

Deacon Training Manual

Introduction from Dr. David C. Little

It is wonderful to be saved! Praise to God for His unspeakable gift. It is a wonder God doesn't take us straight to heaven at the moment of our salvation. He loves us so much and has paid such a price for our salvation that you would think that He would want us to be with Him immediately. But God doesn't do that. He leaves us here to serve.

I served as a pastor for twenty-eight years. They were very good years, and there is nothing as precious as being a shepherd of God's people. In those years, I was spiritually blessed to have wonderful, godly men as deacons. A few of those men were used of God to mold my ministry life, and I will be eternally indebted to them.

When I became the president of Baptist Church Planters (a church planting agency), I determined to give church planters every tool possible to enhance and strengthen the churches they were starting. As missionaries start churches, their purpose is to bring the churches to graduation. To do so, they must have leadership in place, which means a pastor and deacons. Too often, men are put into the office of deacon who have no idea what that necessarily means. I felt it would profit the missionaries and church plants if they had material that could be used to teach qualified men what deacons are and do. Thus, I started this project which I trust will help many churches and will also help men to be used of God as deacons.

It is my prayer that God will use this book to help men be godly servants, and if chosen by the church to be a deacon, will serve as God intended.

Dr. David C. Little



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Lesson One - What is a Deacon?

To understand what God expects of a deacon, we must turn to the Word of God and find out how the biblical word is used. No one should assume that he knows what a deacon is or does until he has thoroughly searched the Scriptures.

The Greek word is diakoneo *dee-ak-on-eh'-o* – found in the Bible 37 times, translated servant, serve, deacon or minister. When it uses the word ‘minister,’ it is not talking about an ordained pastor.

It means: to be a servant, attendant, wait upon. It is used to describe a minister, one that waits on guests (as a waiter or waitress), a person who supplies food and the necessities of life. Sometimes the servant would care for the poor or sick.

Notice how the word is used in the New Testament:

Mt 4:11 “Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

Mt 20:26 “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister.”

Mr 10:45 “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Lu 10:40 “But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.”

Joh 12:26 “ If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.”

Ac 6:2 “Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.”

Ac 19:22 “So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.”

Heb 6:10 “For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

Php 1:1 “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.”

Col 1:7 “As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.”

Notice how the word was used in the preceding verses:

- Angels ministered to Jesus.
- Jesus ministered to those to whom He was sent.
- Martha ministered to those in need of hospitality.

- Paul and Timothy ministered to the saints.
- The church chose men to serve the widows.

Based on the usage of the biblical word, how should deacons minister in the church?

- Call on people who are in the hospital.
- Visit new people in the church.
- Meet the needs of hurting people or those going through trials.
- Arrange help for the widows.
- Regularly call on members, reviewing their spiritual condition, devotion and tithing habits.
- Entertain people in the home.
- Work with people who are not disciplined in finances to encourage them to become better stewards.

Both the pastor and the deacons are servants of Christ and to Christ's people. Pastors and deacons work together to advance the people of God and grow the assembly of the believers. If you fail to understand this, you fail to fulfill your role.

What a deacon is not:

- A director. I prefer not to use the term "Board of Deacons" because it misrepresents what deacons do. I prefer the simple biblical term deacons. Deacons are not directors of the church, but servants of the church.
- A representative of the church. Baptists do not have representative government like Presbyterians do, but rather hold to congregational government.
- Administrator (to manage the affairs of a business, organization, or institution) but facilitator. Webster says of facilitators- "somebody who aids or assists in a process, especially by encouraging people to find their own solutions to problems or tasks." Deacons will find great delight in helping people find solutions with God's help.
- An inspector of the pastor. Some deacons fall prey to this mindset. It is dangerous. This often happens following a bad experience with a pastor and the deacons get apprehensive about pastoral leadership. This mindset will not lend to unity.

The office of deacon:

Baptists believe the Bible teaches two offices, namely, pastors and deacons. Philippians 1:1 says- "Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the pastors and deacons."

Some believe the men chosen in Acts 6 were the first deacons. It is not conclusive that this is true, but the work of the men in Acts 6 resembles the work of deacons, namely serving.

In I Timothy, Paul was writing clearly of the office of deacons.

Before a man should be considered for the office of deacon, he should display the servanthood characteristics associated with the meaning. Is this man serving others rather than himself? Is he helping those in need? Is he calling on those that need encouragement? Is he encouraging the leadership? Is he willing to do the most menial tasks in the church?

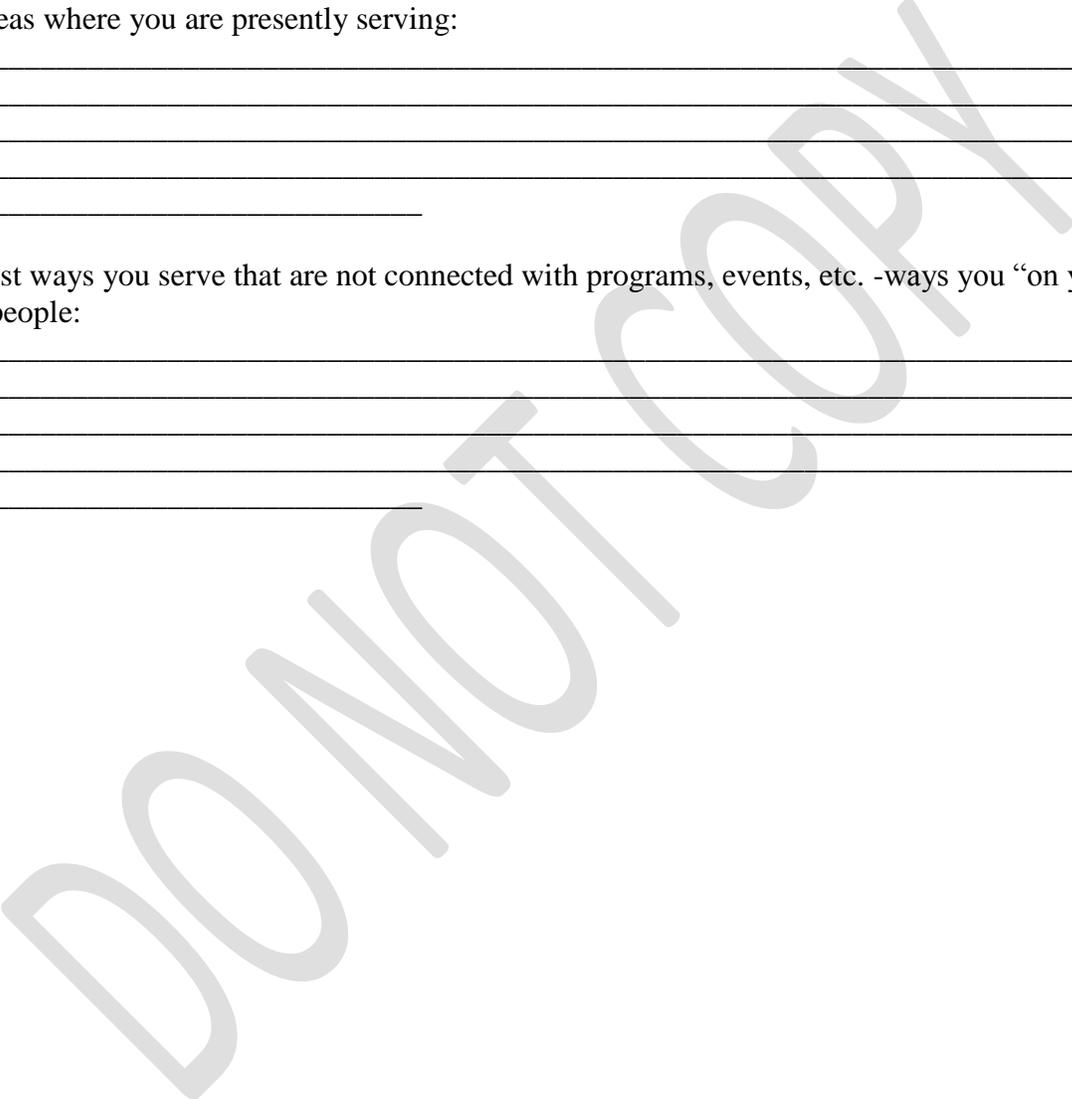
Reading Material- "Who Rules the Church?" by Gerald Cowen

For your consideration- The cart before the horse:
When men in a church want to be elected to the office of deacon, it can be a mark of trouble. What is their motive? Are they looking for power or prestige? When a man realizes the amount of work entailed, he is probably a good candidate for deacon.

