

Deacon Ministry Description

Appointed by the Holy Spirit and called by the congregation, a Deacon is ordained to serve under the Session in the ministry of compassion, concern for needs, and of serving others (EPC Book of Order G 9-1, 12).

Qualifications to Serve as a Deacon (in addition to EPC Book of Order G9-3, 4):

The most specific biblical criterion for Deacons is found in 1 Timothy 3. We may summarize all the requirements under the heading of a life joyfully submitted to the Lord's authority (Word) and power (Spirit). Essentially every attribute or character quality mentioned in these two chapters is taught or modeled elsewhere in Scripture. For instance, we could also say that the character qualities required of elders and deacons is reflected in a life "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3). Having said this, we may identify the following criteria:

1. They are humble, teachable people, who have demonstrated a willingness to submit to biblical authority.
2. Their character is above reproach, consistently demonstrating the "fruit of the Spirit" – "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Paul specifically mentions that they must be worthy of respect.
3. They have demonstrated faithfulness in their marriage covenant or celibacy in singleness.
4. They hold to the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.
5. They have demonstrated a heart of compassion, mercy and a willingness to serve others.

Responsibilities of a Deacon:

The office of Deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, concern for the needs, and of serving others. Therefore, the first duty of the Deacon is sympathy and service (EPC G 9-12).

Specifically, a Deacon will serve at Greenwood in the following ministries:

1. Caring for the vulnerable: building relationships with our vulnerable people – those who are suffering from poverty, bereavement, sickness, or isolation.
2. Communion: preparing the sacrament of communion to be served weekly.
3. Congregational Needs Fund: oversee the distribution of these funds according to expressed guidelines.
4. Hospitality ministry at funerals.
5. Meal, prayer shawls, and flowers: Oversee a team who are willing to cook and deliver meals and create and distribute prayer shawls.

Deacon Terms:

Once elected, Deacons serve on the Diaconate for a three-year term with the option of serving an additional three-year term. If a Deacon serves two consecutive three-year terms, they must take one year off before being eligible for service again on the Diaconate.

Expectations of Deacons:

The Diaconate will meet periodically as determined by the Moderator. Most likely this will be 4-6 times per year but could eventually become monthly if it is determined necessary by the Diaconate. Additionally, the Deacons will be invited to a joint meeting with the Session once per year.