

Deacon Handbook



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INTRODUCTION

This manual is dedicated to helping you as a deacon to serve faithfully and effectively. It is designed to acquaint you with the biblical materials related to the office of deacon and the particulars of the deacon ministry of First Baptist Church.

The church has elected you to the honorable position of a deacon, because your life has exhibited the characteristics of faithfulness and loyalty both to the Lord and His church. A deacon must remember, however, that Jesus said, "The greatest among you will be your servant." (Mt 23:11)

Three passages in the New Testament are commonly cited concerning the office of deacon: Acts 6:1-7, Philippians 1:1, and I Timothy 3:8-12. The word for deacon in the New Testament originally described a servant who "stirred up dust while waiting on tables." As a deacon, your major attention will be given to serving God under the leadership of the pastor and deacon officers in the practical ministry of the church.

THE BIBLICAL / HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF A DEACON

Acts 6:1-7 is the passage often cited for the beginning of the office of deacon in the early Christian church. Though the seven who were elected were not specifically called "deacons" in the technical sense, they nonetheless functioned as deacons. The office of deacon probably grew out of this experience.

Without belaboring all of the details of the Acts 6 passage, let's look at the purpose for which these men were selected. One reason they were chosen was to solve a problem that arose among the church fellowship. They were called upon to preserve the harmony of the church. Another reason was to free the apostles to give full attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word (v. 4).

The position of deacon in Acts 6 is an elected one. A deacon should certainly feel led to serve in that position; however the initiation of that commitment rests in the hands of the local church. It is not a position to which one appoints oneself.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

The **Biblical qualifications** for a deacon are found in Acts 6 and in I Timothy 3:8-13. They are divided into 3 categories:

1. SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS

(ACTS 6:1-6)

- a) Men of good reputation
- b) Full of the Spirit
- c) Full of wisdom

2. MORAL QUALIFICATIONS

(I TIMOTHY 3: 8-10, 12-13)

- a) Worthy of respect
- b) Not hypocritical
- c) Not drinking a lot of wine
- d) Not greedy for money
- e) Holding the mystery of faith with a clear conscience
- f) The husband of one wife
- g) Managing their children and their own households well

3. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE WIFE OF A DEACON

(I TIMOTHY 3:11)

- a) Worthy of respect
- b) Not slanderers
- c) Self-controlled
- d) Faithful in everything

PRACTICAL DUTIES OF A DEACON

The practical duties unique to First Baptist Church, Fairhope, are the following:

1. Loyal support and respect of the pastor and staff.
2. Faithful attendance at the services of the church.
3. Encouragement of and participation in the organizations of the church – Sunday School, Music, Discipleship, Ministries, Outreach, Special Events, etc.
4. A consistent commitment to stewardship by tithing to the church.
5. Personal evangelism among the lost; visitation of the sick & shut-in of the membership.
6. Assistance with new member assimilation.
7. Help serve the Lord's Supper.
8. Pray in worship services.
9. Help with Preschool Hall security.
10. Serve at annual Widow/Widower's Banquet.
11. Minister to the needs of the Sunday School class as assigned.

THE RELATIONSHIPS OF A DEACON

Certainly the deacon's primary relationship is to his Lord. Without that vertical relationship, the horizontal relationships will be distorted. A deacon should be more concerned about his walk with God than anything. Next in importance is the deacon's knowledge and understanding of his role in relation to his family, pastor, church committees, and the church membership at large.

A Deacon's Relationship to his Family

The New Testament mentions a deacon's responsibility in relation to his wife and children. Therefore, a deacon should give his family first priority in his devotion, care and ministry.

A Deacon's Relationship to the Pastor

A deacon should serve under the leadership and spiritual direction of the pastor and be loyal to his pastor in prayer support, encouragement and fellowship. First Baptist Church looks to the pastor for giving overall leadership and administration to the church and its ministry. The church, therefore, expects the deacons to respect the office of pastor and to welcome the unique opportunity to learn from and serve with the pastor. As a deacon functions in the practical ministry of the church, he partners with the pastor in ministering to the members of the church.

A Deacon's Relationship to Church Committees

The deacon body gives counsel to, but does not have control of, all church committee actions. Deacons are servants first and last. Out of courtesy, committees report to the deacon body concerning actions or recommendations for information and feedback. The deacon body may indicate support or give counsel, but not instruct committees as to what they can or cannot propose to the church for official action.