Question- Are you serving Christ and His people?

List areas where you are presently serving:

Now list ways you serve that are not connected with programs, events, etc. -ways you "on your own" serve people:



Lesson Two – The Spiritual Qualifications of the Two Offices

The Bible teaches two offices in the local church i.e., the pastor and the deacons - Philippians 1:1. Also in I Timothy 3, we see the qualifications of the two offices.

The office of the pastor:

Baptists believe that the terms shepherd, elder and bishop all refer to the same office of pastor. Churches that have multiple elders have multiple pastors. Churches should not elevate deacons to elders unless they have received the “definite call of God,” and the church can care for multiple pastors.

From I Timothy 3:1-7

Vs. 1	Desires	to <i>stretch</i> oneself, that is, <i>reach</i> out after (<i>long</i> for):—covet after, desire.
	Bishop	We get our English word- Episcopal from this Greek word- episcopos —the office of a “bishop,” bishoprick, visitation. Sometimes this is translated overseer.
Vs. 2	Blameless	Free from blame, unrebukeable. A finger cannot be pointed at any one thing.
	Husband of one wife	A one woman man. Because Christ will not divorce His church, it is unwise to use men who have been through a divorce.
	Vigilant	circumspect:—sober, vigilant.
	Sober	self controlled, discreet, sober, temperate. This man is moderate as to his opinions or passions.
	Good behavior	of good behaviour, modest.
	Given to hospitality	given to (lover of, use) hospitality. He enjoys guests.
	Apt to teach	He can teach others and they understand.
Vs. 3	Not given to wine	Is not controlled by wine.
	Not a striker	A striker or quarrelsome.
	Not greedy of filthy lucre	without covetousness, money does not control this person
	patient	gentle, moderation, patient.
	Not a brawler	peaceable
Vs. 4	One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity	to preside, or to practice:—maintain, be over, rule.
Vs. 6	Not a novice	newly planted, that is, a young convert
Vs. 7	Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.	properly beautiful, good morally report-record, report, testimony, witness.

The office of the deacon:

From I Timothy, chapter three, verse 8.

VS. 8	Grave	honest. Be men worthy of respect—that is, serious men of dignity, not clowns.
	Not double tongued	telling a different story
	Not given to much wine	towards, that is, pay attention to, be cautious about, apply oneself to, adhere <i>*See note below</i>
	Not greedy of filthy lucre	Not a money grabber.
Vs. 9	Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience	They must be men of spiritual depth and their theology must match their professional life.
Vs. 10	Let them be proved	This means tested or examined. **See note below.
	Let them use the office of a deacon	Use of the office and deacon are the same word. Simply put, if they are tested, get on with being a servant.
	Blameless	No one able to point the finger regarding some matter or practice in the present or past.
Vs. 11	Even so their wives must be grave	Honest, dignified
	Not slanders	False accuser, devil, slanderer. This is a very strong word. The tongue is in view.
Vs. 12	Husband of one wife	Only one living wife. A man cannot serve as deacon who has two living wives ***See note
	Ruling their children and own houses well	The measure of a man’s leadership is revealed in his home. Do his children living at home obey his commands? Does he manage his own house, involving money, order, testimony and etc. **** See note below
Vs. 13	Purchase to themselves a good degree of and great boldness in the faith	Those who deacon well acquire strength and boldness.

* Dr. Ken Brown wrote a pamphlet entitled “The Use of Wine in the Bible.” In this pamphlet he writes: “The general terms for the fruit of the vine (yakin and oinos) do not correspond to the English word for the beverage of wine. These biblical terms mean the fruit of the vine without reference to presence or absence of alcohol.” Study done by this author concludes that Middle Eastern countries and people used the fruit of the vine as their regular beverage and for the purpose of preservation; they made sure there was little ability for fermentation. Grape juice that ferments results in vinegar, not alcoholic beverage. To make intoxicating wine, the producer must control the sugar and heat of the juice. The question begs in this passage, why would deacons be asked to control their intake of grape juice. I believe for two reasons. One, a simple matter of moderation and secondly, some juice might have a small amount of fermentation, especially if it was not meticulously cared for when preserved.

** In some denominations, deacons are ordained and must pass an ordination examination. I personally believe deacons should be able to theologically present their biblical beliefs and also there must be evidence from Christian service demonstrating their tenacity and faithfulness. Only time produces this testing.

*** There are different views on this subject, but I believe Christ wanted His church to be led by men who have proven themselves faithful in all ways, and especially in marriage. A man that has been through a failed marriage does not represent the image of Christ as a faithful groom. Also, this may be an area where some might “point the finger,” disqualifying in the area of blameless. Over the years, I have led many divorced and remarried men to Christ. This issue has come up many times. I remind every man in this situation that the “work of the deacon” can be done by anyone who has a servant’s heart, but the “office of the deacon” can be fulfilled by only those who qualify. It is a very sad day for the church when a man wants the office over the work. Every man reading this must be passionate about serving others and leaving the office to the Lord and the church.

**** This area has been a problem to some men, especially when their older children walk away from the Lord. Here is my suggestion. If the child is not at home, the child is not under the authority of the leader and he is not responsible for the actions of his child. If the leader elects to allow his child, no matter what age, to live at home, the child should abide by the rules of the home. If the leader does not make the child responsible to the rules, he should resign his office and dedicate himself to the restoration of the child.

The scriptural qualifications stated above should be taken seriously. The church has a responsibility to make sure the leaders are scripturally qualified men. Failure to do so will have devastating results.

Lesson Three - Should You Accept the Nomination?

Churches have various ways of electing deacons. Some have nominating committees. Others allow the whole membership to nominate. A few still nominate from the floor (not a good idea).

If nominated, how would you know whether to allow your name to be placed on the ballot? Ask yourself the following questions and honestly answer them.

1. Who nominated you? If it is your relative, you might want to talk to the pastor about his thoughts.
2. Have you a desire to serve people? Have you been serving people in helpful ways? Have you opened your home to others?
3. Are you anxious to have authority as a deacon? If so, you are probably looking at the office in the wrong way.
4. Can you see how God has prepared you spiritually to serve as a deacon?
5. Is your pastor enthusiastic about you serving? Remember, this is a team activity. If you have issues with the pastor, it may not be the wisest choice to serve.
6. Since your wife will be highly involved in hospitality and counseling, is she in complete agreement with you serving as a deacon?
7. Have other godly men suggested you serve as a deacon?
8. Have you been living for the Lord, having devotions (at least to some degree), tithing, and regular in the Lord's house.

All these questions must be answered honestly, before you are ready to serve the church.

Based on honest answers to the above, you can now begin to pray about the matter and proceed, allowing the church to decide if you should be a deacon. Remember, someone has to step up and take the responsibility. If you have grown in the Lord and see that God has prepared you, accept the nomination and move ahead. God will bless you. If you don't feel it is the time, decline and commit to preparing yourself for this service if the church would desire you to serve in the future. God will bless your decision.

Note: In many churches, members do not know of a previous divorce and remarriage. As deacons, you can really help godly men in this position not to be faced with this matter year after year. You can also provide ways to serve and help them be used in the church in multiple ways. Remind them that what pastors and deacons do can be done by anyone. Illustrations: call at the hospital; preach at prisons, campgrounds, nursing homes, etc; Bible studies with unbelievers; discipleship courses; and on it goes. They can do the work, but not hold the office. Encourage them.

What if you are elected?

1. Take time to thank the Lord, HE prepared you for this time in your life. Look back over the years of your Christian walk and review God's leading in your life.
2. Be sure to ask the pastor for time in the first deacons' meeting to share your testimony of salvation and your testimony of God's preparation in your life.
3. Start immediately to pray for the pastor and other deacons on a regular basis. Remember that if the leadership falls into sin, the results are catastrophic for the church.

4. Start immediately praying for your own ministry, asking God to give you opportunities where you might serve in special ways.
5. Look forward to the deacons' meetings. I trust these meetings will be exciting and encouraging to you.

