

Istrouma Baptist Church Deacons

Deacons have a crucial role in the life and the health of the local church. The biblical role of deacons is to take care of the physical and logistical needs of the church so that the pastors and ministerial staff can concentrate on their primary calling.

This distinction is based on the pattern found in Acts 6:1-6. The apostles were devoted “to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (v. 4). Since this was their primary calling, seven men were chosen to handle more practical matters in order to allow the apostles the freedom to continue with their work.

Acts 6:1-6

1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. (ESV)

Paul identifies 9 qualifications of deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

1 Timothy 3:8-13

8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (ESV)

1. **Dignified (v. 8):** This term normally refers to something that is honorable, respectable, esteemed, or worthy, and is closely related to “respectable,” which is given as a qualification for elders (1 Tim. 3:2).
2. **Not double-tongued (v. 8):** Those who are double-tongued say one thing to certain people but then say something else to others, or say one thing but mean another. They are two-faced and insincere. Their words cannot be trusted, so they lack credibility.
3. **Not addicted to much wine (v. 8):** A man is disqualified for the office of deacon if he is addicted to wine or other strong drink. Such a person lacks self-control and is undisciplined. Additionally, the Bible calls us to abstain from any association with alcohol, drugs, etc. that would distort one’s testimony or cause another believer to stumble (Rom. 14:13-23).

4. **Not greedy for dishonest gain (v. 8):** If a person is a lover of money, he is not qualified to be a deacon, especially since deacons often handle financial matters for the church.
5. **Sound in faith and life (v. 9):** Paul also indicates that a deacon must “hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.” The phrase “the mystery of the faith” is simply one way Paul speaks of the gospel (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16). Consequently, this statement refers to the need for deacons to hold firm to the true gospel without wavering. Yet this qualification does not merely involve one’s beliefs, for he must also hold these beliefs “with a clear conscience.” That is, the behavior of a deacon must be consistent with his beliefs.
6. **Blameless (v. 10):** Paul writes that deacons must “be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless” (v. 10). “Blameless” is a general term referring to a person’s overall character. Although Paul does not specify what type of testing is to take place, at a minimum, the candidate’s personal background, reputation, and theological positions should be examined. Moreover, the congregation should not only examine a potential deacon’s moral, spiritual, and doctrinal maturity, but should also consider the person’s track record of service in the church.
7. **Godly wife (v. 11):** According to Paul, deacons’ wives must “be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things” (v. 11). Like her husband, the wife must be dignified or respectable. Secondly, she must not be a slanderer or a person who goes around spreading gossip. A deacon’s wife must also be sober-minded or temperate. That is, she must be able to make good judgments and must not be involved in things that might hinder such judgment. Finally, she must be “faithful in all things” (cf. 1 Tim. 5:10). This is a general requirement which functions similarly to the requirement for deacons to be “blameless” (1 Tim. 3:10).
8. **Husband of one wife (v. 12):** He must be a “one-woman man.” That is, there must be no other woman in his life, other than his wife (if he is married), to whom he relates in an intimate way either emotionally or physically.
9. **Manage children and household well (v. 12):** A deacon must be the spiritual leader of his wife and children (if married and has children).

Additional criteria of Istrouma Baptist Church:

- Church membership for 2 years except for good cause
- At least 21 years of age
- Abstain from alcoholic beverage consumption

7. Are you the spiritual leader of your home? If so, what does that leadership look like?

Your answers to questions 8-14 may prompt further discussion with one of Istrouma's Pastors.

8. Do you tithe to the Lord Jesus Christ through Istrouma Baptist Church, as evidenced by your giving statement? Yes No

9. Have you or your wife ever been divorced? Yes No

10. Do you and your wife currently have serious domestic problems? Yes No

11. Are any of your minor children experiencing serious behavior difficulties? Yes No

12. Do you have any unresolved conflict with anyone inside or outside of Istrouma (financially, relationally, etc)? Yes No

13. Do you engage in any activity that might indicate greed for dishonest gain? Yes No

14. Do you partake of alcoholic beverages? Yes No
If yes, in what context, how often, and to what extent.

15. Have you ever been ordained? If so, where?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Spouse Signature (if married): _____

**Istrouma Baptist Church
Deacon Covenant**

As a deacon, I promise:

- Through the power of the Spirit, to continue to live a life that exemplifies the qualifications detailed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- That my family and I will, unless providentially hindered, be faithful in attendance for Bible study, worship, and other ministry programs of the church.
- That my family and I will support the pastoral and ministry staff to the best of our ability and will regularly pray for them, their families and their ministry efforts.
- That my family and I will practice the Scriptural plan of stewardship, which includes generous giving that begins with the tithe.
- That I will be a faithful witness for our Lord and Savior and will strive to help the lost come to a saving knowledge of Christ.
- That I and my wife (if married) will abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages.
- That I will accept and discharge the responsibilities assigned to me by my church or deacon fellowship to the best of my ability.
- That I will, unless providentially hindered, be faithful to attend all regular and called meetings of the deacon fellowship.
- That I will be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph.4:3), will help resolve conflict in the church Biblically (Matt. 18:15-17 and Matt. 5:23-24), and will, therefore, privately direct any disagreement and concerns to the pastor and other appropriate staff members.
- That, if at any time, I am unable or unwilling to actively fulfill the duties, responsibilities, and commitments of a deacon, I will tender my resignation from the active deacon fellowship.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Spouse: _____ Date: _____
(if married)

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Istrouma Baptist Church - Deacon Selection Process

Step 1

Upon request, the Istrouma Baptist Church family will be given the criteria to serve as a deacon and be asked to nominate men who meet the requirements.

Step 2

The Chairman of Deacons will appoint a Deacon Nomination Team (DNT) of 6 men or more to review and screen the list of nominees for qualifications. The DNT should include one of the pastors as an ex-officio member. The inclusion of one of the pastors on the DNT will help the pastors be faithful to their role of giving oversight to the church, and will help give continuity of discernment and selection from one nomination cycle to the next regarding private and personal matters.

Step 3

The Chairman of Deacons will provide the pastors with a copy of the list of nominees. The pastors will obtain private and confidential knowledge on the spiritual qualifications to serve. The pastors will provide such input confidentially to the Chairman of Deacons. At that time, the Chairman of Deacons will revise the list if necessary.

Step 4

The remaining nominees will receive a written questionnaire and be asked to return it to the DNT.

Step 5

The DNT will review the questionnaires. Issues on questions 8-14 will be directed to the pastors for clarification in private sessions with the nominees. The pastors will return a list of qualified candidates to the DNT without comment.

Step 6

The DNT will prepare a brief bio with photo for each nominee to be presented to deacons to proceed with in-home visits. Deacons who nominated candidates or know the candidates will share information on the nominees with the deacon body at this time.

Step 7

The DNT will assign a deacon pair to conduct in-home visits with remaining nominees and spouses, if married. A DNT member will be present in all pairs. The purpose of the in-home visit is to review the Deacon Covenant with the nominee and spouse, if married. The prospective deacon and spouse, if married, will be requested to sign the Deacon Covenant.

Step 8

After signing the Deacon Covenant, the Deacon nominees will give their testimony to the deacon body. Afterwards, the deacons will vote on each man individually to present the candidates to the Church.

Step 9

Approved deacon nominees will be presented to the Church for approval to serve as a deacon and to be ordained if needed.

Step 10

After election by the church, an ordination service will be scheduled if needed.