

Biblical References to Deacons and Christian Behavior:

In Acts 6 Luke writes that the twelve apostles asked the church to “pick out from among [them] seven men of good repute (1), full of the Spirit (2) and of wisdom (3)” whom the apostles could appoint to minister the daily distribution of food so that the apostles could devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

1 Timothy 3:8-13 states the basic requirements for deacons as Paul explained them to Timothy, namely that deacons should be serious (4), straightforward in speech (5), not addicted to alcohol (6), and not greedy for worldly gain (7). They should hold the mystery of the Christian faith in good conscience (8).

They should have a proven blameless character with the church and community (1). Their wives also should be serious minded, not critical of others, and faithful in all things. The deacon shall be the husband of one wife (9), ruling his children and household well (10).

Deacons should also exhibit one or more of the gifts of the Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, service, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, mercy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in various tongues, and interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor. 12:8-11 and Rom. 2:6-8)

How Shadycrest thinks these requirements apply to our deacons:

(1) Good Repute - Deacons should have a good reputation in the church and the community being recognized by the community as Christians by their witness through word and deed and not be guilty of the sins of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21: Adultery, fornication, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, and carousing.

(2) Full of the Spirit - Deacons should exhibit the fruit of the Spirit as described by Paul in his letter to the Galatians (Galatians 5:22-26). These are love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

(3) Full of Wisdom - Deacons must exhibit an ability to discern consequences of actions so that they can help keep the church from going astray. They must be able to help the church anticipate and plan for needs of the future.

(4) Serious - Deacons must have an attitude of concern for the consequences of their actions and think carefully before proceeding.

(5) Straightforward in speech - Deacons must say what they mean and mean what they say, but not so bluntly that their speech is offensive.

(6) Not addicted to alcohol - Deacons covenant with the church to “abstain from the sale of, and use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage“ (Church Constitution) and follow Biblical principles related to the use of addictive, mind altering drugs. Because of the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs on people’s lives, we do not want to be stumbling blocks for fellow Christians or non-Christians.

(7) Not greedy - Deacons must not value material things above persons and must be satisfied with what God provides. They must not let greed rule their business or personal lives and must deal honestly with all. Deacons must cheerfully give to the ministry of God's Kingdom through Shadycrest Baptist Church in proportion to the blessings they have received from God

(8) Hold the mystery of the faith in good conscience - The deacon must accept the Bible as God’s Holy Word which is able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus and is given by inspiration of God, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (from 2 Timothy 3:15-17) In addition, the deacon must accept the Statement of Baptist Faith and Message adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention as a personal statement of faith.

(9) Husband of one wife - The church expects that neither the deacon nor his wife will have been divorced. A deacon should set an example of a husband’s love for his wife as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25-33) as referenced in the Southern Baptist Convention’s Statement of Faith and Message. A deacon must love and respect his wife more than any other woman. He should be spiritually, mentally, and physically faithful to her (Prov. 5:18,19). The same applies to the wife.

(10) Ruling his children and household well - A deacon should set an example in Christian discipline and education of his children. He should not provoke them to wrath. (Eph. 5:21-33) March 2005