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Lesson Four - The Purpose of the Church

This is a huge topic but should be addressed since you may be or are a deacon of a local church.

Definition- A local church is an organized body of believers that have been born again by the Spirit through the blood of Jesus Christ, immersed upon confession of faith, and who have banded together to follow Christ, observe the ordinances, fulfill the great commission through evangelism and discipleship.

The church is designed to nurture spiritual infants in Christ. It is a hospital for sinners, not a showcase of saints. We must be careful not to get a warped view of the church. People will not be perfect, and neither are the leaders.

As the church fulfills her mission, she will train believers for the work of the ministry. See Ephesians 4. Her training will prepare them for serving in the local church and sending them into the world to fulfill the great commission.

The four main purposes of the church:

Acts 2:42 is a verse within the context of the first church being described. The text says that the church practiced four main things.

1. Doctrine- the systematic teaching of God's word.
2. Fellowship- interaction between believers.
3. Breaking bread- the Lord's Supper.
4. Prayer- dependence on God.

Let's take each one and do some review:

- Doctrine- Matt. 7:28- And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine. Doctrine is instruction.
I Tim. 4:13- Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.
4:16- Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.
- Fellowship- the Greek word, *koinoônia*- partnership, participation, distribution or fellowship. This is much more than dinners and refreshments (which are not all bad), but it involves caring for each other, encouragement, exhortation, accountability and sometimes confrontation. Fellowship should be planned into the churches life just as the other components are planned. "A happy church is a fellowshiping church."
- Breaking of bread- the Lord's Supper is an integral part of the church. It is most often planned for once a month. The church that makes this the main part of the service and not a "tacked on part" is wise. Leadership can move the communion time around, sometimes in the morning (some elderly people can only get out when it is light), sometimes in the evening and sometimes on a Wednesday evening prayer service. I have found that the Wednesday Communion Service was much appreciated and meaningful. Make the very most out of this service.
- Prayer- Jesus said this in John 14:13 "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*."

With that kind of promise, we need to ask. Asking for big things that involve the work of Christ in the church is biblical. The leadership of the church needs to remember that if they are going to lead the church in asking, they need to know what they want. This takes place in leadership meetings, when you pray and seek God for great things. Then you take these matters to the congregation and then to regular prayer. If the church is doing most of the ministry without prayer, it is probable that the work is in the flesh.

Temptations to avoid:

- **The god of Growth-** because people want their church to grow (especially the leadership) there is pressure from within a man and without a man. This pressure causes leaders to try most anything to see growth. We need to revisit I Corinthians 3.
 - Who builds the church?

 - Who is the foundation?

 - How should we build on the foundation?

 - What does the fire try?

Care should be given in growing the local church. The body of Christ is a precious thing. We care for the body, but Christ grows the body.

When leaders take care of the flock, the church will grow. When leaders try to grow a crowd, the flock will be used, abused, and neglected. Take the **HIGH ROAD!!**

When we fall at the feet of bigness or growth, we often build on men. This is very dangerous. When the man leaves, the church fails. It is always better to build the church on the solid exposition of the Word of God.

- **Growth without discipleship.** This means gathering a crowd but lacking systematic training. This training is not simply head knowledge, but experience. Experience takes place “while doing ministry.” This means that leaders take people with them as they serve others. The goal of every church is to prepare every person to serve the Lord full time, and then leave the call up to God. Without discipleship, churches are fickle.
- **Depending on programs rather than prayer.** Too often, the answer to a problem or need is to start another program. Programs are good, but if it is simply a program, it will not produce the results intended. Prayer is the means to God. Praying is an indication of dependence. The dependence of a church on God is measured by the amount of prayer to God. Too often, we leave prayer to Sunday morning pastoral prayer and Wednesday evening. In reality, neither is enough. Perhaps more time in prayer during services, prayer cells throughout the week, along with mostly prayer on Wednesday evening, might produce the spiritual results of programs.
- **Devaluing preaching.** Whenever you have a devaluing of preaching, you are headed toward disaster. God uses preaching. Paul the apostle said that God uses preaching to “confound the wise.” He also uses it to enlighten the eyes of those who will believe. To some it is death, but

Lesson Five - The Role of Leadership as a Deacon

No place in scripture defines deacons as the “board of directors” of the church. Pastors and deacons lead by their lives, not their ability as a ruling body. This fine line is critical to the well being of any local church.

Russell Camp, formerly State Representative of the Empire Regular Baptist Fellowship said this: “The pastor asserts leadership or a plan, the deacons assist the pastor with the plan and the congregation assents to the leadership plan.” If the pastor is not asserting leadership (meaning he knows where he wants to go and how to get there), the church will suffer and the congregation and deacons will be frustrated. But to prevent a dictatorship, every good pastor will review with the deacons his plans and want their input. The deacons will decide if they can assist in this plan and if so, the leadership as a whole will take the plan to the church for their assent. Baptists believe in congregational government, meaning the body of believers holds the final say. Deacons do not represent the people. Presbyterians believe in that form of government, appointing elders to decide for them. Pastors serve the people, and deacons serve the pastor and the people. The Bible teaches us to serve one another.

According to scripture, deacons show leadership by the way they work with people. They will have opportunities to lead in the following ways.

- Lead as a spiritual man, demonstrating this in personal preparation for services, warmth of fellowship, friendliness to strangers, respect in the community, etc.
- Lead as a caring man for the needy, personally helping those who have needs.
- Lead as one who is a disciple maker.
- Lead as one who shows hospitality in the home.
- Lead as one who can organize others to good works.

Every church must determine how they will use deacons to serve the people. Here are a variety of different leadership styles that have been implemented.

- Deacons are the facilitators of the various activities or committees in the church. With this style of leadership, you will see a flow chart with deacons taking responsibility for Christian Education, Missions, Membership, Music, Attendee Services (Ushers, Nursery, etc), Facilities, Finances, etc. In this scenario, deacons must be administratively capable to function effectively.
- Deacons are the caretakers of the membership. The body of believers in the membership would be divided among the deacons. Each deacon would be responsible to care for his membership group.
- Deacons simply attend the monthly meeting. Without clear assignments, deacons will gravitate to a “board of directors” more than servants.

The best is a blend between the first and the second one. The problem with the first one is that not all deacons have administrative abilities. When you place a man with a duty he is not equipped to handle, you will ruin or at least frustrate the man. Use men administratively if they have that ability. I also like the second model, for all deacons by duty and qualifications should be spiritually capable of caring for people.

Lesson Six - Deacons Caring for the Membership

Every church needs to determine what the deacon's role will be in caring for the church membership. It is recommended that the church leadership divide the membership into equal numbers corresponding to the number of deacons. Each deacon will then be responsible for their members, taking personal interest and responsibility for their deacon group.

After the selection is made, it is a good idea to get everyone together and let each member meet their deacon. At this meeting, the deacon should be prepared to share his passion for the members' spiritual lives and his plan for prayer support. Here are some thoughts:

- Inform the membership of the leadership's plan to assign each person a "caring deacon."
- Inform the membership how this division took place.
- Inform the membership what is expected of the deacon, such as reporting their needs at deacons meeting, calling on them in need, etc.
- Inform your deacon group of your availability to them.
- Inform your deacon group of your desire to pray for them. Have sheets of paper and pencil ready to hand out and ask them to put their prayer requests on the paper and hand in.
- Inform your deacon group of your plan to visit each of their homes, and your concerns for their spiritual lives.
- Inform your deacon group that when meeting with them, it will be more than just chatting, but will involve questions about their spiritual progress.

Deacons who build good relationships with members will be able to have tremendous impact on members. I like the statement, "They don't care how much you know (or who you are) until they know how much you care."

Once this relationship is built, it important to make a personal visit to the home. The following should take place:

- Make an appointment. Ladies especially like to know when you are coming. They don't want to be embarrassed and if you let them know, you have a good chance of refreshments.
- Don't spend too much time in chatter. Get to the point.
- Ask each member of the family what is happening in their life at the present.
- Ask each member about their personal devotions. If you are concerned this may not be the time, at least share with them how personal devotions have helped you, and you might add how difficult it is to be faithful.
- Ask about family altar.
- Ask about tithing. I believe families are missing out on blessings because they are not tithing. They are robbing God according to Malachi. Jesus talked about money and its effect and I believe spiritual leaders need to do the same. This is a good opportunity to encourage the parents to instruct the children in tithing.
- Ask about their role in serving at the church. Make sure every member of the family has some role and if not, let them know you will find something for them to do.
- Remind them you are available. Give them your "hotline" to call in time of need. They will feel special that you care that much.

