genesis and continues through Revelation.***
 - Paul uses a word in verse 9 that he likes to use a lot, 'mysterion', ***μυστήριον.***
 - In fact, he uses it a total of 21 times in total, in his 13 letters.
 - Paul uses this word in this context to show that Deacons must understand God's plan of salvation for the world.
 - ***Not only must Deacons have a grasp of the Gospel, be able to share their faith, know and believe biblical doctrine, but also that the life of a Deacon is consistent with the Gospel.***
- ***A potential Deacon must be tested.***
 - 'And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.'
 - Little do most prospective Deacons know but the overseers (Pastors) of the Church are watching the conduct of men who God could call to be potential Deacons at some point.
 - ***Even if a formal conversation is not had with a potential candidate, the leadership of the Church is also watching.***
 - This verse is clear that a prospective Deacon must show themselves approved.
 - Meaning, a person can't join the fellowship one week, and then the next be a Deacon.
 - There is a process, and one must prove themselves.
- ***The lives lived by the wife of a potential Deacon must be parallel with the Gospel.***
 - 'Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.'
 - It's not just the life of a Deacon that must be in line with the Gospel message of Christ, but his wife's character is also mentioned by Paul in this text.
 - ***Why?***
 - Because Deacon ministry is often done as a team (husband and wife).
 - For example, late night visit to the hospital? A Deacon will often take his wife.
 - Someone under your care recently had surgery, the wife will often be the one to cook a meal for the family.
 - And, there are certain conversations that women can only have with women, and a Deacon's wife needs to be prepared for those

and be ready to share Jesus at any opportunity, just like her husband.

■ ***So what does the text say is required of a Deacon's wife?***

- Dignified. (See earlier notes on what dignified means from the greek text)
- Not Slanders.
 - They must not be a gossip. I would also add that they need to be an encourager of the Church and her ministries. They do not need to constantly be critical of the ministries of the Church if they are to be a Deacon's wife.
- Sober-minded.
 - Not partaking in alcohol as well as drugs or anything that could alter one's mental state.
- Faithful in all things.
 - The wife of a Deacon must be faithful to Jesus Christ, her husband, family, job (if working), household, Church and as the text says, 'all things'.

■ A Deacons wife is very important and must not be overlooked in the Deacon selection process. (It is a selection and not a 'vote', due to Acts 6).

● ***A One Woman man.***

- 'Let deacons each be the husband of one wife,'
- I interpret this verse within the context of which Paul wrote it (polygamy was rampant) to mean that a Deacon must be a One Woman man.

■ ***This means that a Deacon must be committed to one woman, his wife.***

- ***This means that a prospective Deacon cannot engage in any kind of relationship that is even somewhat close to adulterous. (This includes sexual relations, texting, calling, and seeing any female who is not his wife).***
- This also means that a man is disqualified from being a Deacon if he struggles with pornography of any kind.

● ***A Prospective Deacon must manage their household well.***

- 'managing their children and their own households well.'
- Apart from Jesus Christ, no one is perfect. This is true.

■ ***But a Deacon must manage his household well. From Scripture, what does this look like?***

- The man must be the leader of his household. (Ephesians 5:23)
- The wife must submit to her husband. (Ephesians 5:22)
- A Deacon must discipline his children as needed. (Proverbs 13:22)
- Is Biblically responsible for financially providing for those in his home. (1st Timothy 5:8)

- Train up his children in the ways of the Lord and have them in Church regularly. (Hebrews 10:25, Proverbs 22:6)
- No matter the income, a prospective Deacon must be a Tither. (Malachi 3:8)

What does a Deacon do?

- ***SERVE.***

- At FBCG we do not have a ‘Deacon Board’. We have a Deacon body. The only time that a ‘board’ is mentioned in the NT is when Paul got in a shipwreck and clung onto a board.
 - ***At FBCG we have a body of Deacons who seek to serve the congregation and community in the ways of Christ.***
- The word ‘Deacon’ is translated from the Greek word ‘Diakonous’ **διακόνους**.
 - As God designed it, a Deacon is not to make decisions for the Church or to be a ‘boss’ over the Pastor.
 - A Deacon is to be a servant.
 - At FBCG we do not have regular Deacons meetings. We do have 2 formal Deacons meetings a year.
 - To approve the financial budget (because I, as the Pastor, don’t want to have anything to do with the finances of the Church other than make recommendations).
 - To elect Deacon officers for the year.
 - We do meet at times for emergencies to provide guidance pending the Pastor’s request.
 - We meet EVERY Sunday Morning at 10:45 AM (prior to the service) to pray over that morning’s service and announce needed visitations as well as prayer requests over members of the congregation.
- ***At FBCG, the following are required of any man who serves as a Deacon:***
 - Be nominated (through a vote) by the congregation and then selected by the Senior Pastor and current Chairman of the Deacons to serve as a Deacon.
 - Undergo and ‘pass’ a lengthy interview and questioning time with the Senior Pastor and current Chairman of the Deacons.
 - If selected to serve FBCG as a Deacon, after the ordination process, the following is expected as a Deacon:
 - ***Be responsible for caring, praying, loving, and serving families that are assigned to them through a Deacon Family Ministry Plan.***
 - At FBCG, we do this by giving each Deacon letters of the alphabet which cover families whose last name start with that particular letter.

- *Regularly visit members of the congregation in the Hospital, homebound, evangelistic visits, and other visits (those on and off their Deacon list).*
- *Support their Senior Pastor and Church staff 100%.*
- *MUST have the Senior Pastor's back at all times, and not speak badly of Christ, the Church, the Senior Pastor, the Church staff or the ministries of the Church.*
- *Keep confidence of any information that is asked to be kept in confidence.*
- *Support AND serve in at least one ministry of the Church if not several.*
- *Regularly attend Sunday Morning and Midweek Worship services.*
- *Regularly, if not daily, pray for the families of the Church that are personally assigned to you in the Deacon family ministry plan.*
- *Be a Tither to the Church.*
- *Regularly (weekly) have Gospel conversations with people that you come in contact with.*
- *Be able to share the Gospel with someone and lead them to Christ.*