A Deacon's Relationship to the Church Membership at Large

The deacons are to be active in ministry to the church family, promoting peace, harmony and a spirit of cooperation among the membership. The primary relationship of the deacons to the church is as follows:

1. Deacons are to be problem solvers and preservers of church harmony. Every deacon carries two imaginary buckets: one of water and one of gasoline. He determines in many situations whether he will help put out the fires of disharmony or if he will fuel the problem.
2. Deacons are to be active in ministry to support the pastor as he feeds the flock faithfully. In sharing the load together, the pastor is also able to spend the time needed in prayer and the ministry of the word for God's direction to lead the church.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DEACON

Deacons are to recognize their roles as ministering servants of the church. They are to be members whose character and qualifications shall be as specified in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-6, and Titus 1:6-9.

Responsibility: The deacon body shall serve under the leadership of the pastor and assist him in performing duties throughout their time of service. The deacons will support and work with the pastor as follows:

1. Lead the church in the achievement of its mission.
2. Minister the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
3. Care for the church's members and others in the community.
4. Have a consistent commitment to stewardship by being an example of tithing to the church.
5. Demonstrate Christ-like consecration, loyalty, prayer support and faithfulness to the local church program.
6. Visit the sick, needy and membership of the church.
7. Encourage and strengthen new converts and the spiritually weak.
8. Regularly attend deacons' meetings.
9. Fulfill the requirements of the **Individualized Deacon Plan** for the year.
10. Be available to assist with the staff as discussed in deacon-staff sharing time.
11. Model the behavior of what it means to be a faithful member of FBC Fairhope.
12. Model the behavior of Christ to the world outside of FBC Fairhope – to family, to business, and to community – so that your life draws others towards the church rather than away from it.

Election of Deacons

Each deacon of the First Baptist Church shall meet the scriptural qualifications from Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8 – 13, support the ministries of the church, be a Christian for at least 3 years, be a member for at least one year, and be, at least, 25 years of age.

First Baptist will seek to have a Deacon Body that shall consist up to thirty-nine (39) members, rotating on the plan of thirteen (13) being elected each year for a period of three (3) years, with one (1) year elapsing before being eligible for re-election.

Deacons shall be nominated and elected by the Congregation in the following manner:

- (1) Education – during the first two (2) Sundays in August, education on the deacon election process and the deacon’s role will be delivered to all Sunday school classes aged Youth and above. Nomination – each member of church will be given one (1) blank nomination ballot on which up to 13 qualified men in the church may be nominated. Nomination forms may be turned in via Sunday school, or in the case of members not attending Sunday school, in the morning worship service on either of these two (2) weeks in August. Absentee Nomination Ballots may be picked up and filled out in the Church Office one (1) week prior to and one (1) week following for members unable to attend the two (2) Sundays when nominations are held.
- (2) A Deacon Screening Committee consisting of nine (9) individuals plus the Pastor and other Ministerial Staff that may be needed to help in the process will be established. The Deacon Screening Committee will consist of the following: The Chairman of the Deacons, two (2) active Deacons as selected by the Chairman of the Deacons, one member from each of the following four (4) Committees: Nominating, Budget, Human Resources and Committee on Committees, each committee selecting one member, and two (2) members from the congregation as selected by the Pastor.
- (3) The Deacon Screening Committee will compile a list of all men nominated by the church members. After the list has been compiled, the Deacon Screening Committee will check the list of nominated men to make sure that they meet the basic qualifications as listed in the first paragraph at the top of this page and any other church expectations. After this has been completed, the Deacon Screening Committee will mail a letter to each prospective deacon candidate listing the basic qualifications and asking if they are willing to serve.

- Once responses have been received back and the list updated to include only those who are willing to serve and meet the list of qualifications, these men will be invited to attend a meeting with the Deacon Screening Committee for a time of information and prayer to further explain the role / duties of a deacon, to explain a deacon's relationship to the Pastor and Ministerial Staff, to share any further requirements of the Pastor for serving as a deacon, and to confirm the candidate's willingness to still serve if elected. In the event more than thirteen (13) men are eligible and willing to serve, using the list of nominees compiled, the thirteen (13) men who received the highest number of nominations during the nomination process will be selected for service. If less than thirteen (13) men are eligible and willing to serve, then that number will continue along in the process.

