

Preparations for Deacon Ordination

Over the last century the significance of Baptist ordination has reached an unprecedented low. While every other Christian denomination has specific requirements for ordination, Baptists are the only major denomination which I am aware that consistently diminish the value of both pastoral and deacon ordination by having established what is effectively very superficial requirements for their leadership. Such error can be seen early in the church's recommendation stage for ordination. Far too often men are presented as candidates for church office without any serious consideration to their belief system. More often than not candidates for deacon are presented based on their attendance to church meetings, their likability or even their business success without any serious consideration to their personal confessions about Christian orthodoxy, Baptist beliefs or even personal practices, long range goals and commitments. Such a slothful attitude toward the office is clearly seen in how we, as Baptists, schedule ordination examinations the day of and directly before the ordination service itself. The questioning portion of the ordination service is little more than a formality with a predetermined outcome. Even if a Pastor or fellow deacon recognized a potential problem within a candidate's confession or commitment he has little or no recourse to help correct the problem. The candidate's course is already set... he will be ordained before his family and friends within the hour. Such actions are a disservice to the church as well as the candidate. The results of our continued demise of ordination as Baptist have been disastrous. Often fine Christian men are elected to office although they are not ready. Often men are elected to an office without any godly preparation or guidance for their service. And often churches end up with leadership in both church offices which do not have a solid foundation for successful and orthodox expression of our ancient faith.

The following is given in the Spirit of Love in order that you as a deacon candidate may better understand the biblical requirements and ministry of deacons. I pray that you will take the necessary time to pursue honest reflection with each question. Do not pass over any question as each one serves a specific purpose to prepare you personally for church office within Christ's kingdom. Do not rush this preparation time! You will want to read through each section once giving every question brief consideration. Then carefully work through each section and subsection one at a time. That is to say these questions are not designed to evoke simple statements. They deal with serious issues which often define the difference between true and false Christianity. You may not be familiar with some of the terms. If that is the case research the expressions and come to a consciences decision about their topic. If you need help please do not hesitate to call me. But for my and your benefit do not call me until you have given the question honest effort on your own. May God give you clear direction concerning His will for you and your family.

Pastor Wayne Higginbotham

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Be Prepared to Discuss Orthodox Christian Beliefs

Every Christian leader and especially those ordained to the office of deacon or pastor must at a minimum be prepared to thoughtfully express orthodox Christian teaching concerning God, God's Word, God's Son and His Salvation. Such ability is a primary qualification of anyone desiring to be a deacon (1 Tim. 3:9-10).

God

1. Give your definition of the Trinity.
2. Describe some unorthodox views of the Trinity.
3. Verses to consider: Matthew 3:16,17; John 1:1,14; Acts 5:3,4

God's Word

1. Was the Bible written by man or God or both? What evidence can you give for your thoughts?
2. What does the term "inspiration" mean?
3. When did/does inspiration take place?
4. Who/what is inspired?
5. Is the Bible Inerrant?
6. How would you handle a person who points to an "error" in the Bible?
7. Verses to consider 2 Tim 3:15,16; 2 Peter 1:20,21

God's Son

1. Describe the nature of the "God-Man."
2. When was God the Son's "beginning?"
3. Was Christ 50% man and 50% God OR 100% man and 100% God? Discuss your answer.
4. Name some views concerning Christ's person which the church has deemed heretical.
5. Verses to consider: John 1:1,14, Heb 1:8, Col 1:15,16
6. Was Christ born of a Virgin?
7. What evidence supports your thoughts?
8. Why is the topic of the Virgin Birth important?
9. Verses to consider: Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:23
10. Did Christ really die?
11. Was Christ resurrection physical or spiritual? Why do you hold this position?
12. Did Christ ascend a physical or spiritual body?
13. Is Christ in heaven right now physically or spiritually?
14. Will Christ return physically or spiritually?
15. Verses to Consider: Matthew 28:9; John 20:24-31; 21:13-14
16. What purpose did Christ's Death serve?
17. Verses to consider: Romans 5:6-8

The Gospel Message

1. Describe the requirements for Salvation.
2. What exactly does the Gospel message entail?
3. What does the Gospel message include and not include?
4. Is an understanding of the Gospel message necessary for salvation?

