

Deacon Handbook

The Deacon Ministry of **Carmel Baptist Church, Matthews, North Carolina**

VISION

The deacons of Carmel Baptist Church are spiritual leaders who support the Elders and Staff in carrying out the vision of Carmel Baptist Church of “making disciples of those nearest, our neighbors and the nations.”

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is dedicated to helping a deacon to serve faithfully and effectively. It is designed to acquaint deacons with the biblical materials related to the Office of Deacon and the particulars of the Deacon Ministry of the Carmel Baptist Church, Matthews, North Carolina.

The Church has appointed men to the position of a deacon because their life has exhibited the characteristics of faithfulness and loyalty both to the Lord and His Church. A deacon must remember, however, that Jesus said, ***“The greatest among you shall be your servant.” (Matthew 23:11).***

Two passages in the New Testament are commonly cited concerning the Office of Deacon: Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-12. The word for “deacon” in the New Testament originally described a servant who “stirred up dust while waiting on tables.” As a deacon, one’s major attention will be given to serving God under the leadership of the pastor(s) and deacon officers in the practical ministry of the Church.

Core Values

The Deacon Fellowship embraces five core values in our servant leadership. These core values establish a framework for defining characteristics sought in a deacon. Without these values the fundamental relationship with God is not right. As a deacon serves he experiences growth within these values because that is the nature of faith, to experience more of the power and joy in God's grace.

1. **Integrity**
2. **Humility**
3. **Gentle strength through surrender**
4. **Love (agape)**
5. **Passion for God's glory**

Integrity, humility, and gentle strength through surrender have been identified as the defining characteristics sought in a deacon. Of the three in 1 Corinthians 13, faith, hope and love, **love** is the greatest, even as deacons are men "full of faith." This love has both a vertical and horizontal dimension, a **love for God** and a **love for one another**. This love for God overflows horizontally in acts of love for others, where one's joy in God is doubled in the joy of others. Disciples are known by their **love for one another** and deacons are a specially called class of disciples. **Passion for God's glory** brings all joy and delight back to God Himself.

These five core values guide the Deacon Fellowship in carrying out the priorities that describe the culture we desire to create at Carmel: "to make disciples of those nearest, our neighbors and the nations."

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I. THE BIBLICAL / HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF A DEACON

Acts 6:1-7 is the passage often cited for the beginning of the office of Deacon in the early Christian Church. Though the seven who were elected were not specifically called "Deacons" in the technical sense, they nonetheless functioned consistent with the biblical qualifications of deacon delineated below. The Office of Deacon probably grew out of this experience. One reason they were chosen was to solve a problem that arose among the church fellowship. They were called upon to preserve the harmony of the church. Another reason was to free the apostles to give full attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The position of deacon in Acts 6 is an appointed one. A deacon should certainly feel led to serve in that position; however the initiation of that commitment rests in the hands of the local church. It is not a self-appointed office.

II. BIBLICAL / PRACTICAL QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

The biblical qualifications for a deacon are found in Acts 6 and in I Timothy 3:8-13. They are divided into two categories:

A. Spiritual Qualifications

*"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because widows were overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be **full of the Spirit and wisdom**. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word. This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man **full of faith and of the Holy Spirit**; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith." Acts 6:1-7 (NIV)*

Full of the Holy Spirit

A deacon is a disciple of Jesus Christ who passionately seeks and finds his satisfaction in the glory of God and who realizes the power to walk in God's ways through full surrender to the Holy Spirit. The phrase "full of the Holy Spirit" captures this disposition. The Spirit can be equated with the "grace" of God and the power that flows from that grace. In addition, the consistent experience of this grace produces supreme joy in the deacon. This grace is appropriated through faith, a faith which works through love. Therefore, a deacon full of the Holy Spirit is driven to acts of love because it is in the channels of love where the grace of God and the resulting joy experienced flows most freely.

Full of Wisdom

*“Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)--Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, **but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.**” Acts 6:9 -10 (NIV)*

Jesus Christ *“has become for us wisdom from God” 1 Corinthians 1:30.*

The Bible, with the cross of Christ at its center, reveals the wisdom and truth of God. Therefore the wisdom revealed in Jesus Christ and His Word is most precious to the deacon, because this allows the deacon to know God more deeply and the more he knows of God, the happier he is. All acts of service by the deacon are an extension and overflow of his supreme, delight and joy in God Himself.

