

# A Proposed Job Description for a Deacon

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**Frame of Reference:** The *general* frame of reference for the task of a Deacon is the view of the church as a visible, organized, live body, according to the teachings of Scripture and the summary in the Westminster Standards and the *Form of Government, Book of Discipline and Directory of Worship* of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The *specific* frame of reference is the (name of your congregation).

Within these frames of reference the Deacon is looked on as a man called and equipped by God to be a servant of the Lord in the church, whose gifts and calling are recognized by the congregation through his election, testing and ordination. He is a servant entrusted with the special responsibility of the handling of the temporal affairs of the church, including the administration of temporal relief. A Deacon's task is a spiritual task, requiring him to be filled with the Spirit and wisdom in order to discharge it (Acts 6:3). The Deacon derives his office directly from the Apostles and not from Elders (Acts 6:1-6). He is therefore not an apprentice Elder, nor is his office to be considered as a stepping-stone to the eldership. However, because God has required that Elders be overseers of the flock, the Deacons are under their oversight and are responsible to them in the Lord (1 Peter 5:1-5). The qualifications of a Deacon are those set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A Deacon must first be tested before serving in his office (1 Timothy 3:10). The attitude necessary to performing the office of Deacon well is that set forth by our Lord in Mark 10:42-45.

Within this framework the Deacon is expected to shoulder responsibilities within two broad categories: 1. Personal development and family relationships, and 2. Service responsibilities of his particular position. 1. Personal Development and Family Relationships Objective A: A Deacon is to be a maturing disciple of Jesus Christ, so that his life, private and public, is an example and encouragement to the flock.

Goal 1: He should read God's Word, meditate on it, pray and praise God daily.

Objective B: A Deacon is to be a faithful head of a Christian home, if married.

Goal 1: He should spend adequate time with his wife so as to combat her loneliness (Genesis 2:18). Goal 2: He should have some time daily to pray with his wife. Goal 3: He should have family devotions in the home daily. Goal 4: He should spend adequate time with his children to be example and guide to them.

Objective C: A Deacon is to develop his spiritual ability gifts for more useful service to God.

Goal 1: He should seek to understand what his spiritual gifts are. Goal 2: He should seek God's Wisdom in their development and use.

Objective D: A Deacon is to endeavor to maintain physical health and emotional stability.

Objective E: A Deacon is to undertake civil responsibilities falling upon him in due course as a citizen.

2. Service Responsibilities of his Particular Position

Objective A: A Deacon is entrusted with special responsibility for the handling of the

temporal affairs of the church, including the administration of temporal relief.

Goal 1: The Deacons should divide among themselves the responsibility for the temporal affairs of the church, including the administering of temporal relief, so that the task is shared by each according to his abilities and interests. To do so the Deacons might organize themselves according to the following guidelines:

a. Officers 1. There may be a president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. 2. The duties of the president may be to preside at meetings when the minister does not, to prepare a plan for the organization of the Board of Deacons, and to arrange for joint meetings with the Session periodical to discuss goals, personnel, and the work of the Board of Deacons. According to the Form of Government these meetings should be at least once a quarter. 3. The duties of the vice-president may be to keep in contact with the committee chairmen, to encourage them in carrying out their responsibilities, to help them as needed, and to see that each chairman has a report about his committee's accomplishments and plans prior to the monthly Deacon's meeting. This report should be brief and to the point. The vice-president should remind each member of the Board about the Deacon's meeting. 4. The duties of the treasurer may include the receiving, disbursing and recording of all the church monies, including the funds of the Committee on Benevolence, the forming of a group to study long-range plans, the preparing of the annual budget, and the keeping the officers, the Session and the entire congregation informed as to the financial status and trends of the church. 5. The duties of the secretary may include the taking of minutes at all meetings of the Board of Deacons, and of recording them in the record book only after they have been approved. 6. In selecting officers such as president and vice-president, it is generally a favor to the members of the Board not to nominate them for such service until they have had a chance to see how the Board functions.

b. Committees 1. Structure a. There may be six committees of the Board of Deacons, the committee on Benevolence, the committee on Building maintenance, the committee on Ground maintenance, the Janitorial committee, the Finance committee and the Ushers committee. b. A Deacon should be chairman of each committee. c. A committee chairman may recruit from the Board of Deacons or from the congregation as a whole, people as needed to serve on his committee. If a committee has several major functions, sub-committees may be set up to be responsible for these. Anyone in the church may serve on a Deacon's committee. d. The Deacons' committees may meet as needed, some needing to meet every month, some not needing to. The committees should discuss their business in business meeting, make plans on how to carry it out, see that the work is done, and report their work to the Board of Deacons. If a committee has a problem on which it needs the advice of the whole Board, this problem, together with possible solutions, should be presented to the whole Board.

