

Acton Baptist Church Deacon Manual

**The Deacon Ministry of
Acton Baptist Church**

APPROVED 8/8/2024

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 the **Acton 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 shall be your servant.**" (Matthew 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 3:8-13. The word for deacon in the New Testament originally described a servant who "stirred up dust while waiting on tables." A Deacon's major attention will be given to serving God under the leadership of the pastor and deacon officers in the practical ministry of the church.

I. 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 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** (verse four).

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.

II. BIBLICAL / PRACTICAL 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 three categories:

A. SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS (ACTS 6:1-6)

1. Full of the Holy Spirit *
2. Full of wisdom *
3. Full of faith *

B. MORAL QUALIFICATIONS (I TIMOTHY 3: 8-10, 12-13)

1. Worthy of respect *
2. Sincere *
3. Not indulging in much wine *
4. Not pursuing dishonest gain *
5. The husband of one wife *
6. Manages his children and household well *

C. QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE WIFE OF A DEACON (I TIMOTHY 3:11)

1. Worthy of respect *
2. Not malicious talker *
3. Temperate *
4. Trustworthy in everything *

*All scripture quotes are from the New International Version.

III. SELECTION OF A DEACON

GENERAL: The number of new deacons needed shall be determined by the deacon body. A ratio of one (1) deacon for every fifteen (15) active families shall be a basic guide in determining the number of deacons needed to serve Acton Baptist Church. Candidates must have been members of this church for a minimum of one year. The following provisions shall serve as guidelines for nominations for election:

A. Recognition of a Previously Ordained Deacon (ABC BYLAWS, ARTICLE IV, SECTION D.6)

Note: If for any reason, the candidate is not able to complete all the steps of this process, the candidate may be considered at a later time. The church members should not be asked to vote on a candidate who has not completed this process.

1. A man who has been ordained by another church of like faith and order may be recognized to serve as an active Deacon at ABC after at least 1 year as a member.
2. The Deacon body will follow the process steps for "Recognition of a Previously Ordained Deacon" found in Attachment # 1 in this document.

3. Once the Deacon body has approved the candidate for recognition, the candidate is presented to the ABC membership for approval in accordance with the ABC BYLAWS ARTICLE IV, SECTION D.10.

B. Selection of NEW Deacons from the Church Membership (BYLAWS, ARTICLE IV, SECTION D)

Note: If for any reason, the candidate is not able to complete all the steps of this process, the candidate may be considered at a later time. The church members should not be asked to vote on a candidate who has not completed this process.

1. The Deacon body periodically determines if there is a need to seek additional Deacons.
2. Once the Deacons have determined the need for additional Deacons, the Deacon body will follow the process steps for "Selection of New Deacons from the Church Membership" found in Attachment # 2 in this document.

IV. SERVICE OF A DEACON

- A. 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 for three (3) consecutive deacons' meetings without acceptable explanation, the Deacon Officers should discuss the situation and options with the Deacon. Based on the circumstances, the Deacon body may consider the need for action up to and including moving the Deacon to inactive status.
- B. There are some instances when a deacon feels it is necessary to become inactive for a period of time. When the request is for less than a year, the deacon will remain on the active list of deacons but will be excused from normal duties. These duties will be reassigned within the deacon body until the deacon returns to full-time status.
- C. When a deacon request to be inactive for more than a year, the request will be referred to the church for approval to place the deacon on inactive status. The deacon is then required to participate in the normal selection process to return to active status.

V. DEACON EMERITUS

A. Definition

The high honor of Deacon Emeritus is established to recognize and honor a deacon who has demonstrated outstanding service for the cause of Christ and Acton Baptist Church but can no longer serve due to age, health, or life events. As Deacon Emeritus, he is not required to attend meetings, vote, or have a widow

assignment. However, he can still serve in areas such as Lord Supper if he so chooses.

B. Consideration

To be considered, the deacon needs to make a request to the Chairman of the Deacons to have his status changed to Inactive. Once Inactive the Deacon body will assess eligibility for Deacon Emeritus. The general guidelines are over age 70 with 10 years as an active deacon in good standing at Acton Baptist Church. Special case situations will be considered. For a Deacon to become a Deacon Emeritus requires an endorsement by a two-thirds majority vote of the quorum present at a regular meeting of the deacons and an approval by a majority vote at a regular Church Ministry Update (CMU).

C. Recognition

The Pastor and Chairman of the Deacons will honor the new Deacon Emeritus and spouse at a Sunday morning worship service with a certificate of appreciation.