A deacon is passionately and consistently immersed in the Scriptures. Like Psalms 119:97, the Word is *“his meditation all day long.”*

It is expected of every deacon that he have a firm grasp on the essentials and fundamental doctrines of our faith and that he is held by them. This provides the cornerstone of wisdom he embodies and articulates.

Full of Faith

“They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” Acts 6: 5

Deacons who are full of faith are men who are full of God’s Word. We know that “faith comes by hearing the Word of God”. The deacon knows and fully relies on the truth in God’s Word that, *“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature...”* (II Pet 1:4) As the deacon partakes of the divine nature through faith in God’s superior promises, he both experiences supreme joy and the power for sacrificial works of love. He knows and embodies the truth that the Spirit, which he is full of, works by “hearing through faith.” He becomes a living epistle of the Word, so spreading the Word of God. As a result of the promise that God’s Word shall not return void, his life is God’s vessel of drawing many to “joy and peace in believing.”

A deacon is also the embodiment of faith working through love. The nature of his faith is to find total satisfaction in God. This satisfaction is a love for God and a joy in God that overflows in acts of loving service to others. His joy, like the Macedonians, is “doubled in their joy.”

B. CHARACTER QUALIFICATIONS (I TIMOTHY 3: 8-10, 12-13)

“Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.”¹ Tim 3:8-13 (NIV)

Worthy of respect

A deacon is to be a man who has the bearing of respectfulness and dignity—a mature man of character and spiritual demeanor who steadfastly promotes “blamelessness and dignity” in his living.

Sincere

A deacon is to be an honest man who is verbally consistent. Literally this word could mean not “double-tongued”. He speaks the truth. He must be a man who lives the way he talks.

Not indulging in much wine

While the original word refers to habitual consumption, blamelessness and dignity in a deacon is increased by total abstinence. For this reason, the deacons of Carmel are men who choose to limit their liberty for the sake of unquestionable credibility in this area.

Not pursuing dishonest gain

A deacon must be purely motivated in his ministry glorifying God’s name and cause. The acquisition of financial gain or power cannot be his hidden agenda. His business dealings outside the church must be worthy of one who represents Christ and His church. The superior promises of joy in God frees the deacon from the pursuit of selfish and dishonest gain. A deacon is one who has the “healthy eye” of Matthew 6:19-24. His healthy eye is focused on the one treasure: God. When looking at money and God, he sees God as infinitely more valuable and desirable. His qualities of being full of the Spirit, faith and wisdom facilitate this healthy eyesight.

Keep hold of the faith

A deacon must understand Christian truths as well as Carmel’s doctrinal positions and unreservedly acknowledge and promote those truths with clear conscience. Paul warned that the lack of a clear conscience can shipwreck one’s faith. Hence he

declared that *"I so strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and Man."*
Acts 24:16 (NIV).

A conscience remains clear as the deacon stays rightly related to God. A deacon remains rightly related when both his satisfaction in living and the power to do so are drawn by faith from God.

A deacon's joy, therefore, results in service and always knowing he remains rightly related to Jesus Christ, wherein is his joy.

First tested

A deacon must have proven over time that he evidences qualities of character and ministry necessary for serving the body at Carmel as assessed by the Deacon Selection Committee and affirmed by the pastoral leadership.

Husband of one wife

A married deacon must be clearly committed and devoted to his wife. It should be clear that he is in a loving relationship with his wife. Divorce occurs in many families. Divorce could be an issue disqualifying a man for leadership. If divorce has occurred in the life of a prospective deacon, the circumstances and the way in which the candidate reflected his faith will be the subject of discussion in the screening process. Each case will be examined individually.

Good manager at Home

A deacon must be the spiritual leader in the home and one who manages the affairs of his household with diligence.

III. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE WIFE OF A DEACON

"In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything".(1 Tim 3:11 NIV)

Worthy of respect

This is the same term found in 1 Tim. 2:8 concerning deacons. It means "dignified, honorable, not taking lightly things that are of a serious nature."