A candidate may withdraw his name following this meeting.

- The Pastor will then meet with each man individually to affirm his willingness to serve if elected, to answer any questions the candidate may have and pray with each candidate. Once the qualified men have agreed to serve, their names will be submitted to the membership of the church for a final vote of approval in October.
- (4) Ordination for any new deacon will be held in November.
- (5) Deacons will begin their service on January 1.
- (6) All vacancies for any unexpired terms will be filled immediately by reviewing the list of nominees from that year, starting with the man with the highest number of nominations that was not selected for deacon during the original process. The recommendation to fill the vacancy shall be made by the active deacons and approval of the Church in regular Business Meeting.

Deacon Body – Organization & Structure

The following is a summary of the organization of the Deacon Body and the duties of its leaders.

Deacon Body

According to the Fairhope First Baptist Church By-Laws, the Deacon Body is the active, functional, organized body of deacons elected and set aside by our church current ministry to serve our church. The deacon body shall consist of up to thirty-nine (39) active deacons who shall serve on a rotating basis and shall be elected by the church according to the process described in this guidebook. However, the deacons have the responsibility to recommend to the church changes in the deacon membership as ministry requirements dictate.

Deacon Service

1. A deacon shall remain in active status as long as he annually indicates his desire and commitment to serve, is regular in attendance at the deacons' meetings and participates in the ministries of the deacon body. If a deacon is absent from three (3) consecutive deacons' meetings without acceptable explanation, he will be declared inactive by the Deacon Officers, and a replacement will be sought.
2. There are some instances when a deacon feels it is necessary for him to become inactive for a period of time. As long as his inactive service does not exceed two (2) consecutive years, he will be given opportunity to reactivate himself at the appropriate time.
3. If a deacon desires to serve actively again after exceeding two consecutive years of inactive service, he will be required to go through the deacon selection process in order to resume active status.
4. We realize that deacons come from varying stages of life – from young adulthood to retirees – each stage brings with it certain time constraints and commitments. While we do not expect deacons to “do everything,” it is in the best interest of the church membership if they see deacons modeling:
 - Regular Sunday, Wednesday and special event attendance
 - New member visits (assignments divided up w/all deacon body)
 - Prospective member visitation
 - Hospital, home visits as directed by church ministerial staff
 - Carrying out Deacon Family Ministry Plan

**** For specific expectations of service, please refer to Practical Duties of a Deacon (pg. 4) and A Servant’s Hand and Feet - the Deacon’s Service (pg. 21).***

Deacon Leadership

The deacons shall be organized as a unit, electing three officers to serve for the current year at some point after the annual election of deacons, but before they began serving. The officers shall serve for a term of one (1) year and shall be eligible for re-election for one (1) additional year. A deacon officer shall not be eligible to serve for more than two (2) consecutive years for the same office. These officers are:

1. Deacon Chairman

Chosen by the Deacon Body, this person serves as the motivational and organizational leader of the deacon body. His duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plan, conduct and evaluate deacon meetings.
- Lead the deacons in becoming an effective ministry team and in developing their ministry plans.
- Lead in providing deacons with adequate training and resources for doing their work.
- Work closely with the Pastor and Church Staff to facilitate an effective ministry partnership.
- Work with other deacon officers to identify deacon sub-committees and ministry opportunities.

2. Vice-Chairman

The active Deacon Body elects the Vice-Chairman. His duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conduct the deacon meetings in the absence of the chairman.
- Assist the chairman in planning and executing his responsibilities.
- Assist the chairman in developing sub-committees and ministry opportunities.

3. Secretary

Elected by the Deacon Body, the duties of the Secretary include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Keep accurate minutes of deacon meetings and records of deacon ministry opportunities.
- Maintain accurate attendance records of all meetings.
- Prepare official correspondence for the deacon body.
- Coordinate maintenance and update of the Deacon Handbook.
- Assist the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in deacon ministry opportunity planning.

Using Spiritual Gifts as a Deacon

Like every church member, a deacon possesses certain spiritual gifts as a part of his unique relationship to our Lord and his personal experience. Also like each church member, a deacon experiences the fullness of knowing Christ as he uses this gifts to further the kingdom. The list below represents the spiritual gifts listed throughout scripture.

Leadership

Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).

Administration

Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).

Teaching

Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God's Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

Knowledge

The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God's Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).

