

About Church Officers & Deacon

The following gives an overview of our approach to church leaders or “church officers” and a fuller discussion of our approach to church governance can be found [here](#). The following comes from chapter 7 and 9 in the *Book of Church Order*.

About Church Officers

Under the New Testament, our Lord at first collected His people out of different nations, and united them to the household of faith by the ministry of extraordinary officers who received extraordinary gifts of the Spirit and who were agents by whom God completed His revelation to His Church. Such officers and gifts related to new revelation have no successors since God completed His revelation at the conclusion of the Apostolic Age.

The ordinary and perpetual classes of office in the Church are elders and deacons. Within the class of elder are the two orders of teaching elders and ruling elders. The elders jointly have the government and spiritual oversight of the Church, including teaching. Only those elders who are specially gifted, called and trained by God to preach may serve as teaching elders. The office of deacon is not one of rule, but rather of service both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people. In accord with Scripture, these offices are open to men only.

No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or receive any official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the Scriptures.

About the Office of Deacon

The office of deacon is set forth in the Scriptures as ordinary and perpetual in the Church. The office is one of sympathy and service, after the example of the Lord Jesus; it expresses also the communion of saints, especially in their helping one another in time of need.

It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the Session (the elders) and

consent of the congregation.

In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the Session. In a church in which it is impossible for any reason to secure deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders.

To the office of deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment.

The deacons of a particular church shall be organized as a Board, of which the pastor shall be an advisory member. The Board shall elect a chairman and a secretary from their number and a treasurer to whom shall be entrusted the funds for the current expenses of the church. It shall meet separately at least once a quarter, and whenever requested by the Session. The Board of each church shall determine the number necessary for a quorum.

The Board shall keep a record of its proceedings, and of all funds and their distribution, and shall submit its minutes to the Session regularly, and at other times upon request of the Session.

It is desirable that the Session and the Board of Deacons meet in joint session once a quarter to confer on matters of common interest.

Deacons may properly be appointed by the higher courts to serve on committees, especially as treasurers. It is suitable also that they be appointed trustees of any fund held by any of the Church courts. It may also be helpful for the Church courts, when devising plans of church finance, to invite wise and consecrated deacons to their councils.

The deacons may, with much advantage, hold conference from time to time for the discussion of the interests committed to them. Such conferences may include representatives of churches covering areas of smaller or larger extent. Any actions taken by these conferences shall have only an advisory character.

It is often expedient that the Session of a church should select and appoint godly men and women of the congregation to assist the deacons in caring for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the prisoners, and others who may be in any distress or need. These assistants to the deacons are not officers of the church and, as such, are not subjects for ordination.