- Pray with the family before leaving. You might even have a round of prayer. This kind of meeting will build a strong relationship between the deacon and the family.

How deacons can serve at special times:

- When members have tragedy in their families- BE THERE.
- When members are in the hospital.
- When members have financial issues, such as losing employment, etc.
- When family members die. Attend calling hours or the funeral.

It will be profitable for each deacon to periodically get his group together for special times of fellowship and prayer. Another idea that can work well is having the deacon groups meet for one Wednesday evening prayer service each quarter.

Remember, you are there to serve them, rather than them serving you. A servant's heart will come through "loud and clear."

Lesson Seven - Deacons and Counseling

In the ministry of caring for your membership group, you will come upon some difficult problems. Counselors call this “baggage.” Newly saved people often come with a lot of baggage. What do you do when such cases need counseling?

The following suggestions are simplified for teaching purposes:

1. Listen. You should not minimize the power of listening. Remember, you are not responsible to have all the answers. The temptation is to quickly open your mouth with an answer. This is a big mistake. It is far better to listen and then say, “I am going to take this to the Lord in prayer and seek His will regarding this matter.” This does a number of things:
 - Let the person know you believe God has something to say about it.
 - Gives you time to think about it and pray.
 - Gives you time to consult with the pastor.
 - Allows another time to get back with them, building the relationship. (Don’t be surprised that when you go back the problem is resolved.)
2. A mentor gave me this little outline that you might want to keep in the cover of your Bible, just in case you need it. It goes like this:
 - Recognize reality- most people with problems are not facing the truth.
 - Realize the resources- God has multiple ways to help you.
 - React responsibly- Don’t panic. Determine to do the right thing.This is pretty simple but profound. This will help you in ways you cannot imagine.
3. Always give them a portion of scripture to memorize. Remember, the Bible promises success to those who hide God’s Word in their heart. You cannot beat it.
4. Realize the power of prayer. I believe that if you and the person counseled will regularly ask for God’s help specifically, God will answer that prayer. Persistence is the key. For this reason, keep a running log of specific prayer requests for the people you are counseling. A note about this. Make prayer requests specific to the person counseled, not about others. You will note that the real problems people have are within themselves, but they often blame their problems on people around them. Illustration: “Pray that my husband gets saved” is okay, but we do not know God’s purpose for his life. A better prayer would be “Pray that I will be a good example before my husband, demonstrating the grace of God to him.” This request aligns with scripture and is attainable.
5. Remember, when people ask you to keep confidence, you cannot tell anyone. Now, if someone says they are going to do something to hurt themselves or someone else, you have to tell them that you are going to get them help. If not an emergency, and you feel you need to share with the Pastor for help, call them and ask them if you can share it with the person you want to get help from. Most will allow you to do so.

There is one exception in this area of keeping confidence:

When minors are involved, a counselor should never promise to keep confidence and then be placed in the unfortunate circumstance of having to break that confidence when some issue arises that the parents need to know. A good preface to use is a statement like: “I want to keep this conversation as private as possible, but I can’t make that promise unconditionally. God hasn’t placed me in the position of your parent. They are the ones who have the ultimate

responsibility before God for your care. If there is a serious issue they need to know about, I will need to bring them into the conversation.”

6. A word of caution. When godly people first begin to counsel, they are tempted to share the information with others. Do not! The consequences are not good. This word of caution should be taken seriously.

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Lesson Eight – Deacons’ Meetings

In most cases, the constitution calls for monthly meetings of the deacons with the pastor. Deacons should never meet without the pastor or pastors, except in the case of immorality, doctrinal deviation or unchristian like conduct that needs immediate attention. The following thoughts will help make the meetings go smoothly:

- If possible, the meetings should always be at the same time and place. This allows the pastor and deacons to plan their schedules.
- Deacons should take the meetings seriously. Every attempt should be made to attend.
- The constitution will spell out who conducts the meeting. It works best if the pastor leads the deacons’ meeting because he is more in touch with the needs of the church and is the bishop, the overseer. If the constitution calls for the chairman to run the meeting, the pastor should be able to insert his thoughts at any time.
- The deacons should elect a chairman, in the event the pastor is not present and or if a meeting must take place.
- The pastor should work along with the chairman in preparing the agenda. It is good if the pastor can meet with the chairman and review the agenda prior to the meeting. The pastor and chairman should be real teammates.
- The agenda should include the following:
 - Minutes of the past meeting (best if prepared and handed out before the meeting so time is not taken to read the whole document). No motion is needed to accept the minutes if they were distributed. Only the question needs to be asked if there are any changes or comments.
 - Pastor’s Report
 - Preaching plans.
 - Calling and Counseling (limited in confidentiality) activity- I believe the pastor and deacons are accountable to the membership. If both record their activities, the membership has the confidence that the work is being done.
 - Special events the pastor is working on.
 - Concerns.
 - Praises.
 - Deacon’s Report- this involves a report on members in their group. Time will not allow for a review of every member, but those needing special attention and prayer should be mentioned. It is at this time the group will know of those in need of assistance through the deacon’s benevolence fund.
 - Prayer time for membership and pastor.
 - Financial report (especially if the deacons serve as the trustees).
 - Reports- either Deacons administrating committees or from Committee Chairmen. It is important to move the meeting along and not handle small items of business. Time can be wasted on items of business that others can handle. See Addendum on Organization through Committees.
 - Old Business
 - New Business

Deacons’ meetings should be very enjoyable.

- It is a time of praising God for His blessings. The sharing and prayer time are delightful.

- It is a time to plan for the future and get excited about coming events and opportunities.
- The time together develops a team spirit.
- The time together allows the pastor and deacons to be on the same page.
- The refreshments (don't forget them) add a time of fellowship.
- There is no need to have meetings longer than two to three hours. Usually two hours will be sufficient to care for the needs of the church.

When pastor and deacons are united, the devil has a hard time disrupting the church. Most problems that disrupt churches start in the leadership. You can have problems in the pews but if they know the pastor and deacons are unified, they will not do much to hurt the church. Timothy admonishes us to “be strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus.” Spiritual strength united is a mighty army against sin and the devil.

Dr. Michael Peck has in his leadership material good information on the styles of men who will make up the pastoral staff and deacons. Learning to love each other, with differences, is critical.

The following is from Dr. Michael Peck’s leadership material:

The Bible is filled with examples of leadership with greatly differing personality styles. In three decades of developing leaders in the local church, I have come to watch for the five typical leaders and particular styles. While there are variations, it is interesting to see these operate within the local church today.

Leader #1 - Paul, the lion in velvet – take charge type (2 Cor. 11:23-12:9).

This leader does not carnally seize power; but rather manifests significant leadership abilities. This person is organized, motivated, challenged, task focused, not easily discouraged, seldom quits, is able to organize and delegate, and is a great supervisor. This leader might intimidate some people; but also is capable of inspiring others to rise to the challenge of the moment.

From Philippians 3, notice several characteristics of this style of leadership.

- A. Priorities (3:4-9).
- B. Passion (3:10).
- C. Persistence (3:13-14).
- D. Partnership (3:16-17).
- E. Patience (3:20-21).

- Administrative Organizer – Paul Type*
1. Defines the need.
 2. Rallies the troops.
 3. Delegates responsibilities.
 4. Sees the project completed.
 5. Restores vision if lost.
 6. Appears frustrated by people at times.

This leader will need to be challenged to view people properly. Note Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-7. Though Paul had tremendous organizational skills, he also had a compassion for people. Every local church needs the gifted administrator, the organizer who will also love and respect people.

Leader #2 - **Peter, big hearted, leap before I look type.**

This leader is talkative, outgoing, spontaneous, outspoken, influential, usually cheerful, and very reactive. This leader is very emotional. When this leader is up, he is the life of the party. When this person is angry, watch out!

It is interesting to see Peter's reactions to various situations. Probably he will be talking. Note several of these situations and Peter's reactions.