Wisdom

Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).

Prophecy

The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).

Discernment

Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).

Exhortation

Possessors of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).

Faith

Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).

Evangelism

God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship (Eph. 4:11).

Service/Helps

Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).

Mercy

Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).

Giving

Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).

Hospitality

Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

Here are the scores from your spiritual gift survey that you took as part of our Screening Process.

Leader	Admin	Teaching	Knowledge	Wisdom	Prophecy	Discern	Exhort	Faith	Evangelize	Serve	Mercy	Hospitality	Giving	

Individual Spiritual Gifts Inventory Scores

A spiritual gift is an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers which empowers them to serve the body of Christ, the church. The New Testament Passages that discuss a believer’s spiritual gifts are:

Romans 12:6-8 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30 Ephesians 4:11 1 Peter 4:9

Deacons at First Baptist Church are expected to fulfill our church’s mission, which is *Knowing Him and Making Him Known*. By consciously “working out their faith” through the practicing of these gifts, a deacon’s service shines before all, who see the deacon as knowing God and making Him known.

Deacons will be given the opportunity to align their spiritual gifts with an appropriate ministry that utilizes these gifts throughout their tenure as deacon.

Individualized Deacon Plan

As lay leaders of the church, deacons should lead the charge for our membership to fulfill the mission of FBC Fairhope, which is:

“To know Him and make Him known”

In concrete terms, this means that deacons should seek opportunities in discipleship (to know Him) and evangelism (to make Him known.) The deacon should feel comfortable in either Christian practice, but like all believers, he is probably gifted in one more than the other.

The Individualized Deacon Plan will match the portion of the Mission Statement to those spiritual gifts that characterize the deacon. For example,

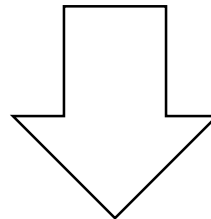
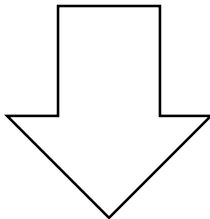
To Know Him (discipleship)

Teaching
Knowledge
Wisdom
Prophecy
Discernment

To Make Him Known (evangelism)

Evangelism
Giving
Hospitality
Mercy

<- Leadership ->
<- Administration ->
<- Exhortation ->
<- Faith ->



Below is how a deacon might match his gifts to ministry opportunities and the church’s mission.

To Know Him

Teaching/Training classes
Financial Peace training
New Member Class
Divorce Recovery
Bible Study

To Make Him Known

Power Team
Perky Pumpkin Party
Visitation/Outreach
Operation Christmas Child
Mission trips – local, regional, international

Deacon Training each December will help deacons develop an Individualized Plan of service/ministry for the year. Deacons currently serving will update their Plan at this time each year as well.

PRAYER & FASTING RESOURCE FOR DEACON

Having an organized approach to prayer often develops a richer, deeper prayer life for the believer. The information below is adapted from Campus Crusade for Christ – Prayer & Fasting Journal. The Journal suggests twelve (12) five minute increments of time to equal sixty (60) minutes of prayer. Even if you cannot devote that much time at one sitting, the way that this information is organized will help you become more serious about your prayer life.

1. PRAISE - Psalm 63:3; Hebrews 13:15; Matthew 6:9

Prayer should begin with a recognition of God’s nature. The Lord’s Prayer—our model for praying—begins with “Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.” Praise is that aspect of prayer which vocally esteems God for His virtues and accomplishments.

2. WAITING - Psalm 37:7; Isaiah 40:31; Lamentations 3:25

Not only should we begin prayer with praise, but time also should be given to being “quiet” in God’s presence. The original Hebrew text of Psalms 37:7, “rest in the Lord,” really means “be still” in the Lord. This is not meditation, or just a time for listening; it is simply taking time to let God love you.

3. CONFESSION - Psalm 139:23-24; Psalm 51:10-11; 1 John 1:9

The Psalmist asked God to search his heart for unconfessed sin. He knew sin was one of the greatest roadblocks to answered prayer (see Psalm 66:18). Early in the prayer we need to make time for confession. This clears the way for powerful praying.

4. THE WORD - 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 19:7-8

“The commandment of the Lord (God’s word) is pure, enlightening the eyes,” wrote a young King David. When we bring God’s word into our prayer we are opening our eyes to new possibilities in God. At this point in prayer we **read** God’s word.