Not malicious talkers

A deacon's wife must not speak quickly and when she does speak, do it in love. Gossip must never be a part of her nature.

Temperate

This means being self-controlled in all things.

Trustworthy in all things

A deacon's wife must be trustworthy. From time to time she will hear information that, for the good of the church and the people, she must keep to herself.

IV. PRACTICAL MINISTRY RESPONSIBILITIES

Deacons represent an extension of the Pastoral Care Ministry and are considered as leader-servants of the Church. Deacons are to recognize their roles as ministering servants of the Church.

PRACTICAL DUTIES

Practical duties of a deacon at Carmel are as follows:

- Loyal support of the pastor and staff.
- Faithful attendance at the services of the church.
- Encouragement of and participation in the ministries of the church – Sunday Bible Study Communities, music, missions, outreach, prayer, etc.
- A consistent commitment to stewardship through tithing.
- Personal evangelism among the lost and visitation of the sick and shut-ins
- Regular attendance at the meetings of the deacons.
- Assistance with new member assimilation.
- Participation in the "Deacons' of the Week" assignments.
- Give attention to the needs of the membership, especially to widows.
- Assist in resolving problems which arise within Carmel Baptist Church and work toward unity.
- To be examples within the fellowship of wisdom, spirituality, faithfulness and of good character
- Maintain a high level of confidentiality with information relating to issues which may arise within the Deacon Ministry.

V. SPECIFIC MINISTRY RESPONSIBILITIES

The **specific duties** unique to Carmel Baptist Church fall into three categories: Family Ministry; Spiritual Leadership; and Men's Mentoring.

1. Family Ministry

Consistent with biblical teaching, the foundational role of the deacon is service to the needy. Today, the needy can be parties with long term needs, such as widows, shut-ins, the infirmed, or families and individuals experiencing short-term needs resulting from illness or other issues.

2. Spiritual Leadership

Deacons at Carmel Baptist Church must lead by being a visible presence at church gatherings and services. As spiritual leaders, the Deacon Fellowship at Carmel Baptist Church supports the pastoral staff by serving as a confidential sounding board, and by providing feedback to guard church unity. Deacons are also expected to lead through public prayer, service of the Lord's Supper, and administers membership accountability.

3. Men's Mentoring

Understanding that Godly leadership is critical for the spiritual health of families and the adoption of lifetime Christian principles in children, and growth of this church, deacons at Carmel Baptist Church are biblically called to focus on the spiritual development of men. In this work, deacons are to mentor, encourage and spur men in the love and care of their family, in spiritual development and in servant hood through participation in projects.

VI. SELECTION OF A DEACON

As stated in Section II, there are spiritual and character qualifications for any man serving as a deacon at Carmel Baptist Church. All nominees presented to the church will have met those requirements before beginning the process with the Deacon Selection Committee (DSC). The selection process will work as follows:

1. The church has the opportunity to nominate men to serve in the roll of deacon.
2. The DSC will take those names and make initial contacts to determine interest in serving, given the candidate meets the qualifications from Section II.
3. Upon stating he is willing to be considered for the office of deacon, the candidate's name is given to the deacon officers to set up a meeting for him and his wife, if married, to hear clearly the role and expectations of serving as a deacon at CBC. These meetings are conducted by the deacon leadership and will include one or more candidates.

4. Following this meeting, if the candidate still feels led to pursue being a deacon his name is referred back to the DSC for a formal interview with that team.
5. Upon the unanimous consent of the DSC, his name will be put into nomination to the church, along with the other candidates to fill those spots left open by men rotating off the deacon fellowship.

VII. ORDINATION OF NEW DEACONS

An ordination service will be scheduled as soon as practical to ordain any man elected to the Deacon Fellowship who is not already ordained. Carmel Baptist Church shall present a copy of the Certificate of Ordination to mark the occasion.

VIII. SERVICE OF A DEACON

A deacon shall remain in an active status for three years and is eligible again for church nomination to active service after a one year leave.