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Be Prepared to Discuss Key Baptist Beliefs

While we are first and foremost Christians we are also Baptists. Although we wholeheartedly confess brothers and sisters outside our Baptist Tradition who also hold to an orthodox Christian confession, we, none the less, hold to secondary convictions which directly impact our local fellowship. These secondary beliefs allow sustained harmony within our local body. In order to help maintain order it is a must for each leader to unconditionally affirm Baptist faith. These questions are designed for you to think through Baptist areas of belief and come to a conclusion on your own.

Ordinances

1. What are the Ordinances of the Church?
2. Describe various views of the Lord's Supper as well as that held by Baptists?
3. What view do you ascribe to concerning the Lord's Supper?
4. What is your view concerning "sprinkling" and "immersion" Baptism?
5. Can someone who has been "sprinkled" be a Christian brother or sister? Why or why not?
6. What is your view concerning "infant" baptism?
7. Describe your view concerning "footwashing" as an ordinance of the church.
8. Verses to Consider: Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25; Matthew 3:16,17; 28:19-20; Acts 8:36

Church Offices

9. What Church offices are promoted by other denominations?
10. What Church offices do you ascribe?
11. Describe the offices and their responsibilities.
12. What is your view concerning the role of women as possible candidates as deacons?
13. 1 Timothy 3:1-13

The Authority of the Church

1. Who makes the final decision with a church body?
2. Describe the relationship between the Pastor and Church as well as the Deacon body and the church.
3. Acts 6:2; Ephesians 4:9-13; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Sign Gifts

1. What is your view of the gift of tongues?
2. Is that gift available today? Why or why not?
3. Verses to consider: Isaiah 28:11; Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 13:10

Eternal Security

1. Do you believe in the common phrase "eternal security?"
2. How would you defend your position?

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Be Prepared to discuss Key Questions concerning Deacon Qualifications

While the very consideration of you as a Deacon is a great honor, the role itself is one of servitude. It is certainly not something to take lightly. This role immediately thrusts you as a representative of our creator. This role immediately places you and your family within the public spotlight. Thoughtfully consider your position before God as well as your testimony before the church and the public.

How would you describe your Salvation experience?

What are the qualifications of deacons?

1. Acts 6... traditionally accepted as addressing deacons
2. 1 Timothy 3:8-13

What is the role of deacons?

1. Acts 6... traditionally accepted as addressing deacons
2. 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Are there any areas in your personal life which you feel may be in conflict with the biblical requirements of deacon?

What is the role of the role of a deacon's wife?

What is the Role of the Pastor?

What is the relationship of the deacon with the pastor?

What is the role of the deacons with one another?

Describe your personal walk with the Lord?

Deacons are to be men of "Wisdom" and "Faith" as characterized by Acts 6:6-11. Describe your understanding of Biblical "Wisdom" and "Faith."

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Scenarios to think through as a Deacon

As a Deacon you will be required to deal with people. While the possible listing of problems is endless here are a few fundamental relationships which you must be prepared to respond in a Godly manner. If you are a deacon long enough you will encounter problems. It is best to establish proactive responses to those problems before they appear and before you react!

How will you respond to a member who promotes a view contrary to our Christian beliefs?

How will you respond to a member who promotes a view contrary to core Baptist beliefs?

How will you respond to a member in conflict with others members within your church?

How will you respond to a member who is critical of another deacon?

How will you respond to a member who critical of the pastor?

How will you respond when your ideas concerning church ministry are not pursued?

How will you respond when church committees pursue ideas of which you do not agree?

How will you respond when you are personally or publicly criticized as a deacon?

How are you going to respond if you are EVER asked to step down as a Deacon?

Describe several ways in which a deacon may react and that no matter what the issue is always a sin against our God.

Can you share with someone from God's Word God's plan for Salvation? Do you think it is necessary for a deacon to be capable of sharing God's message from the Bible?

Summarize in one sentence the responsibility of a deacon.

Discuss the following statement. As a deacon I have special insight into God's purpose and will and therefore my opinion is most valuable.