VI. RELATIONSHIPS OF A DEACON

Certainly, the deacon's primary relationship is to his Lord. Without that vertical relationship being what it ought to be, 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. Family

The New Testament mentions a deacon's responsibility in relation to his wife and children; therefore, the church feels that a deacon should give his family priority in his devotion, care and ministry.

B. Relation to the Pastor

The Deacon's responsibilities are to serve with the Pastor and other ministers in performing pastoral task of:

- Promoting harmony in the church,
- Leading the church in the accomplishment of its mission,
- Proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
- Caring for the church members and other persons in the community.

C. Relation to Committees

In accordance with the meaning of the Word and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.

The deacon body gives counsel to, but does not have control of, committee actions.

Committees may address the deacon body concerning actions or recommendations for information and feedback. Thus, the Deacons may function as a “sounding board” to provide feedback as to how the membership, as a whole, may view the actions or recommendations or to suggest additional information to be provided to the membership. 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.

Individual deacons are encouraged to serve on the various Committees / Teams / Councils of the church. The ABC C&BL require at least one deacon to be a part of each church committee.

D. Relationship to the Church Membership at Large

In accordance with the meaning of the Word and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.

The deacons are to be active in ministry to the church family, and to promote peace, harmony and a spirit of cooperation and unity among the membership. **Deacons are to be problem solvers and preservers of church harmony.**

VII. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DEACON

In accordance with the meaning of the word of the New Testament, deacons are to recognize their roles as ministering servants of the church. They are to be members of this church whose character and qualifications shall be as specified in I Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-6, and Titus 1:6-9.

A. Deacon Ministry Role: (BYLAWS ARTICLE IV)

In accordance with the meaning of the Word and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their responsibilities are to serve with the Pastor and other ministers in performing the pastoral tasks of:

1. Promoting harmony in the church,
2. Leading the church in the accomplishment of its mission,
3. Proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
4. Caring for the church members and other persons in the community.

B. Deacon Ministry Responsibilities:

1. Support and encourage committees and organizations through prayer and participation,

2. Be available to discuss any item of major importance,
3. Serve on councils and/or committees as assigned,
4. Provide a summary report of the committee and/or council meetings to the deacons, as well as making the councils or committees aware of any concerns from the deacons,
5. Be expected to attend a monthly deacons' meeting,
6. Assist the Pastor in ministering to families and individuals as ambassadors of encouragement, crisis support, and prayer,

(Additional ABC Responsibilities)

7. To demonstrate Christ-like concern, prayer support and faithfulness to the local church program,
8. To encourage and strengthen new converts and the spiritually weak,
9. Faithful attendance at the services of the church,
10. A consistent commitment to stewardship,
11. Support new member assimilation and
12. Participate in the Deacon Group of the Week Program by assisting in receiving new members and making visitor contacts following the worship service.

VIII. ORDINATION OF A DEACON

The ordination of a deacon is designed to be a meaningful time of commissioning to faithful service. The ordination service should be scheduled to allow for the participation of as many church members as possible. Each candidate for ordination should be presented to the church along with their family and the service should include the "laying on of hands" as part of the commissioning process.

IX. DUTIES OF THE DEACON OFFICERS

The deacon officers will be selected annually by the deacon body according to the ABC C&BL. No officer shall serve more than three consecutive terms in one office.

Deacon Officer Nomination Process

The Deacon body will elect one (1) officer position annually: Vice-Chairman in training.

The current Deacon Officers will recommend one (1) Deacon to fill the Vice-Chairman in

training position. This will include a Deacon not currently serving as an officer.

Typically, Deacon officer positions are filled based on a rotation process in which:

- Each year, the Chairman will rotate out of the Chairman position
- The Vice-Chairman will rotate to the Chairman position
- The Vice-Chairman in training will rotate to Vice-Chairman position
- A new candidate is nominated for the Vice-Chairman in training position

This rotation process is intended to ensure there is continuity within the officer body from year to year. Circumstances may necessitate nomination of additional positions each year with the concurrence of the Deacon body.

