



Statement on Deacon Ministry

Purpose

TCBC deacons exist to serve the household of God by identifying and meeting tangible needs, protecting the church's mission, and promoting unity within the body, in accordance with Scripture.

Background and Vision

We believe that the NT clearly establishes the designation of specific individuals in the church who are to serve in the office of deacon and deaconess. While Acts 6:1-6 does not use the term *deacon* to describe Stephen, Phillip and the other men chosen to assist the apostles, the passage in many ways does describe the prototypical characteristics and focus of those who were soon to be called *deacons*. By the time the church was established at Philippi, and the writing of Paul's first letter to Timothy, the designation of *deacon* appears to have had a commonly accepted understanding (Philippians 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-13).

That not all people in a church who are serving are to be designated as *deacon* seems clear from the fact that there is a distinction between deacons and elders (who both serve) and also that there are distinct qualifications that are necessary above and beyond the act of serving others and assisting the elders. The qualifications for deacons are established in 1 Tim 3:8-13 and, similar to the criteria for the prototype deacon in Acts 6, there are no particular skill-related (aptitude) criteria given. This is in contrast to elders who must demonstrate aptitude in teaching. For example, in Acts 6, there clearly needed to be organizational skills necessary to assess and meet the needs of the Hellenistic widows. However, the criteria to select these men were integrity and faithfulness, criteria essential to restoring unity to the body so that the Apostles (prototypes

for elders) could return to prayerful study of the Word and preparation for teaching the people while having the joy of knowing that the body was unified in their fellowship. (Hebrews 13:17)

Thus, the primary task of the deacons has been described by some as *peace keepers* and *shock absorbers*,¹ attributes that require the 1 Timothy qualifications of integrity and guarded speech, as well as evidence of leadership and management in their homes, just as with elders. The elders are clearly designated in Scripture as *overseers* and thus lead the church body as a whole, including those members who serve as deacons. Under the leadership of the elders, deacons then serve the practical needs of the church corporately and individually, allowing the elders to be devoted to prayer, the ministry of the Word, and to the provision of spiritual oversight. Elders and deacons will function together in unity, desiring to fulfill their respective roles in service to the local church and its head, Christ Jesus.

Selection

Unlike the selection of overseers, selection of deacons is not mandated by Scripture. If needed, however, selection of deacons will be based first and foremost on the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy. We believe Scripture allows for the selection of female deacons (deaconesses) at the discretion of the elders. In choosing from among qualified members, elders may take into consideration particular needs of the church, but aptitude for doing a specific practical need of the church is never to be a stand-alone qualification for serving as a deacon. For this reason, deacons may be tasked with particular areas of responsibility for which they have no specific skill set, depending upon the church's needs. In these cases, the deacon is responsible for identifying and leading members who have the practical skills to meet a church need (in such categories as the physical building and grounds, Information Technology, bookkeeping, etc.). However, those considered for the deacon position should be readily identified by the congregation and the elders as members who have demonstrated a strong desire for service and who are already serving in a practical way.

The number of deacons selected at a particular time is dependent upon the needs of the church as identified by the elders. This will result in the possibility that many qualified individuals may not be asked to serve in this capacity at a given time. Deacons will be encouraged and expected to utilize such members in service, thus training and giving experience to those who may serve in the future.

This process of preparing others to serve will ensure that the needs of the church are met in the future and protects against a particular area of service becoming dependent upon a single individual. While there are no predetermined term limits, we believe that a process of preparing new deacons and ultimately transitioning responsibilities to other qualified members is healthy for the church and should be pursued intentionally.

Structure/Role

Small Group Ministry

1. Elders will be responsible for the spiritual oversight of at least one deacon and member Care Group.
2. Each Care Group will have at least one deacon assigned to it. Deacons will be responsible for regularly attending the Care Group. The deacon may or may not lead said Care Group, but will identify and assist with the practical needs of members of their group.
3. Along with the Care Group leader, deacons will alert the elders of any spiritual/shepherding needs within their group and will also report any issues requiring additional assistance.

Other Areas of Deacon Responsibility

Deacons with particular responsibilities related to church function or ministries will meet regularly with the elders for oversight. The frequency of these meetings will be dependent upon the nature of the service/ministry. Areas of deacon responsibility may include:

1. Buildings and Grounds
2. Finances
3. Security
4. Benevolence/Mercy-ministry/Helps (including widow care)
5. Missions
6. Assimilation
7. Ushering/Communion
8. Special Events
9. Technology

References:

1. Dunlop, Mark <http://9marks.org/article/deacons-shock-absorbers-and-servants/>

Recommended Reading List:

Ministry of Mercy: The New Testament Deacon- Alexander Strauch

Conviction to Lead- Albert Mohler

The Book on Leadership- John MacArthur



Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

Purpose:

The purpose of this statement is to clearly convey the beliefs of the elders, staff, and members of Twin City Bible Church regarding marriage and human sexuality, as defined in the Holy Bible.

Definition of marriage:

We believe God created the institution of marriage, and therefore He is the only One who has the right to define it. That one definition is found only in the Bible. We believe the Bible clearly teaches that marriage joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive one-flesh union and covenant relationship that is intended by God to last a lifetime. Marriage is God's pattern, revealing the unique relationship between Jesus Christ and His church. (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:31-32)

We believe the husband and the wife have equal dignity before God. Scripture also teaches that both husband and wife have distinct roles and responsibilities. The husband has the responsibilities to love, lead, provide for, and protect his wife. The wife has the responsibilities to graciously submit to her husband and his leadership and to be a suitable helper. (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

Human sexuality:

We believe sexual intimacy is a gift from God and is to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has prohibited any intimate sexual activity outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. (1 Corinthians 6:18)

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexuality, pedophilia, bestiality, or pornography, is a perversion of God's intention and is therefore sin and offensive to God. (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). In addition, we believe any disagreement with, denial of, or attempt to alter one's gender, or one's God-intended heterosexual orientation, is likewise sin and offensive to God.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:9)

We believe that every person is made in the image of God and must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes are not in accord with Scripture. (Genesis 1:26-27; 1 John 4:7-8)

TCBC marriage policy:

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all Twin City elders, deacons, members, staff, employees, and ministry volunteers should abide by and agree to the Twin City Bible Church Statement on Marriage and Sexuality.

TCBC affirms that all weddings associated with this church, and any other related activities, celebrations, or ceremonies that occur on the TCBC campus, shall be for weddings which meet the biblical standards articulated in this document. Additionally, all pastors and church staff shall only participate in weddings that meet the biblical standards articulated in this document. Those who desire to conduct a marriage ceremony at Twin City Bible Church or for Twin City Bible Church members are subject to the review and approval of the elders at Twin City Bible Church.