- A. Reaction to Christ's identity (Matthew 16:15-16).
- B. Reaction to Christ's purpose (Matthew 16: 21-22).
- C. Reaction to Christ's glory (Matthew 17:1-4).
- D. Reaction to Christ's ownership (Matthew 19:23-27).
- E. Reaction to Christ's death (Matthew 26:31-35).
- F. Reaction to Christ's suffering (Matthew 26:37-40).
- G. Reaction to Christ's arrest (Matthew 26:50-51).
- H. Reaction to Christ's resurrection (John 20:1-6).

Peter Type:

1. Good intentions – work on follow through.
2. Check impulsiveness.
3. Learn to listen, don't always talk.
4. Their enthusiasm is an encourager.
5. Tap into their generosity.
6. Beware of the great mood swings.

Leader #3 - **Timothy, the gifted but laid back type.**

Within every local ministry, there is the type of person who would rather sit in the background without taking steps of public initiative. Though supportive of the ministry and other leaders, this type of person is so laid back, often they are overlooked for ministry opportunities. The Timothy type of leader has a good attitude toward authority. They are not highly self-motivated. They are quiet and reticent. Seldom are they offensive. This person has to be pushed to unusual limits before he or she expresses harshness. They could easily be called the reluctant leader.

Think of Timothy. There are several things to remember about this dear ministry partner.

- A. He was able to teach (1 Timothy 1:3a).
- B. He was able to be tactful (I Timothy 1:3b).
- C. He was able to be trusted; but needed genuine encouragement. This encouragement is seen in the following areas of his life.
 - (1) Warfare (I Timothy 1:18).
 - (2) Ministry (I Timothy 4:13-16).
 - (3) Character (I Timothy 6:12-14).
 - (4) Commitment (I Timothy 6:20).

The Timothy Type:

1. Learn the disciplines of self-motivation.
2. Make decisions even when it is hard.
3. Make lists, check goals, stay focused.
4. Don't allow fears to rob obedience and faith.

Leader # 4 - **John, the unconditional lover of hard to love people.**

This type of leader is tenderhearted, loving, and compassionate. The "John type" is very gifted, often in music or writing. This person longs to be helpful, expressive, and demonstrative of the love of God. This person can genuinely feel the needs of others who are hurting and discouraged.

Notice two interesting things about a John leader:

- A. See how deeply he cares.
 - (1) Deeply loves the Lord Jesus (John 13:23).

John Type:

1. Easily hurt, very sensitive toward self and others.
2. Often is gentle on others and hard on self.
3. Can carry grudges.
4. Super in creativity and imagination.
5. Wonderful in hurting situations.

- (2) Moved by the marks of genuine discipleship (John 13:34-35). This is further illustrated in his mentioning “love” twenty-five times in his epistles.
- (3) Instantly adopts Christ’s mother and cares for her (John 19:26).

- B. See the interesting cautions about this type of leader.
 - (1) Really sensitive and may in rare times have a jealous situation (Mark 9:38).
 - (2) Remembers hurts and may in rare times be revengeful (Luke 9:54).

Leader #5 - **Barnabas, the oil that makes the machine run quietly type.**

This leader is a good judge of character. This person is generous, encouraging, and might even be called a risk taker when it comes to others. This leader is gracious, forgiving, and ready to see the positive in others.

Notice several things about Barnabas:

- A. He was unselfish in giving (Acts 4:37).
- B. He was unconditional in acceptance (Acts 9:26-27).
- C. He was uncompromising in testimony (Acts 11:19-24).
- D. He was unusual in grace and forgiveness (Acts 15:36-41).

Barnabas Type:

1. Good judge of character.
2. Risk taker.
3. Gives of self.
4. Sees potential in people.
5. Wonderful in assimilating new folks.

While there may be other styles of leadership, these are the five basic styles to be found in every local ministry. Every style has its problems as well as potential. Think of these in practical ways for just a moment.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Paul 	<p><u>Problems</u> Not patient with others Critical spirit Can be harsh/domineering Drives people too hard</p>	<p><u>Potential</u> Great organizer Good motivator Good insight Never quits</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Peter 	<p><u>Problems</u> Can be too talkative Exaggerates Doesn't follow through Speaks before thinking Explosive</p>	<p><u>Potential</u> Able to influence Fun to be with Great to be with Greets visitors well Sees lighter side</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Timothy 	<p><u>Problems</u> Procrastinator Appears lazy Too laid back Waits to be asked</p>	<p><u>Potential</u> Gentleness and grace Not easily offended Not offensive Works well with people</p>

- | | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| • The John | <u>Problems</u>
Too sensitive, feelings hurt
Too affectionate
Hard to take stand | <u>Potential</u>
Loves unlovable people
Helpful to hurting people
Desire to be with this one |
| • The Barnabas | <u>Problems</u>
Gives of self too much
Expectations high of this one
Needed in too many areas | <u>Potential</u>
Great in assimilation
Diffusing explosive situations
Great assistant in difficulties |

Questions to help us take the next step of growth:

1. In the various ministries of the local church, can you identify the servant types?
2. Are these servant types serving in the capacity best suited to them?
3. Without naming the person, what types of “problems” are easily identified in your local ministry? What biblical principles can be applied and what steps will be taken to address the problem?
4. One of the greatest needs of most local churches focuses on assimilating new people. Who are the Barnabas type servants in your ministry? How can they be used effectively in assimilation?

What happens when you place these leadership styles side by side? Imagine a work project is about to happen in your church.

1. *Paul Type - Willing to organize and supervise.*
2. *Peter Type - Makes the project fun. Their encouragement influences people to get involved.*
3. *Timothy Type - Deals well with people. They do not easily get upset and angry when dealing with difficult people and situations.*
4. *John Type – When “unlovely” acting person gets involved, the John types works well with them.
They love people unconditionally.*
5. *Barnabas Type – Will welcome and help newcomers get on board. They are great at defusing potentially explosive situations.*

Lesson Nine - Men and Temptation

Men have problems in these areas: Power, money and women or any admixture of the three (and they mix well).

Power

Man has the evil force of Satan within him. Satan fell from his heavenly position because he sought to usurp the glory of God. His pride caused him to lose everything. See Ezekial 28: 14-19. Also, Isaiah 14: ¹²”How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! ¹³For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. ¹⁵Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”

Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness in this very way- Matt. 4: ⁸”Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

Paul mentions in the New Testament the power of pride. He reminds Timothy that men need to be mature. Note I Timothy 3: ⁶”Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

John says in I John 2:16 “For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

Pride is a problem for us. We are warriors, conquerors by nature. When little boys conquer, they boast. We must first beware of what we are trying to conquer (don't conquer for self, but God), and then be humble in success.

Being a deacon is not about power, but service.

Money

Money is the power to get what we want. Money is not bad, but the love of it is dangerous. God says:

I Timothy 6:10 “For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

Col. 3:5 says that covetousness is idolatry.

I Cor. 10:14 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”

Here is a check list that must be addressed:

1. Do you live on what you have?
2. Do you carry over credit on your cards?
3. Do you know contentment?
4. Do you want all the overtime you can get?
5. Is your greatest pleasure in buying things?

6. Do you give benevolently? If you become a leader, it will be required by your service. It always costs to serve God.
7. Are you tithing?

It is never how much you make, but rather what you do with what you make.

When asking members if they tithe and give benevolently, it is of necessity that the deacons do the same.

Women

As men, we struggle with this area. The Bible is full of illustrations demonstrating so. God made men to be attracted to women. God made women beautiful and to be enjoyed for companionship and also intimacy. But God also made fences to keep us in check.

See Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness

Fornication- porneia (where we get pornography)

- 1) Illicit sexual intercourse
 - 1a) adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc.
 - 1b) sexual intercourse with close relatives; Lev. 18
 - 1c) sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman; Mk. 10:11, 12
- 2) Uncleanness
 - 1a) physical
 - 1b) in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living; of impure motives

Col. 3:5-7 “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.”

If you want to ruin your marriage or ministry, allow immorality into your life. The sin of immorality starts in insidious ways:

- Kindness from a woman can be taken wrong. The woman doesn't even know she is enticing you. Women do not think like men think (what a surprise).
- Appreciation. When men serve, women respond with appreciation. Sometimes the appreciation at home is taken for granted and not expressed, and this new appreciation can lead to wrong conclusions.
- This kindness or appreciation leads to infatuation. Infatuation is imagining something that is not there. It is letting your mind wander into lustful thinking. The truth is never found in infatuation. This will consume your mind. Beware of the lies of infatuation.