2. Duties a. The duties of the Benevolence committee may include ministering to the sick, needy and aged, the encouraging of members to visit the sick, needy and aged, a tape ministry to shut-ins, the arrangement of transportation to worship services for the aged and infirm, and the allocation of benevolent funds which funds may be disbursed through the treasurer. b. The duties of the Building maintenance committee may include the consideration of, carrying out or arranging for needed repairs, painting, remodeling, lighting-replacement in the church buildings, the making of a check and priority list of building maintenance work, and the encouraging of members of the church to help in the work of the committee. c. The duties of the Grounds maintenance committee may include the care of the lawns, the parking lots, the shrubbery and trees on the church property, taking care of necessary plantings, the making of a check and priority list of grounds maintenance work, and the encouraging of members of the church to help the committee in its work. d. The duties of the Janitorial committee may include seeing to it that needed janitorial supplies are secured, seeing that the custodial work is carried out satisfactorily, arranging for periodic house-cleanings in which the help of all the members of the church is secured, and the making of a check list of cleaning jobs that should be done weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually and annually e. The duties of the Finance committee, of which the Treasurer may be chairman, may include the counting of monies

received after worship service, long-range financial planning for the church, preparing of the annual budget for presentation to the Deacons and the Session, the informing of the Session of the financial condition, trends and needs of the church, and consideration and action on requests made by non-members for use of any of the facilities of the church. f. The duties of the Ushers committee may be to appoint, train and schedule ushers for the regular meetings of the church, and for special meetings when needed. The committee may also arrange with people in the church for flowers for church services. Note: With this proposed committee structure, members of the church who are not active Deacons can be enlisted to be on the various committees as needed. It should be recognized that, although the committee on Benevolence is considered as a separate committee, yet the work of benevolence is a work in which each Deacon should be active and take his part. Each Deacon should therefore consider himself an ex-officio member of the committee on Benevolence. The deliberations of the Benevolence committee may be directed, however, by a small steering group if so desired, which can consider the work and responsibilities in benevolence and distribute appropriate responsibilities to the several members of the Board of Deacons in benevolent matters.

Objective B: Deacons should encourage members of the church to provide for those who are in want. Goal 1: There should be a Deacons' Fund for such purposes included in the church budget. Goal 2: Special needs judged to be of concern to the congregation, but for which the Deacons' Fund is inadequate, may be brought to the congregation for a special offering.

Objective C: Deacons should seek to prevent poverty.

Goal 1: The Deacons should seek to make themselves aware of needs within the congregation. Goal 2: The Deacons should cheerfully seek to take adequate steps either in discreetly providing financial aid or providing job opportunities or other such matters to help prevent members of the congregation from coming to poverty. Goal 3: The Deacons should help those in need outside the congregation as there is opportunity.

Objective D: Deacons should pray with the distressed and remind them of the consolations of Holy Scripture.

Objective E: Deacons might assist, with the Elders, in the distribution of the elements at the Lord's Supper when asked.

Objective F: A Deacon should consider serving on the Presbytery's or General Assembly's Diaconal Ministries Committees when asked, being careful to remember his first responsibility to his relationship to God, to his wife and family and to the congregation he serves.

Objective G: A Deacon should with the other Deacons report to the Session at quarterly meetings designated for this purpose.

### **Proposed Committee Structure**

#### Benevolence Committee

Chairman:

Members:

#### Building Maintenance Committee

Chairman:

Members:

#### Finance Committee

Chairman:

Members:

#### Grounds Maintenance Committee

Chairman:

Members:

Janitor's Committee

Chairman:

Members:

Ushers Committee

Chairman:

Members:

[Rev. Albert G. Edwards III](#) served various OP churches in both the east and west before his recent retirement. Albert and Polly now live in Medford, Oregon.