5. INTERCESSION - 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Psalm 2:8; Matthew 9:37-38

Our prayer now centers on intercession for a lost and dying world. This concerns praying for others who have desperate needs. Of course, intercession is one aspect of prayer where 5 minutes will never do. You may need more time with this portion of your prayer.

6. PETITION - Matthew 7:7; Matthew 6:11; James 4:2

This aspect of prayer concerns our personal needs. Petition is included in the Lord’s Prayer in the expression, “Give us this day our daily bread.” To petition God is to open our need to God through prayer.

7. THE WORD Jeremiah 23:29; 2 Samuel 22:31; Numbers 23:19

Bringing God’s word into prayer is so important it appears twice on our list. Earlier we suggested you **read** God’s word. Now we **pray** God’s word. Here we bring actual Scripture into our prayer. We can never pray out of God’s will when we pray God’s word.

8. THANKSGIVING Philippians 4:6; Psalm 100:4

When Paul wrote to the Philippians he instructed them to offer prayer and supplication “with thanksgiving.” Thus, thanksgiving should occupy more than a single aspect of our prayer – it should be sprinkled throughout. Thanksgiving differs from praise in that praise recognizes God for who He is, while thanksgiving recognizes God for specific things He has done.

9. SINGING Psalm 100:2; Ephesians 5:19; Psalm 144:9

Melody in its purest sense is a gift of God for the purpose of singing praises unto Him. Many Christians, unfortunately, have never learned the beauty of singing a “new” song unto God melody. After all, Paul spoke of singing “spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19). To sing unto the Lord is to worship God in melody.

10. MEDITATION Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-2; Psalm 77:12

To wait in God’s presence is simply to be there to love Him. Meditation differs in that our mind is very active. To meditate is to ponder spiritual themes in reference to God. In fact, only once in Scripture do we find God specifically promising success and prosperity. It is God’s gift to those who meditate day and night in God’s word (Joshua 1:8).

11. LISTENING Ecclesiastes 5:2; 1 Kings 19:11-12

Whether through His written word or by an inner “still, small voice” of His Holy Spirit, God speaks to praying Christians. But we must take time to listen. **Listening** is different from both **waiting** and **meditation**. Here we listen for direct orders from our Heavenly Father concerning activities of our day.

12. PRAISE Matthew 6:13; Psalm 100:4; Psalm 150

There is an imaginary door to every prayer time with a sign affixed that simply reads – “praise.” We must always enter prayer through this door. And when prayer moves toward its conclusion we must look for this same door. We begin our prayer by recognizing God’s nature, and we end in similar fashion. Jesus taught this when He ended His prayer with the statement, “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen!” Thus, we have a simple twelve (12) step plan for filling an hour with meaningful prayer.

These are just suggestions—everyone has a different prayer life. However, developing such a prayer habit will not only change you, but the world around you as well!

Fasting Resource Guide

How you as a deacon begin and conduct your fast will largely determine your success. By following these seven (7) steps, you will make your time with the Lord more meaningful and spiritually rewarding.

Steps to Successful Fasting

Step 1 – Set your objective

Why are you fasting? Is it for spiritual renewal, for guidance, for healing, for the resolution of problems, for special grace to handle a difficult situation? Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify His leading and objectives for your prayer fast. This will enable you to pray more specifically and strategically.

Step 2 – Make your commitment

Pray about the kind of fast you should undertake. Before you fast, decide the following up front:

- How long will you fast—one meal, one day, a week, several weeks, 40 days. (Beginners should start slowly, building up to longer fasts.)
- The type of fast God wants you to undertake (such as water only, or water and juices; what kinds of juices you will drink and how often.)
- What physical or social activities you will restrict.
- How much time each day you will devote to pray and read God's word.

Step 3 – Prepare yourself spiritually

The very foundation of fasting and prayer is **repentance**. Unconfessed sin will hinder your prayers. Here are several things you can do to prepare your heart:

- Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance & accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all those who have hurt you (Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; Luke 17:3-4).
- Make restitution as the Holy Spirit leads you.

-Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit according to His command in Ephesians 5:18 and His promise in 1 John 5:14-15

-Surrender your life fully to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master; refuse to obey your worldly nature (Romans 12:1-2).

