



DEACON TRAINING

Presbytery of Donegal 2021

DEACONS IN THE BIBLE

ACTS 6:1-7 Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.”

What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

DEACONS IN THE BIBLE

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons.

Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.

Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

DEACONS IN THE BIBLE

Romans 1:1-16

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

G-2.02 DEACONS: THE MINISTRY OF COMPASSION AND SERVICE

G-2.0201 Deacon Defined

The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and

service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress.

Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

G-2.0202 Under Authority of the Session

Deacons may be individually commissioned or organized as a board of deacons. In either case, their ministry is under the supervision and authority of the session.

Deacons may also be given special assignments in the congregation, such as caring for members in need, handling educational tasks, cultivating liberality in giving, collecting and disbursing monies to specific persons or causes, or overseeing the buildings and property of the congregation.

Deacons shall assume other duties as may be delegated to them by the session, including assisting with the Lord's Supper. (W-3.0414).

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

G-2.0202 Under Authority of the Session

A congregation by a majority vote may choose not to utilize the ordered ministry of deacons.

If the congregation has neither a board of deacons nor individually commissioned deacons, the function of this ordered ministry shall be the responsibility of the ruling elders and the session.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

G-2.0402 Preparation for Ministry as a Ruling Elder or Deacon

When persons have been elected to the ordered ministry of ruling elder or deacon, the session shall provide a period of study and preparation, after which the session shall examine them as to their personal faith; knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the church; and the duties of the ministry.

The session shall also confer with them as to their willingness to undertake the ministry appropriate to the order. If the examination is approved, the session shall appoint a day for the service of ordination and installation.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

G-2.0403 Service of Ordination and Installation

The service of ordination and installation shall focus upon Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church, and shall include a sermon appropriate to the occasion. The moderator of session or person authorized to preside shall state briefly the nature of the ministry of ruling elder and deacon.

The act of ordination and installation takes place in the context of worship. The order for that service of worship in the Directory for Worship (W-4.04) shall be followed.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

G-2.0404 Terms of Service

Ruling elders and deacons shall be elected to serve terms of no more than three years on the session or board of deacons, and may be eligible for reelection according to congregational rule. However, no ruling elder or deacon shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years, and a ruling elder or deacon who has served six consecutive years shall be ineligible for election to the same board for at least one year.

Election shall be to classes as nearly equal in number as possible, with the term of only one class ending each year. The presbytery may, upon written request and by majority vote, grant a congregation a waiver of this limitation on terms.

Once ordained and while they are active members of any congregation of this denomination, ruling elders or deacons not in active service on a session or board of deacons continue to bear the responsibilities of the ministry to which they have been ordained, except as provided in G-2.0406, G-2.0407, or in accordance with the Rules of Discipline.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

W-4.0402: Setting for the Service

Ordination, installation, and commissioning may take place during the Service for the Lord's Day as a response to the proclamation of the Word. Ordination, installation, and commissioning may also take place in a special service that focuses on Jesus Christ, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the mission and ministry of the Church, and which includes the proclamation of the Word and may also include the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

W-4.0403: Order of Worship

A service of ordination, installation, or commissioning focuses on Christ and the joy and responsibility of serving him through the mission and ministry of the church. Following the sermon, the moderator (or designee) of the appropriate council briefly states the nature of the ministry to which persons are being ordained, installed, or commissioned.

Those who are being ordained, installed, or commissioned gather at the baptismal font. The moderator (or designee) asks them the constitutional questions (see W-4.0404). A ruling elder asks the corresponding questions of the congregation. When all questions have been answered in the affirmative, those to be ordained will kneel, if able, for the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination. Members of the session lay on hands at the ordination of ruling elders and deacons; the session may invite other ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament to participate. Because ordination only takes place once for each office, the laying on of hands is not repeated.) Those previously ordained will stand, if able, along with the congregation, for the prayer of installation.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

- e. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline?
Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

- f. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

- g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

- h. Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

(For deacon) Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

W-3.0414: Communion

The bread and cup are shared in the manner most appropriate to the occasion. Worshipers may gather at the table, come forward to meet the servers, or receive the bread and cup where they are. The bread may be broken and placed in people's hands or they may receive pieces of bread prepared for distribution. They may drink from a common cup, receive individual cups, or dip the broken bread into the cup.

Ordinarily ruling elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament serve the bread and cup; the session may authorize other church members to do so.

DEACONS IN THE BOOK OF ORDER

As soon as possible after the service (ordinarily on the same day), the bread and cup may be shared with absent, homebound, or hospitalized members by two or more persons in ordered ministry.

Those who carry out this extended service of communion shall be authorized by the session; equipped with the necessary theological, pastoral, and liturgical gifts and resources; and instructed to maintain the unity of Word and Sacrament through the reading of Scripture and offering of prayers.

THE MINISTRY OF DEACONS IN VISITATION

- **Some congregations set up Visitation Teams**
- **These Teams are often Deacon Teams, or Deacons help organize and supervise**
- **Some Visitation Teams include:**
 - **Hospital Visitation**
 - **Homebound Visitation**
 - **Grief Care and Support**
 - **Families in Transition (new baby, kid off to college, illness)**
 - **New to Church Community**
- **Visitation Teams can be commissioned by congregation, given name badges, “calling” cards**
- **Training in Visitation – “Never Sit on the Bed”**



THE ROLE OF DEACONS IN YOUR CONGREGATION

What do Deacons do in your congregation?

What is most Life-Giving for you?

Is anything life-draining or confusing?

How do the Deacons and the Session interact?