IX. LIFE DEACON

Deacon service is a lifelong calling by God. Once a man concludes active deacon service (3 years), he is expected to continue to serve in the church through one of the many ministry opportunities that are available. A few examples include teaching a Sunday Bible Study Community, serving in the Widows Ministry, or participating on one of the many church-wide committees. Apart from serving, a Life Deacon is also expected to be a leader and mentor for other men in the church. This active participation, even after the 3 year term, is necessary for unifying and edifying the church body, as well as continued spiritual growth and maturity of the Life Deacon.

X. TERMINATION OF DEACON SERVICE

1. His personal resignation, or
2. His transfer of membership from Carmel Baptist Church, or
3. His removal from such office by action of the Deacon Fellowship.

XI. RELATIONSHIPS OF A DEACON

The deacon's primary relationship is to the Lord. The principle concern of a deacon is his walk with God. Next in importance, is the deacon's knowledge and understanding of his role in relation to his family, pastor(s), church ministries, and the church membership at large.

Relationship to the Deacon's Family

The New Testament mentions a deacon's responsibility in relation to his wife and children; therefore, the church feels that a deacon should give his family first priority in his devotion, care and ministry.

Relationship to the Pastor(s)

A deacon should serve under the leadership and spiritual direction of the pastor(s) and should be loyal to the pastor(s) in prayer support, encouragement and fellowship.

The families of Carmel Baptist Church look to the pastor(s) and elders for giving overall leadership and administration to the church and its ministry. The church, therefore, expects the deacons to respect the office of pastor(s) and to welcome the unique opportunity to learn from and serve with the pastor(s). As a deacon functions in the practical ministry of the church, the pastor(s) are freed to give attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

Relationship to Church Ministries

Nowhere in the New Testament is there even a hint that the Deacon Fellowship is to function as a board of directors, or as administrators of the church's business affairs. Deacons are servants first and last. As spiritual and servant leaders, the Deacon Fellowship is available for council, guidance, and accountability for church ministries. Out of courtesy, ministry leaders may consult with the Deacon Fellowship concerning actions or recommendations, for information, and for feedback. The Deacon Fellowship may indicate support or give counsel, but not instruct ministry leaders as to what they can or cannot propose to the church for official action.

Relationship to Church Members

Deacons are to be active in ministry to the church family, and to promote peace, harmony, and a spirit of cooperation and unity among the membership. Deacons are to be problem solvers and preservers of church harmony.

As an example, every deacon carries two imaginary buckets: one of water and one of gasoline. He determines in many situations whether he will help put out the fires of disharmony or if he will fuel the problem.

Deacons are to be active in ministry. This will enable the pastor(s) to feed the flock faithfully and to be able to spend the necessary time in prayer for God's direction and inspiration in leading the church.

XII. DEACON MEETINGS

The meetings of the Deacon Fellowship shall be restricted to the pastor(s) and the active deacons of the church, unless otherwise requested by the Deacon Fellowship and or pastor(s). The deacon officers, in consultation with the pastor(s), will determine regular meetings. Meetings of the Deacon Fellowship will typically be scheduled once a month.

XIII. ORGANIZATION

The Deacon Fellowship consists of 36 men. Each year 12 deacons are elected for a 3 year term. At the end of their third year of service the 12 deacons rotate off of the Deacon Fellowship. The Deacon Fellowship has four areas of ministry that deacons serve on. They are Widows, Outreach, Caring, and Prayer. Each deacon is asked to select one of those ministry areas of service. Deacons serving their third year are expected to serve as mentors to newly ordained deacons. Upon completing their third year, a deacon is ask to commit to some area of service while being a Life Deacon.