To prevent problems from developing, do the following:

- If married, enjoy the wife of your youth. Make plans to court your wife. This should be part of your life purpose.
- Think biblically. Remember, you cannot do better than God's Word says. Follow it carefully. There are multiple warnings.
- Daily ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of the truth, especially when your mind is entertaining lustful lies. The truth is that if you pursue this course, it will lead to heart break, embarrassment, destruction, and death.

- Keep your devotions fresh. If you miss some days, don't get beat up about it, but get back in the Word.
- Be very careful about being with another woman in a compromising situation. You should never meet with a woman alone.
- Deacons should have control of what they watch on the TV, computer, literature and what movies they rent.

Conclusion

The devil would love to bring you down. When leaders fall (oaks), they crush little ones (green shoots and little trees). You cannot imagine the damage that will happen. "Sin will take you down a road you do not want to go and cost you more than you can pay."

John Bunyan said this, "Sin is the great block and bar to our happiness, the procurer of all miseries to man, both here and hereafter: take away sin and nothing can hurt us: for death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is the wages of it."

Lesson Ten – Dealing with Conflict in the Church

Just because we are believers does not insulate us from difficulties and personality conflicts. Many churches have been through very difficult times. Churches have been torn apart and woe to the men who are deacons during these times. It is difficult!

Baptist churches are independent congregations. Taken too far, you have isolation. A better approach is interdependence. Sister churches offer strength and blessing. This is also true in times of trouble. When you find yourself in trouble, call for help. Here's how it works.

Getting help:

If your church is in association with a fellowship, it is best to contact your representative, asking him to contact the "Church Relations Committee" or ask godly men to come and visit with the church leadership. If the problem can be resolved without the whole church or sister churches getting involved, it will be better for the church. Assistance can be called for by the pastor or deacons. All attempts of resolution should be made before this takes place, but it is unwise to wait until the church is falling apart to call for help. Gaining wisdom from godly advisors is biblical. Pastor and Deacons should welcome a spiritual review.

When to call a "Church Council:"

Church councils should be called for the following reasons:

- When doctrinal issues challenge the statement of faith and the church appears incapable of coming to any agreement.
- When division in the church body cannot be resolved.
- When the church leadership is unwilling to abide by congregational vote.
- When there is a discipline problem that threatens church unity.

How to call a "Church Council:"

Care should be taken in calling a council together to help the church. The following procedure is advisable:

- Following the guidelines of the church constitution, call for a church business meeting. Usually, an announcement must be made two consecutive Sundays before the meeting is convened and a statement of the business to be conducted must be posted.
- Make a motion in the church membership meeting (business meeting) to call for a church council among the fellowshipping churches of your locality. Call the same churches together that would help with an ordination or recognition service.
- The motion will call for the pastor and two members of the fellowshipping churches to sit in council and give the church spiritual advice. It should be stated that the council would elect a chairman and secretary upon gathering, that it would review the situation and then give the church a recommendation.

Baptists understand that the council has no authority over the church. The council only makes recommendations.

Avoid the following:

- A selective council. Invite all churches that you would normally invite to an ordination or that attend your local fellowship. Avoid any partiality or “setting up the council” with friends on either side of the issue.
- A secret council. This business should be in the open. The council will determine whether certain business items or interviews need to be closed to the membership.
- A useless council. This occurs when the church is unwilling to listen to the advice of the council.

How to conduct the “Church Council:”

The council should convene on the date and time specified, electing a chairman and secretary. The council will open with a time of prayer to seek God’s wisdom. The council will most likely do the following:

- Hear from both sides.
- Interview a number of church members.
- Interview the pastor.
- Interview the deacons.
- Ask the membership to fill out a survey form.
- Obtain the necessary information to make a godly recommendation.

Some interviews may be done individually while others can be done in groups. The council may need many meetings to work on the problem, but will bring their conclusion and recommendation to the church as soon as possible.

Godly men will need to be honest, forthright, humble and unified. If their efforts are bathed in prayer, they will be able to present even the most difficult recommendation to the membership. The church may ask someone from the council to help them to follow through on the recommendation and progress toward reconciliation.

The council will conclude its work and disband.

The Church responding:

Because the Lord Jesus Christ leads the church through conflict by godly wisdom, both members and leaders should be willing to follow the advice and counsel of godly men. The church should hear the recommendation of the council with an open mind and vote to follow the wisdom proffered.

The recommendation may include:

- A call for forgiveness and reconciliation with follow-up by an appointed council member.
- The resignation of certain members or leaders (this may be the resignation from an office or church membership).
- A change in policy or constitution.
- Further counsel.

Although it would be unwise, the church may reject the recommendation of the council. If this happens, it could threaten fellowship with sister churches and hinder the possibility of resolving internal conflicts in the future.

A word of encouragement:

God has provided the church with capable leaders. Accountability to a church council reflects accountability to the God of Heaven, to whom we will all answer at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Anyone who refuses the wisdom of Christian brothers reveals a deeper spiritual problem. God can use difficult situations and submission to the wisdom of others to bring about revival. Perhaps the church will see her greatest growth following the advice of a church council.

A word of caution:

If the problem in the church ends up being the pastor, the deacons will be forced to take up the reins and give direction to the church. This is a sad time for the church, but sometimes necessary. The caution is this: after taking up the reins, you must be willing to relinquish them to the next pastor. The pastor needs to be able to lead without feeling the deacons are controlling him.

DO NOT COPY

Lesson Eleven - Church Discipline and the Deacons

Church discipline is a necessary ingredient to a pure church and to godly members. It is never easy but always profitable. Deacons have a key role in church discipline.

A. Deacons should handle the discipline:

Because you are in close contact with the members, you will know the problems that develop, and be assured, they will. Here's what to do when they take place:

1. Call the person or family and get correct information. If you have "heard there is a problem," simply call and ask if what you heard is true. A personal visit is best.
2. If sin is to be confronted, it is best to take another deacon with you in seeking repentance. I prefer the pastor not be involved at the first for a couple of reasons:
 - i. If he is not involved, then the person living in sin that attends services may listen to his message from the Word without resenting him. Let the person resent the deacons if there is going to be resentment.
 - ii. The pastor already carries enough of the people's problem, so in this way, the deacons can bear some of that load.
3. If the sinning member will not repent, then I recommend the person be asked to attend a meeting of the deacons and pastors to give account.
4. If the sinning member does not repent, then they must be brought before the church.

B. Handling the disobedient believer:

The Bible is clear on sin. It must be called what it is. Be sure what you are dealing with is sin, citing scriptural standards. Confront again the one in error and explain they must come before the church and give account for their actions. Here is how I proceed:

- This should be a closed session of the membership
- The one in error should be invited
- The deacons should inform the membership of the accusation and grounds for discipline
- The erring brother or sister should be given an opportunity to speak and repent
- The membership must vote to either accept the repentance or place the member on discipline or dismissal from the church

Most of the time, the erring person will refuse to attend and walk away from the church. If this takes place the following should be done:

- Call for a meeting of the members.
- The accusation read to the members.
- The members need to vote to place the erring one on church discipline or dismissal from the membership.
- In most cases, the unrepentant member will ask to be dropped from membership. In this case, legally you must drop them, but you can state in the minutes that they were dropped from membership on church discipline or at least state that there was a serious matter of sin when they asked to be dropped from membership and that no letter of recommendation can or will be sent to another church requesting it.

C. Dealing with a repentant believer:

Sometimes churches ask the repentant believer to confess before the church. This is not a good idea for the following reasons:

- There is no control over what is said, which can be critical.
- There has not been enough time to determine if there is a real change of heart.

Informing the church. The deacon or pastor should make an announcement concerning the problem at hand. I personally like a closed meeting of the members for church discipline or repentance.

- Do not go into detail about the sin, but make sure they understand there was sin.
- Report if there is repentance and share that the believer wants forgiveness.

Every church has its own requirements for church discipline, but here are some thoughts:

- Voting rights taken away.
- No Christian service in the church.
- Barred from the communion table. This may be controversial, but think about a disobedient person taking the Lord's Supper unworthily. Dangerous!

