

# DEACON MINISTRY TEAM HANDBOOK



*Our Mission is to Know Jesus,  
Serve Jesus, and Share Jesus*

## **Oakdale Baptist Church**

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Rev. Joe Price, Senior Pastor

Dear Deacon Nominee,

Before you can answer the question “Do I want to become a deacon?” you must first ask yourself “Why do I want to become a deacon?” Do you want to be a leader of the church or a servant to the church? Traditionally, many churches have defined the deacon body as “managers” over the church; however, Jesus Christ plainly expresses His desire for the leaders and deacons to be primarily spiritual mentors and servants *to* the church and not just managers *over* the church. Jesus instructed his disciples that, “. . . whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant . . . just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. . . .” Matthew 20:26-28 (NKJV)

Acts 6:1-6 describes a potentially divisive issue that confronted the early church. The issue was resolved when deacons were chosen to serve fairly the needs of the widows of the church and to free the apostles to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word of God. As the Deacon Ministry Team seeks to serve Christ and His church, it will play a key role in fulfilling the vision of Oakdale Baptist Church to develop people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The following handbook is designed to give you the qualifications of a deacon, as well as to provide an overview to the commitments and functions of the deacon-led ministry teams. As you review this material, please take time to be certain that you sense the calling of Jesus Christ to lead the church by being a servant *to* His people.

Your Servants in Jesus’ Name,

The Deacon Ministry Team  
Oakdale Baptist Church

# Deacon Ministry Team Responsibilities

The Deacon Ministry Team of Oakdale Baptist Church shall assume the following responsibilities:

- 1) Purpose of the deacon will be to seek opportunities to minister to families and report opportunities monthly during scheduled deacon meetings.
  - a. The deacon will be an example of service and ministry by leading and serving on one or more of the deacon-led ministry teams.
  - b. The Deacon Ministry Team will lead the congregation in its observances of the Lord's Supper.
  - c. The Deacon Ministry Team will serve as a council of advice and as a prayer partner to the Senior Pastor and other members of the Pastoral Leadership Team.
  - d. The Deacon Ministry Team and their wives will be supportive of the prayer ministry through individual and cooperative prayer time.
  - e. The deacon, as a spiritual leader, will be a model by setting the standard for interaction and fellowship with others by greeting people in the lobby and sanctuary before and after each service. He will be especially sensitive to introduce himself to visitors and those members with whom he is unfamiliar.
  - f. The Deacon Ministry Team will assign one deacon each Sunday to serve as Deacon of the Week.
    - i. The Deacon of the Week will have the following responsibilities:
      - He will devote a time to pray with the Pastor before the morning service.
      - He will lead the congregation in the morning announcements and opening prayer.
      - He will assist the Senior Pastor and Ushers in greeting guests.
      - He will forward names of guests to the Pastor, Chairman of Deacons or their designee for appropriate follow-up.
  - g. The deacon will be fully supportive of all deacons' meetings and other deacon-sponsored events in the Church.
  - h. The Deacon Ministry Team will assign one deacon to serve as the deacon of the month. The deacon of the month will be responsible for the Wednesday night prayer service leadership along with two fellow deacon ministry team members. The deacon of the month may occasionally be asked to lead in special congregational activities.

# Biblical Requirements of a Deacon

The primary purpose of every deacon should be to serve “The Body of Christ” in accordance with the intention and practice of this ministry in the New Testament. Models for deacon service are found in the following passages.