XIV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEACON OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN

1. Moderate all deacon meetings
2. Oversee all deacon ministries
 - See that each ministry is staffed and functioning.
 - Assist whenever needed in planning and promoting ministries.
3. Serve as a member of the Leadership Team
 - Furnish the Leadership Team and church office with a planned yearly calendar of deacon activities, which involve use of Carmel Baptist Church facilities
 - Serve as liaison between Deacon Fellowship, Ministerial Staff, and Carmel Baptist Church
4. Cooperate with all Carmel Baptist Church leadership in working toward unity, harmony, spirituality and growth of Carmel Baptist Church

VICE CHAIRMAN

1. Moderate deacon meetings in the absence of the Chairman
2. Assist the Chairman as needed in all deacon ministries
3. Serves as a member of the Leadership Team

RECORDER

1. Record the minutes of each meeting
2. Keep record of attendance
3. Notify deacons of special events involving deacon participation
4. Serve as timekeeper for deacon meetings
5. Serve as a member of the Leadership Team
6. Maintain Deacon Assignment Schedule

MINISTRY LEADERS

Prayer Ministry Leader

1. Encourage the Deacon Fellowship to devote time to prayer both in the home and in the church body.
2. Follow up with those deacons who are assigned weekly prayer assignments to ensure we have prayer coverage for each church service.
3. Assist in the development and coordination of church wide prayer initiatives with Carmel's staff, elders, and other deacons.
4. Coordinate with Discipleship Communities' care group leaders any specific prayer needs relating specifically to the church, staff or school and relays these prayer needs to the Deacon Fellowship during their monthly meetings.
5. Responsible for leading prayer in all deacon meetings and functions as well as encouraging other deacons to assist in leading prayer time.

Caring Ministry Leader

1. Encourage fellow deacons in their service of visiting shut-ins and those in the hospital.
2. Assist fellow deacons in understanding how to perform their duties in serving the needs of our shut-ins.
3. Assist fellow deacons in understanding how to perform their duties in making hospital visits.
4. Follow through with Homebound assignments and ensure they are being made in a timely and consistent manner.
5. Work with the Pastoral Caring Ministry office to understand who are our long-term homebound are and how best to meet their needs.

Outreach Ministry Leader

1. At the beginning of each year, meet with all deacons that chose Outreach as their primary ministry. Train and educate deacons as to the outreach functions to be performed. Discuss possible new functions for the outreach team for the current year. Follow up as needed.
2. Work with the Adult Ministry Assistant (AMA) on how a deacon is to make and report results of outreach contacts. Also provide the AMA with an updated and correct list of e-mail addresses.
3. Present info from #2 above to all deacons. Train all deacons on:
 - Examples of contact procedures for phone, e-mail, and mail to outreach contacts.
 - How to recognize and follow-thru on leads the deacon will receive via e-mail.
 - How to report results of contacts made.
4. Have a reminder and follow-up system established to help deacons minimize, if not eliminate, failed outreach contacts. Provide regular follow thru on the system.
5. When and if necessary, work with the Missional Pastor on any potential

changes or improvements to the Outreach Ministry.

Widow Ministry Leader

1. Survey new deacons to find out who truly has a passion for the widows ministry.
2. Assign new deacons (and Life Deacons if needed) to widows.
3. Make sure all deacons and church office have the contact information for widows.
4. Work with Pastoral Caring Ministry office to co-ordinate the dates and planning for the 3 big events: Big Hug Sunday; Spring luncheon; and Christmas luncheon
 - Arrange program, decorations, and seating venue.
5. Work with Pastoral Caring Ministry office to coordinate the dates for widows-only fellowships.
6. Encourage deacons to be passionate about serving the widows of Carmel.
7. Work with staff to know when to approach a new widow, and to help meet her needs.

Lord's Supper Ministry Leader

1. Work with the church office to understand the Lord's Supper schedule for the calendar year. This schedule usually consists of one Lord's Supper celebration per quarter, plus the Tenebrae service on Good Friday. At the time of publishing, the service style is also described in the schedule - row by row method or table self-service method.
2. Three to four weeks prior to each Lord's Supper event, the ministry leader logs into Access ACS and sends an email to all Deacons and Life Deacons announcing the next event and asking everyone who is available to respond with the time or times that he can serve. With row by row method, it takes several volunteers as there are 64 positions to fill on a Sunday morning.
3. As the replies come in, the ministry leader manages a spreadsheet and begins matching the names with service times until all the slots are filled. A reminder email is sent 2 weeks prior to the service and then a final email is sent the Thursday or Friday before the service.
4. The day before or early on the morning of the service, the Ministry Leader walks the Worship Center floor to mark each position with tape so each deacon will know where to start the service.
5. The day of the service, the ministry leader checks in with the Lord's Supper assembly team in the kitchen, the Senior Pastor, and also the Worship Pastor to determine any last minute changes or instructions. The ministry leader is stationed at the Main Welcome Desk from 7:30 am until noon to check in each deacon and to relay any instructions or answer questions.
6. During the serving of the Lord's Supper, the Ministry Leader stands in the back of the Worship Center and watches as the deacons move into position

and begin to serve. If something goes wrong during the service, the Ministry Leader stands ready to assist.