-Meditate on the attributes of God, His love, sovereignty, power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, compassion, and others (Psalm 48:9-10; 103:1-8 & 11-13).

-Begin your time of fasting and prayer with an expectant heart (Hebrews 11:6).

-Do not underestimate spiritual opposition. Satan sometimes intensifies the natural battle between body and spirit (Galatians 5:16-17).

Step 4 – Prepare yourself physically

Fasting requires reasonable precautions. Consult your physician first, especially if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment. Some persons should never fast without professional supervision. Do not rush your fast. Prepare your body. Eat smaller meals before starting a fast. Avoid high-fat and sugary foods.

Step 5 – Put yourself on a schedule

For maximum spiritual benefit, set aside ample time to be alone with the Lord. Listen for His leading. The more time you spend with Him, the more meaningful your fast will be.

Step 6 – End your fast gradually

Do not eat solid foods immediately after your fast. Suddenly reintroducing solid food to your stomach and digestive tract will likely have negative, and possibly, dangerous consequences.

Step 7 – Expect results

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (John 14:21). The Lord will give you fresh, new spiritual insights. Your confidence and faith in God will be strengthened. You will feel mentally, spiritually, and physically refreshed. You will see answers to your prayers.

A Servant's Heart – the Deacon's Humility

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!
Philippians 2:5-8

Servant leadership is exemplified when Deacons:

1. Are overwhelmed with their own spiritual need.
2. Are compassionate; have a forgiving spirit; look for the best in others.
3. Esteem all others better than self.
4. Have a dependent spirit; recognize others' needs.
5. Surrender control.
6. Are willing to yield the right to be right.
7. Have a giving spirit.
8. Are self-denying.
9. Are motivated to serve others.
10. Desire to be faithful to make others a success
11. Desire to promote others
12. Have a sense of unworthiness; are thrilled to be used at all; are eager to give others credit.
13. Rejoice when others are lifted up
14. Think, "I don't deserve to serve in this ministry!"
15. Know that they really have nothing to offer to God.
16. Are humbled by how much they have to learn.
17. Risk getting close to others.
18. Accept personal responsibility; can see where they are wrong.
19. Receive criticism with a humble, open heart
20. Are concerned with being real.
21. Are willing to be transparent with others.
22. Are quick to admit fault and to seek forgiveness.
23. Take the initiative to be reconciled; gets there first.
24. Compare themselves with the holiness of God and feel desperate for mercy.
25. Continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with the filling of the Holy Spirit.

A Servant's Hands and Feet– the Deacon's Service

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

Attendance

- Deacons are to model church attendance on a consistent basis. Worship participation, Sunday school attendance, mid-week prayer meetings, and special events all represent expected occasions where a deacon could and should attend. Obviously, 100% attendance at all possible services is unrealistic, but so is expecting our church and membership to grow without deacons leading the charge.

Deacon's Meetings

- Deacon's meetings may be held at a variety of days and times, but deacons are expected to not only attend, but participate. These meetings are held so the staff can communicate with the deacons, and thus the church body. They are a time of spiritual renewal through prayer and fellowship for the deacon body as well. Deacons should plan on attending a minimum of 9 out of the 12 meetings each year. (see page 9 for specifics of meeting expectations.)

Visitation/Hospital Visits

- Visitation does not come naturally for every church member, including deacons. However, it is an important church activity that connects us with our surrounding community. Luke 5 sets the example for us when Jesus called his early disciples to become “fishers of men.” The deacon should plan on participating in church visitation at a minimum of once per quarter. (Part of the deacon training each year will be some helpful tips on how to make a successful visit to prospective members.)
- Hospital visits are a meaningful way for deacons to serve both the church member and the staff. The size of our church has made it strenuous for the staff to reach all members that may be sick or ill, yet members want and expect to be supported. We ask that the deacon be willing to make a hospital visit if called upon by the staff, but certainly as part of their Deacon Family Ministry Plan. (see below)

Deacon Family Ministry Plan

- Introduce yourself to your new class in January, and then visit one time per quarter.
- Make sure to put your name on the class communication list (directory, email, etc.)
- Pick up a class directory from teacher or church office.
- Communicate with teacher one time per month to share information on class members.
- Communicate with each class member at least 1x/year (birthday, anniversary, etc.) via phone, email, text, or written card.
- Based on feedback from above items, minister to members in their time of need.