Acts 6:1-6 (NKJV) records that: “Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”

In I Timothy 3:8-13 (NKJV), Paul gives the following instructions: “Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” A closer examination of these two passages reveals that a deacon should meet the following qualifications:

- 1) “Good reputation” (Acts 6:3) — A deacon’s integrity must be beyond reproach in the Church as well as in daily conduct so as to inspire respect and confidence in the Gospel. His Christian witness should be reinforced by his trustworthy character.
- 2) “Full of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:3) — A deacon’s life is daily permeated with the Spirit of God who brings holiness to his life and power to do through him what he cannot do on his own.
- 3) “Wisdom” (Acts 6:3) — A deacon should be wise enough to control his temper and disposition. Furthermore, wisdom must be attained as deacons immerse themselves in the Word of God so that God might pour out His mind in them.
- 4) “Full of faith” (Acts 6:5) — A deacon needs to have an immovable faith in God that will dare to lead the Church forward in the work of the Kingdom, in spite of obstacles that may dishearten many others.
- 5) “Reverent” (I Tim. 3:8) — A deacon must be firm in his faith, stable in his convictions, sound in his beliefs, and correct in his Church loyalty. This word “reverent” signifies weight. In this sense, it speaks of one who carries weight, or one who counts for right influences.

## Biblical Requirements of a Deacon cont'd...

6) "Not double-tongued" (I Tim. 3:8) — A deacon's word should be truthful and sincere. A deacon is a man of his word and consistent in his speech. He never gives rise to misunderstandings and differences.

7) "Not given to much wine" (I Tim. 3:8) — A deacon, in his role as a spiritual mentor, should never find himself in a position unable to perform his duties due to intoxication.

8) "Not greedy for money" (I Tim. 3:8) — A deacon must not be covetous in the manner in which he earns, spends, and saves his money, in his management of Church funds, or in bringing his tithes and offerings to the Church.

9) "Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience" (I Tim. 3:9) — A deacon should be sound and stable in the teachings of the Bible and genuinely committed to believing and living out the revealed truths of the Christian faith.

10) "First be tested . . . being found blameless" (I Tim. 3:10) — A deacon should not be a new convert, but tested and proven to be a growing and maturing Christian who is above reproach and fully devoted to God.

11) "Husbands of one wife" (I Tim. 3:12) — A deacon is to be totally devoted to his wife, maintaining singular devotion, affection, and sexual purity in both thought and deed. The biblical exception that would allow for a Christian to divorce his spouse is sexual immorality (marital unfaithfulness) on the part of his spouse (Matthew 19:9). We interpret "husband of one wife" as a man who is sexually pure and whose marriage commitment is to one woman only. Our belief is that the deacon is to be a faithful and loving husband to his wife. The Bible also takes into account the life of a deacon's wife in determining his qualifications to serve (Matthew 5:32; I Corinthians 7:10-11). Under no circumstances should a divorce prior to a man or woman's conversion experience necessarily prohibit a deacon from service (II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:7). The Bible also teaches that under certain circumstances it is better for a man not to marry. Therefore, an unmarried man may serve as a deacon (Matthew 19:11-12).

12) "Ruling their children and their own houses well" (I Tim. 3:12) — A deacon should manage his home and exercise control over his children to the best of his ability. He should be respected as the spiritual head of his household.

# Other Requirements of a Deacon

Beyond these biblical requirements, the Deacon Ministry Team of Oakdale Baptist Church believes that our Lord Jesus, and every member of this church, may expect each deacon, as a spiritual leader, to model leadership in the following areas:

- 1) He should support the Senior Pastor and other members of the Pastoral Leadership Team by freeing them to serve in accordance with their calling.
- 2) He should support all phases of the Church programs to the best of his ability with his attendance, Spiritual Gifts, talents, prayers and substance.
- 3) He should be a faithful and systematic tither in accordance with Scripture, knowing that the tithe is a minimum requirement. He should pledge to give at least one-tenth of his total income to the support of Oakdale Baptist Church.
- 4) He should be evangelistic and missionary in spirit, deeply interested in the salvation of people at home and abroad (see the example of Philip in Acts 8).
- 5) He should agree to act and speak in Christian love. He should be fully cooperative with his Senior Pastor, Pastoral Leadership Team, and Church. He should be able to refrain from destructive criticism, willing to settle all differences in a quiet and Christian manner.
- 6) He should keep in secrecy those things that should not be discussed with others, especially sensitive proceedings from all deacons' meetings.
- 7) He should zealously guard the spirit of unity within the Church.
- 8) He should further strive for unity within the deacon body. For example, once a decision has been made at a deacons' meeting, regardless of how much internal discussion and debate transpire among the deacon body, he should emerge in one accord.
- 9) He should, as a spiritual leader, understand his position to be one of "ministering servant." The wishes of the congregation must have priority over his personal wishes. He must be devoted to the spiritual welfare of the Church.
- 10) He should accept the "Baptist Faith and Message (2000)" as a doctrinal statement of his Christian beliefs.

