

The Deacon's Office

Article I – Definition of the Office

The term *deacon* comes from the Greek word *diakonos*, meaning “servant” or “minister.” They serve to meet the local needs of a church both practical, spiritual.

Deacons support the life of the Church by meeting needs, worship leading, media, administration, assisting in the care of the poor, and ensuring that all ministry needs are met for the church. So that pastors/teachers can give primary attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word in that local church.

Article II – Qualifications of the Office

Biblical Qualifications

- Worthy of respect, sincere, not double-tongued (1 Tim. 3:8).
- Not indulging in much wine and not pursuing dishonest gain (1 Tim. 3:8).
- Hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (1 Tim. 3:9).
- Tested first; only if proven blameless should they serve as deacons (1 Tim. 3:10).
- Faithful in marriage and managing children and household well (1 Tim. 3:12).
- Full of the Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3).

Lifestyle & Disposition

- Live a life of humility and faithfulness.
- Display generosity, hospitality, and care for others.
- Work in unity with pastors/teachers or apostles.
- Model servant leadership by meeting needs with joy.
- Maintain integrity in finances and daily dealings.

Skills & Competencies

- Skilled in the ministry needs for that local church.

Article III – Responsibilities of the Office

Deacons bear responsibility to:

- The responsibilities depend on the local needs of that church.

Article IV – Apprenticeship of the Office

- **Calling** – Pastors/Teachers shall discern individuals sensing a call to serve as deacons, confirmed by character and local church references.
- **Agreement** – Candidates must read and understand the *Gardens in Exile Charter* and *Leadership Office Bylaws* before entering an apprenticeship agreement.
- **Apprenticeship** – Apprentices shall be trained through teaching, lifestyle shadowing, and practical ministry experience by co-laboring. The goal is to prepare them to meet the qualifications of an deacons, as outlined in the Apprenticeship Guidelines.

Article V – Appointment of the Office

Apprenticeship Route

- Pastors/Teachers may appoint deacons.
- Pastors/Teachers ensures the apprentice has completed their apprenticeship.
- Pastors/Teachers ensures the apprentice has read, understands, and agrees to the Charter and Leadership Bylaws.
- Pastors/Teachers confirms a strong theological foundation and administers an oral or written examination in line with the theological outcomes set by the Apostolic Council.
- Pastors/Teachers submits the report form provided by the Apostolic Council for testimony and record.
- Pastors/Teachers appoints the apprentice into the office of deacons through prayer and the laying on of hands.

Recognition Route (Existing Deacons)

- Pastors/Teachers requests character references from family and church leaders regarding the candidate's suitability.
- Pastors/Teachers discerns whether the candidate meets the qualifications or should first enter an apprenticeship.
- The recognizing pastor/teachers ensures the candidate has a strong theological foundation, tested by oral or written examination in line with outcomes set by the Apostolic Council.
- Candidates must read, understand, and agree to the Charter and Leadership Bylaws.
- If approved, the recognizing Pastors/Teachers submits a report to the Apostolic Council for testimony and record.
- The candidate is publicly appointed through prayer and the laying on of hands.

Article VIII – Restoration & Removal of Deacons

1. Accountability

Every deacon shall be accountable to their local Pastor/Teachers for their conduct and service.

2. Restoration

Deacons may be corrected for misconduct, dishonesty, financial abuse, neglect of duty, or any action contrary to Scripture and the *Gardens in Exile Charter and Bylaws*. Correction shall aim for repentance, healing, and restoration (Gal. 6:1).

3. Removal from Office

- Deacons may not be removed by another deacon.
- If removal is necessary, the matter must be addressed by the Pastor/Teachers
- Removal must be based on clear evidence, not personal offense.
- Ministries overseen by a removed deacon shall be reassigned to another deacon under Pastor/teacher supervision.

Article IX – Amendments

- Amendments to these Bylaws may only be made by the Apostolic Council.