A. Chairman:

1. He will preside at all deacon body meetings whether regular or called. He may call special meetings when a need is determined by the pastor or member of the deacon body.
2. He will notify the deacon body of meetings utilizing correspondence, phone calls or e-mail and place appropriate notices in the church media.
3. He will coordinate with the pastor, deacon officers and others as needed to develop an agenda for all deacon meetings.
4. He serves as the representative of the deacon body to the Church Council and other church functions as needed.
5. The Chairman develops and coordinates recommendations for the various activities and procedures of the deacons and the format of the meetings for approval of the deacon body.
6. He will work with the pastor and other officers to recommend three deacons to serve on the Deacon Search Committee when needed.

B. Vice-Chairman:

1. The Vice-Chairman serves as the coordinator of the Deacon Family Ministry Program by assigning families to individual deacons and maintains the appropriate records for the program.
2. He will coordinate the fellowship functions of the deacon body including retreats, banquets, and special meetings.
3. He will support the Chairman in carrying out his duties when necessary.
4. He will work with the pastor and other officers to recommend three deacons to serve on the Deacon Search Committee.

C. Vice-Chairman in Training

1. The Vice-Chairman in training will work with the Vice-Chairman in all functions assigned to the Vice-Chairman.
2. He will support the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in carrying out their duties when necessary.
3. He will work with the pastor and other officers to recommend three deacons to serve on the Deacon Search Committee.

4. He will take notes when the Secretary is unavailable and will provide that information to the Secretary such that minutes can be maintained and published.

X. DUTIES OF THE DEACON SECRETARY

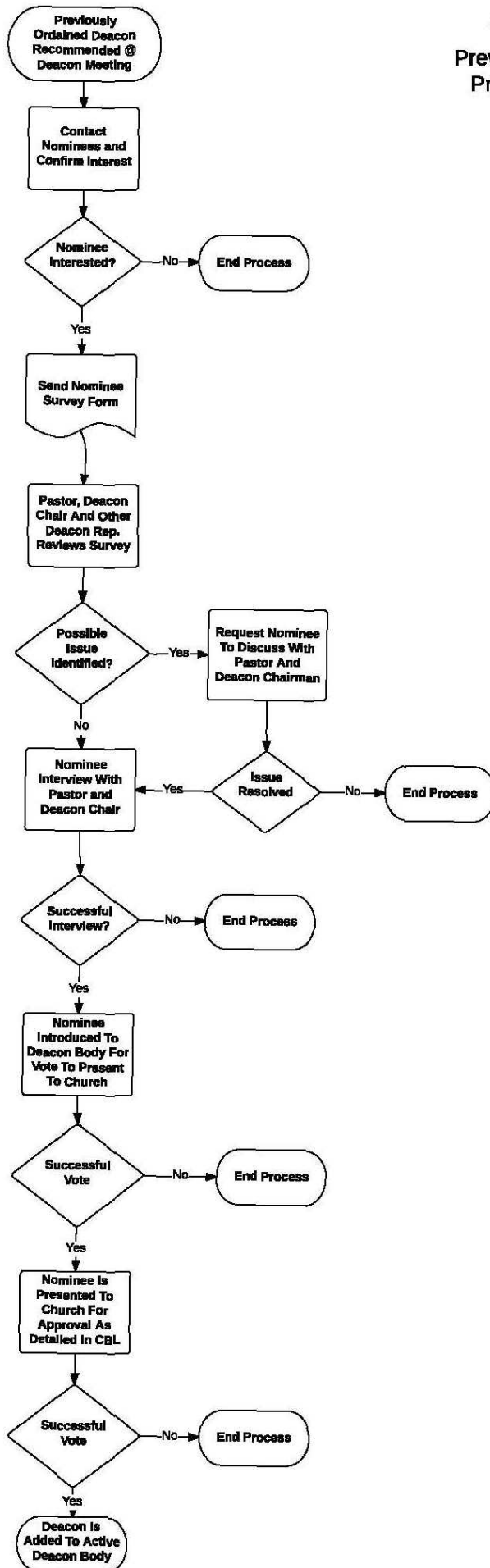
The Secretary position will be filled by a Deacon volunteer elected by the Deacon Body. The term of service will be until such time that the Secretary requests to step down from the position or until the Deacon Body request that a new Secretary be elected.

1. The Secretary maintains and publishes the minutes and other records of each deacon body meeting both regular and called.
2. When appropriate, he sends flowers, cards and/or memorials with the approval of the other deacon officers and solicits the funds to accomplish this from the deacon body as needed.
3. He will maintain an up-to-date roster of the deacon body.
4. He will take the roll of those in attendance at each regular and called meeting of the deacon body and maintain an accurate record of attendance for all meetings.
5. He will work with his replacement for at least six months to ensure a smooth transition between Secretaries.
6. The Secretary position may transition from one individual to his replacement at any time during the year and is not tied to the end of year transition of the officers.