# Qualifications of a Deacon's Wife

If a deacon is married, the Bible also provides some qualifications for his wife. These, too, need to be weighed in the life of a man who is considered for the ministry of a deacon. They are as follows (I Timothy 3:11, NKJV):

- 1) "Reverent" — The wife of a deacon should have a sincere Christian purpose, with a great reverence for spiritual matters. For the fuller meaning of this word, see "reverent" as applied to the deacons (page5 of this handbook).
- 2) "Not slanderers" — The wife of a deacon should not be known to give a false report concerning someone else.
- 3) "Temperate" — The wife of a deacon should be well-balanced spiritually, and calm in her dealings with others.
- 4) "Faithful in all things" — The wife of a deacon must be an exemplary member of the church to which her family belongs. Furthermore, she must be loyal and fully supportive to her husband. Others should see in her a heart of faithfulness in the Kingdom of God, in spite of obstacles that may dishearten many others.

# Deacon Ministry Team Overview

Refer to the DEACON description in the Constitution of Oakdale Baptist Church.

# Deacon Ministry Team Overview cont'd...


There are five primary functions of the Deacon Ministry Team at the Oakdale Baptist Church:

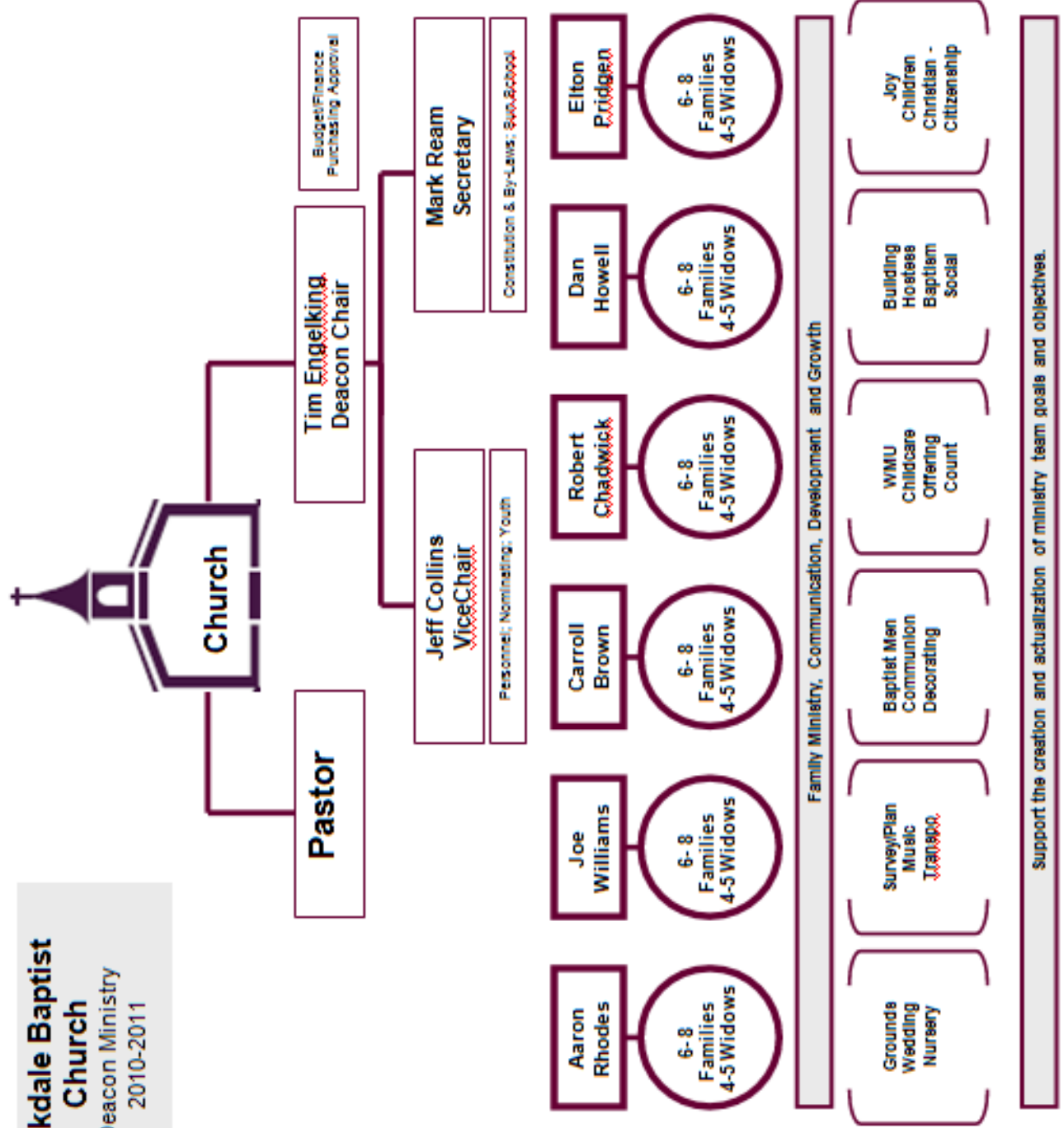
- 1) Promote church unity.
- 2) Serve the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of people
- 3) Relief the Senior Pastor and Pastoral Leadership Team so that they may offer more attention “to prayer and to the ministry of the Word of God”
- 4) Provide internal accountability
- 5) Assist the deacon officers in coordinating pulpit supply and interim pastorate on an as needed basis