XV. DEACON MINISTRIES

PRAYER MINISTRY

“The effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man avails much,” James 5:16.

God has called us to prayer for everything. It is our personal connection with the Father and helps us all develop a closer personal relationship with the Lord. It is what breathes life into that relationship with Him.

As deacons we are called to pray for the needs of the church and for each other. It is encouraging to know that other deacons are always lifting up the needs of the church, the needs of each other, and praying for their own personal relationship and walk with the Lord.

This commitment comes with a responsibility to help in three areas of the church.

- 1) **Prayer Watch**– Each Sunday a deacon is assigned a service where he will spend that hour praying for all aspects of the service during that particular time frame. Typically a deacon will be assigned the service in which he attends with his family.
- 2) **Pray with Pastor**– Approximately 15 minutes before that assigned service, the deacon will also meet with other deacons and the pastor to pray with him before the service starts.
- 3) **Prayer Ministry** – Deacons are also encouraged to be involved in a ministry within Carmel that supports prayer corporately or individually within a men’s small group. There are many opportunities for a deacon to get connected within Carmel. You will be given a list of those ministries and men’s small group to help you continue to growth in your prayer life.

CARING MINISTRY

The Caring Ministry of the Deacon Fellowship involves two primary areas of support to the church. These two areas are the Homebound Ministry and Hospital Visitation Ministry.

Homebound: The deacon assigned each week is to visit our long-term homebound. They will be sent an email from the Adult Ministry Assistant in the church office during their assigned week assigning shut-ins to visit. They will be assigned a time period to complete the visits. Upon completion of the visit, a recap of the visit is to be entered

into the online access system similar to outreach assignments. Priority is to ensure that all of our shut-ins receive routine visits from our deacon fellowship. The desire of the fellowship is that these members are shown the love of Christ through our visits. If any action is required immediate, the staff member for caring is to be notified for follow-up.

Hospital: The deacon assigned each week is to visit any members or family members that are in the hospital over the weekend period. The staff will be visiting them Monday through Friday. The assigned deacon will be notified on Friday afternoon of any needed visitations. These visits are expected to be brief as we need to remember that the patient is in the hospital to get well not entertain lengthy visitors. The deacon will make any required visits and notify the church office by Monday morning of current status.

OUTREACH MINISTRY

The Outreach Ministry is about reaching out to guests who have visited through worship services, special events, Sunday Bible Study Communities, etc. These guests are assigned to deacons weekly on a rotating basis. Deacons will receive as much info as possible which generally includes family member names, when visited, phone and/or e-mail info, address, and sometimes general comments. They need to be contacted within a week and then deacons will report feedback to the church.

In general the **MINIMUM** responsibility will be:

- Call them and thank them for visiting Carmel.
- Ask and answer any questions they may have. If you don't know an answer, that is OK, just promise to get the info they need, and keep your promise.
- Ask about the family (or individual)--any specific needs. Worship, Bible Study, kids' needs, sports, choir, etc.---Then you, or someone else, can elaborate and help them find a home at Carmel
- INVITE them back!!!
- Report results
- If you can't reach by phone, after a couple of tries, use email as a backup.

Going the extra mile (NOT required though)

- Offer to meet them before or after church. Put a face with a name.
- Invite them to lunch after church; get to know them and let them get to know you.

FREQUENCY - You will have outreach responsibility about 2+/- times per quarter. You should have from 1 to 3 contacts per time.

WIDOW'S MINISTRY

*“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”
James 1: 27.*

Carmel Baptist Church deacons have embraced the opportunity to actively participate in serving the widows of the church as directed by James 1:27. Without a doubt, it is a tremendous blessing to the deacons that are serving in this ministry and to the special ladies who are in the ministry.