CONCLUSION

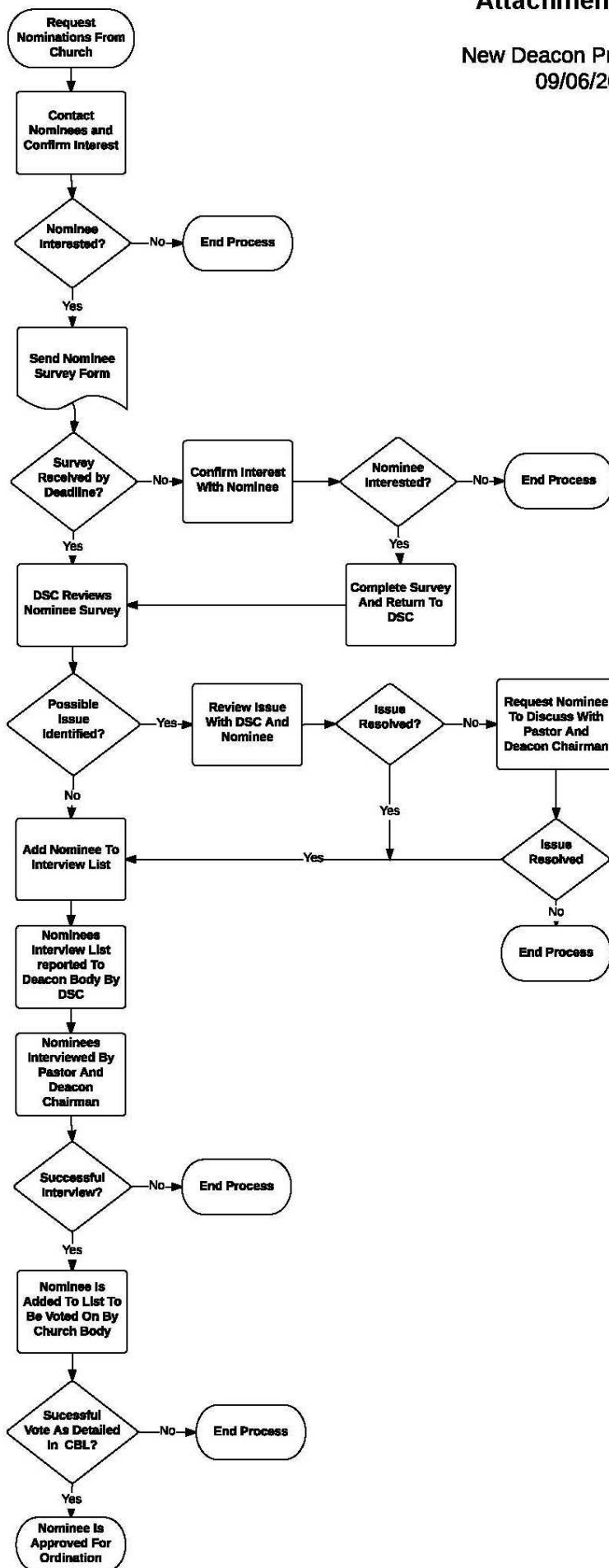
Serving as a deacon demands a high level of commitment, a mature knowledge of the faith and dedication to fellowship and service. I Timothy 3:13 summarizes it best, **"For those who have served well as Deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."** May your service as deacon be one of the richest and most rewarding of your walk with the Lord.

Attachment # 1:
Previously Ordained Deacon
Process Map 09/06/2015



Attachment # 2:

New Deacon Process Map 09/06/2015



Attachment # 3:

Typical Deacon Candidate Interview Questions

1. Would you share your personal testimony?
2. What is your view of the Bible? (II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:20)
3. Do you believe in the security of the believer as cited in Ephesians 2:8, John 3:16 and I John 5:11-13?
4. Discuss the mission of the church as stated in the Constitution & By-Laws?
5. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22-25)
6. What are your thoughts about spiritual warfare as cited in Ephesians 6:10-18?
7. Are you faithful in your stewardship by tithing at Acton Baptist Church?
8. Will you be able to attend the meetings of the deacon body on a regular basis?
9. Is your wife in full support of your service as a deacon?
10. Have you read together the qualifications of a deacon's wife, found in I Timothy 3:11, and do you both agree to them?