We also believe that deacons are primarily spiritual mentors and not just spiritual managers. As such, every deacon is assigned leadership roles to see that the primary functions mentioned above are fulfilled. The organizational chart on the following page provides a synopsis of our various deacon-led ministry teams. All of these will be led by current members of our Deacon Ministry Team, and most of them will require our deacons to work closely with our Pastoral Leadership Team to enlist, train, and organize other Church members (according to their **S**piritual gifts, **H**eart, **A**bilities, **P**ersonality, **E**xperience) for effective ministry on these deacon-led ministry teams. Each of these teams will provide a report at our regularly scheduled deacons' meetings. The S H A P E model of servant leadership will help us to transform Church members into ministers.

Finally, as the spiritual mentors and servants of our Church, our deacons need to set the example for others in their regular attendance at worship service and Bible study events, ministry, and our evangelistic and missionary efforts in our community and wherever the Holy Spirit may lead.

# Deacon Ministry Team Organizational Chart


**Oakdale Baptist Church**  
 Deacon Ministry  
 2010-2011



# Deacon Ministry Team Nominee Covenant

As my name is put forward as a nominee to the Deacon Ministry Team of Oakdale Baptist Church, I want to affirm my support in the following areas:

- . I will strive to be a faithful witness of the gospel in all my spheres of influence.
- . I will be faithful in attendance of all Church services as my schedule allows.
- . I will be a generous and systematic tither to our Church.
- . I will be prayerfully cooperative with the Senior Pastor, Church Staff, Pastoral Leadership Team, and the Church leadership.
- . I will refrain from destructive criticism and work to settle all differences in a quiet and Christian manner.
- . I will keep in confidence those things that should not be discussed with others, especially sensitive discussions from all meetings of the Deacon Ministry Team.
- . I will strive for unity among members of the Deacon Ministry Team. Once a decision has been made at a team meeting, I will completely support that decision in word and action. (Revised 6-5-2011)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominee

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Please Print Name Below:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this form and return it to the Deacon Chairman.

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Chairman of Deacons

Print \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_