We must always remember that the goal of church discipline is two-fold. First, church purity and second, restoration of the sinning brother. Sometimes the restoration seems more important, and it should not be minimized, but purity is equally important, and for the church as a whole body, critical.

Addendum

1. Analysis of the church ministry:

It is good to periodically review the ministries of the church. I have found this a profitable exercise. Here's how to do this simply.

- a. Have a Sunday dinner after the morning service. (Try to get everyone to attend.)
- b. After dinner, have the pastor explain the purpose of the survey. It is designed to make the church better in the area of ministry.
- c. Send the members with their deacons to respective areas.
- d. Have the deacons pass around a questionnaire with three questions:
 - i. What do you really like about the church?
 - ii. What areas do you feel improvement is needed?
 - iii. What are your hopes and dreams for this church?

If you desire a more in-depth survey, you can list all the ministries of the church and have the members rate them from one to five. I have found the simple response is best.

- e. Collect the responses and have the secretary develop a report and give it to the pastor and deacons.
- f. Review the report at the next meeting. After review, prepare to meet with the committees to bring about the necessary change.
- g. You may find that the church is not where you thought it was.
- h. Don't react!! You might not like what you read, but it is the truth, whether you perceive it that way or not. Act to move the congregation to "higher ground."

2. Membership classes:

I asked a mentor this question: "If you were a pastor again, how would you build a strong church?" His answer was not what I expected. He said, "I would build a strong church on membership training and pre-marital counseling." I wasn't prepared for that answer, but in thinking it through, I saw his wisdom.

Membership class is critical. Everyone should be required to take the class. Why? Here are the reasons:

- a. Membership is a serious decision and the church should demonstrate the seriousness of the matter by having a prepared course of study for membership classes.
- b. Some will desire membership and are not saved. I have personally experienced the privilege of leading people to Christ in membership class.
- c. Every church is different and needs to teach its way of doing the Lord's business.
- d. The more information you give people before membership, the less problems you have after membership.
- e. Most potential members do not know people in the church. Membership class is a great opportunity to get to know a few. I have seen life long friendships develop in membership class.
- f. Most believers, even former Baptist people, do not know the reason they are Baptists. This is a great need in our country.
- g. It is preferable that the pastor teach the membership class because this really connects him with the people. But, this is not always possible. Every deacon should be prepared to teach membership.

- h. A whole quarter seems like a long class, but membership lasts for a life time. Don't miss the opportunities of this important time.

Baptist Church Planters has available a Membership Course for adults and children. Contact BCP for more information.

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Local church organizational system by committees

Every administrative program hinges on three basic styles:

1. Pastor runs everything- pastor plans and gets people to fulfill his plan.
2. Deacons are the administrators- deacons and pastor plan and deacons find people to fulfill the plan.
3. Committee operated administration- the membership plans and fulfills the plan. The pastor and deacons only give direction.

The key question is “who is doing all the planning?” Who takes ownership of the church?

Business people have found that grass-root planning produces the greatest sense of ownership and production.

The role of the pastor and deacons

1. Properly organize the church administration so the maximum amount of people are using the abilities they have and use them in such a way as not to create confusion and dissension.
2. To build a team spirit.
3. To provide a means for workers to express themselves.
4. To develop confidence and trust in the leadership.
5. To protect the church from any one person “running the show.”
6. To provide an administration that will function well when there is no pastor.

Assessing the church body

For a pastor and deacons to accurately know where the people are, how they think, and understand their needs, they must go to all the people and ask them. This is called going to the “grass roots” for information. Here we will learn about their needs, how they feel about certain ministries, what they like and do not like about the church, as well as their hopes and dreams for the future. A shepherd must know his people to effectively minister to them and help them find a place of ministry in the church. Baptists hold to the autonomy of the local church, which gives the authority to the membership. The balance between the called man of God and congregational authority is beautiful when properly understood. The bishop (pastor) oversees the ministry, not as an overseeing inspector, but as an encourager. He does not do all the work, or have the work done his way, but sees that it is being done. He asserts leadership – giving ideas, maturation, enthusiasm, and guidelines for ministry. He is a discipler for Christ’s sake and allows disciples to minister to their fullest potential, not as servants for himself, but for the church and Christ. Never is the motive of the administrator to please himself, provide security for himself (everybody is doing what I say and thinking as I think), give himself a good name, nor to make his organization famous. He does not drive people, he walks before them and they learn (disciple) how Christ is to be served. The pastor is not a dictator nor is he a lifeless figure head. The day of both is over.

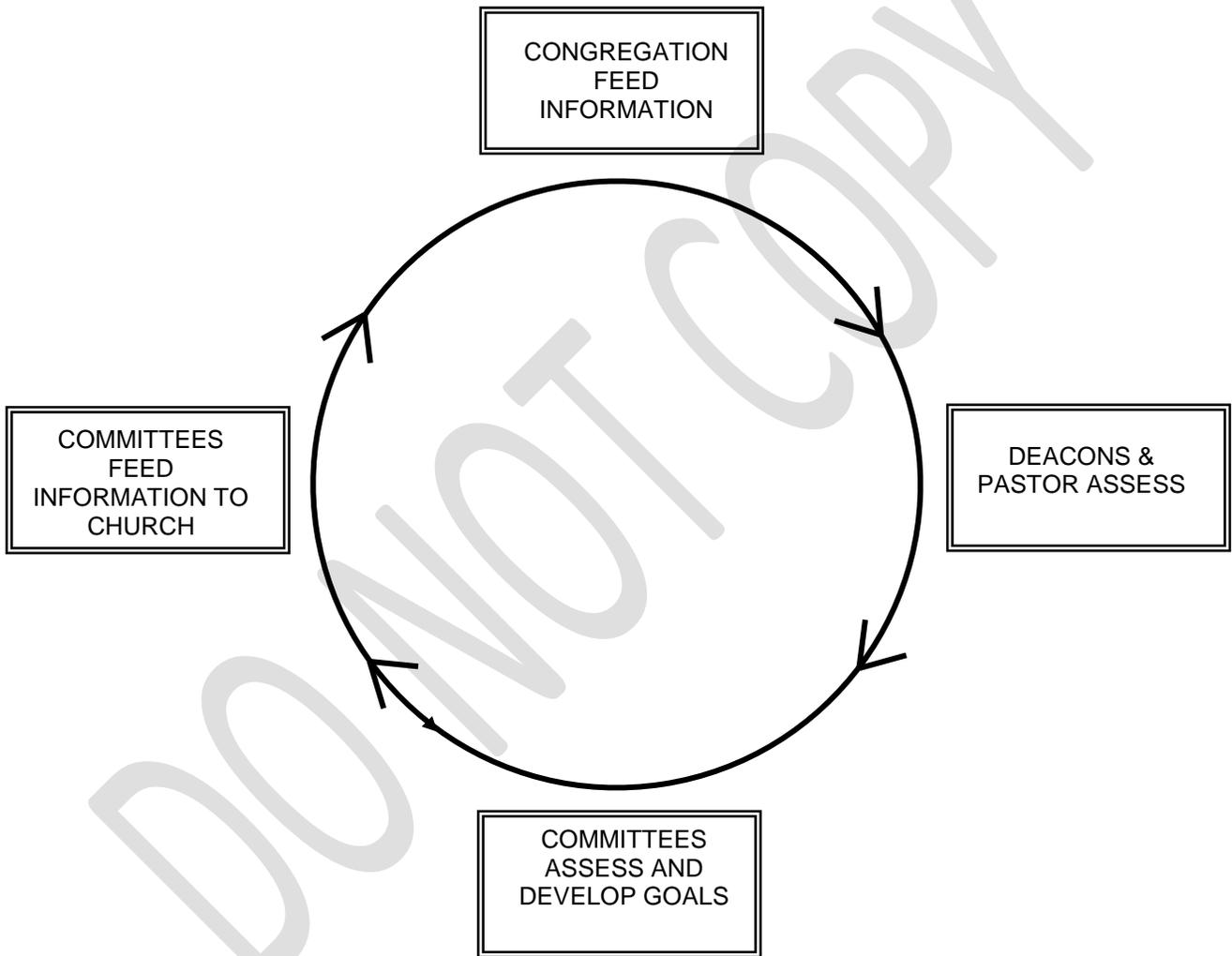
When Church leadership is secure, they will not be afraid to seek the opinions of the people. Too often people in our churches feel like many wives, “my opinion doesn’t count.” Pastors and deacons run the church, “handling down” the orders and controlling the people. This usually develops when either the pastor believes “these people are carnal and they need to be spiritual and it is my responsibility to bring this about” (which, by the way, is not the ministry of an overseer, but a pastor, and then he must recognize who the real “Lord” is) or when a pastor is insecure and needs everything going right (his way) all the time. The opposite is true when people feel the leadership hears them, cares for them, and allows them to serve to their fullest potential.