The loss of a spouse can be a devastating life event, followed with all the ups and downs of loneliness, depression, and feelings of being overwhelmed. Many of these ladies have depended on their husbands for years to do certain tasks and to be their constant companion. While we cannot, in even a small way, replace a spouse, we can show the love of our savior Jesus Christ and the friendship and compassion that is needed during these times.

How the Ministry Works: Each deacon (or Life Deacon) who participates in the ministry is given a widow (sometimes two ladies) to shepherd and befriend. Typically this ministry is for the entire deacon family. Our role is easily defined as getting to know the special lady, and helping understand her needs. We may send notes, make phone calls, remember special dates such as her birthday, spend time with her (as a family event), and make them feel part of your extended family. Any small gesture that is made may help ward off feelings of loneliness and will be greatly appreciated.

Widows Events: Currently, the deacons sponsor a Spring luncheon and a Christmas luncheon that are designed to let our special ladies be pampered with food and entertainment. It is meant to be an event to let them enjoy time with you and your spouse, and the other special ladies and deacons.

Other Widow Events: During the year there are 4 or 5 mid-week luncheons or outings that do not require deacon involvement.

Big Hug Sunday is held in February and is the meant to allow the church as a whole to say “We Love You” to our Special Ladies. They are recognized in all services, and invited to participate in a luncheon with their Deacon and his family.

Deacon Responsibilities:

- Communicate with your special lady
- Let her know she is loved by her church
- Identify any special needs she may have, (sometimes this is around the house; we have help if you need it to meet her needs)
- Be faithful to attend the 2 luncheons and Big Hug Sunday
- Be happy to see her at church

- Love on her with a Christ-centered love.

LORD'S SUPPER MINISTRY

*“Seven men of good reputation and full of the Spirit were selected to **serve tables**.”*
Acts 6:2-3 These seven men were the first Deacons.

Today's Church: In today's church, when a man of good reputation and full of the Spirit accepts the position of deacon, one of the core responsibilities is to serve others. We have this opportunity to serve others in His house during the Lord's Supper celebration. This is truly one of the highest honors that a deacon can perform. Not only is this a high honor, but it is a regular opportunity for each deacon to revisit the roots of the early church. It's a chance to reconnect with the original mission of the Deacon Fellowship and to be humble servants unto the Lord.

At Carmel: At Carmel, we celebrate the Lord's Supper four or five times per year. This service typically falls on a Sunday morning during worship and also one additional time during Tenebrae on Good Friday. Every deacon is expected to serve during the Lord's Supper, unless he's unavailable due to vacation, travel, sickness, etc. We also expect each deacon to volunteer to serve during multiple service times if possible (8:00, 9:30, and 11:00). Because this is such a high honor and also a visible position on a Sunday morning, we also ask each deacon to wear a suit or sports coat and a tie for the service.

Prayer is such an integral part of deacon service. Prior to the actual Lord's Supper service, we ask each deacon to prayerfully prepare himself for serving in this capacity. This can happen individually at home or corporately with other deacons before the service begins.

TIME COMMITMENT

Each of these areas will involve some time upon the deacon's part. We have a rotating schedule for the prayer, hospital visitation, shut-in visitation, and outreach visitation. This commitment usually occurs on a cycle of about every 4-5 weeks. The Lord's Supper time table is listed above. Those involved in the Widows Ministry will require additional commitment to serving our lovely ladies. There are many special events listed above but it also includes the commitment to share in their lives on special days such as birthdays, holidays, etc.

CONCLUSION

The office of deacon demands a high level of commitment, a mature knowledge of the faith, and dedication to fellowship and service. I Timothy 3:13 summarizes it best, ***"For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."***

APPENDIX

- Deacon Rotation Roster & Life Deacon Roster
- List of Meeting Dates
- Lord's Supper Dates
- Deacon Assignment Calendar
- Church Staff
- Other

Acknowledgement: With gratitude this handbook was drawn from the Deacon Handbooks of First Baptist Church, Garland Texas, East Shore Baptist Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, First Baptist, Orlando, Florida and New Hope Baptist Church, Valparaiso, Florida.