I have found many methods work in receiving the needed information. From simply writing thoughts on a blank sheet of paper, to many pages of specific questions, all lend to give the people an opportunity for expression. Once you have this in hand, have the secretary of someone other than the pastor (if possible) categorize the information. The pastor and deacons and hopefully their wives will meet and go over the report. We *must not* take offense at anything said. This is not a personal attack; it is just the way it is. Now we can start working to improve the ministry to fit the needs of the people. The report will next be brought to the membership and then given to the respective committees to provide solutions for the weaknesses and “shore up” the strong points. Committees will need to be warned not to take offense, but accept the challenge.

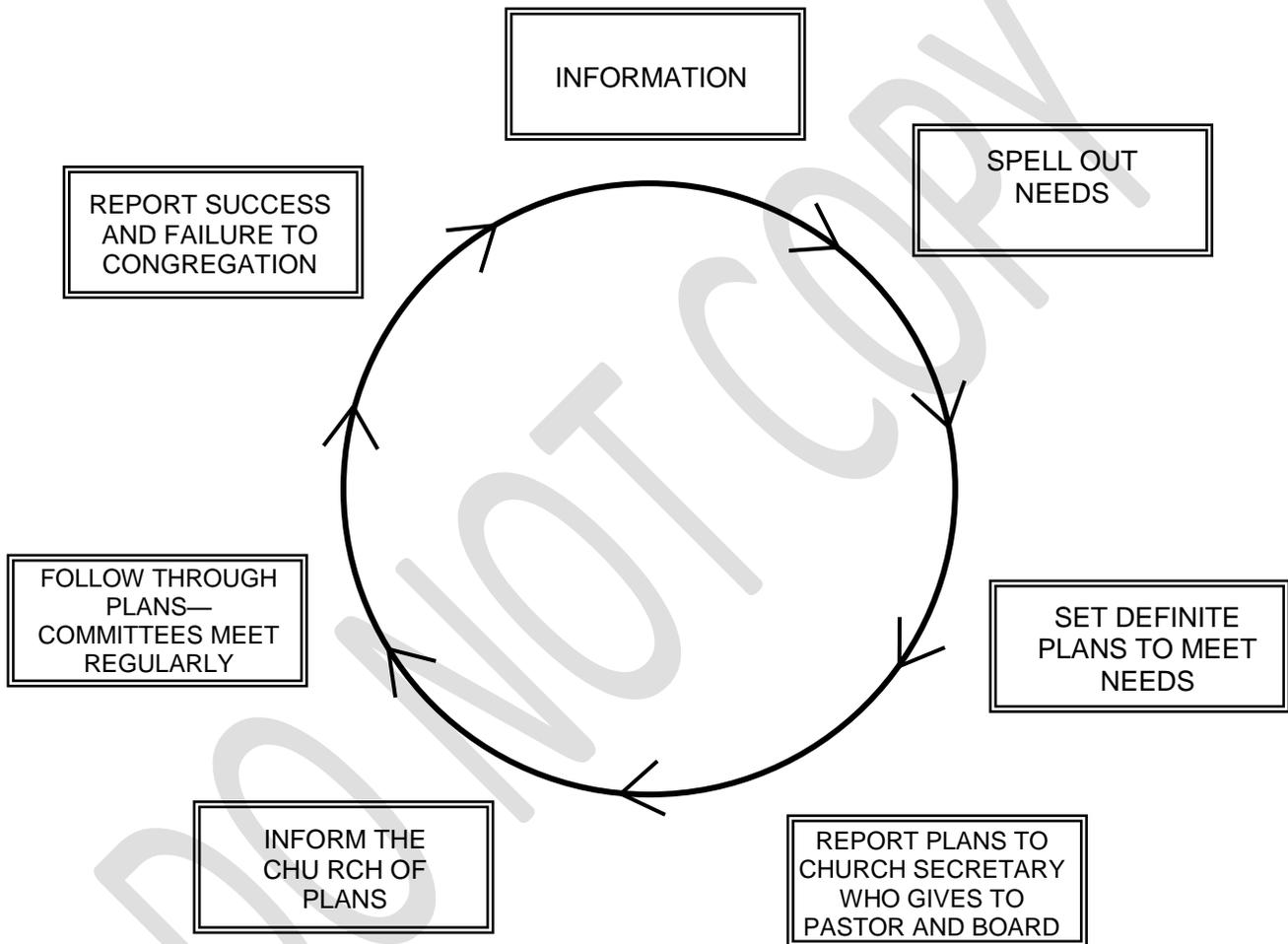
Now you are at the most important. Here is where the bishop serves, and, with the deacons, makes sure committees are working through their assignments to bring about the most effective ministry possible. Here you let thinking people think, pray, and plan. To interfere by manipulation to bring about the pastor's desires will kill the ministry. Thinking people will say, "then do it yourself" = pastoral burn-out. Non-thinking people will burn out trying to please the pastor.

DO NOT COPY

GAINING AND USING INFORMATION PROPERLY



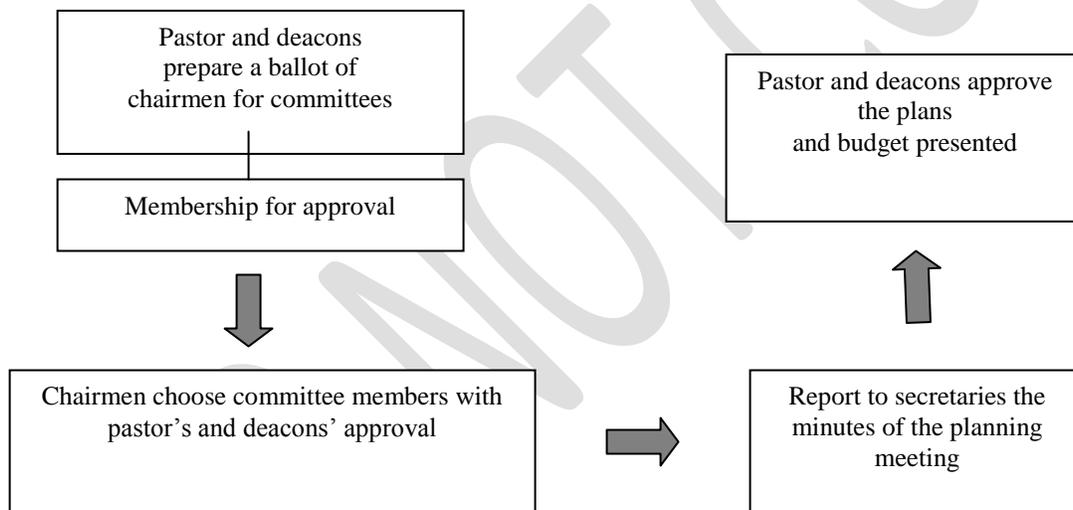
PROCESS COMMITTEES TAKE IN MAKING IT HAPPEN



How it works

- Determine what ministries you want.
- Find the most capable person to lead that ministry.
- Make the appointment with church approval.
- Allow the chairman to choose their committee.
- Chairman checks with his appointed deacon before approaching a possible committee member.
- Pastor works with the chairman on their agenda for committee meeting.
- Each person can be on only one committee.
- All meet the same night.
- Pastor shares his plans.
- Committees make plans- one year in advance, next four months detailed.
- Report to secretary.
- Deacons review the plans at their deacon's meeting.

Flow of Decision Making



Why the system works

- Decisions are grass root-with the people who do the work.
- It uses the maximum amount of people for administration.
- It gives people value and ownership.
- It doesn't allow any one person to rule.
- It keeps the deacons free to care for the spiritual needs of the church body.
- It holds leaders accountable, but in a workable system.
- The church sees things getting done.