

STATEMENT ON THE DIACONATE
OF
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF SEBRING

DEFINITION:

A community of men and women living out the ministry and servanthood of Jesus Christ.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DIACONATE

Scripture References

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Acts 6:1-6

Matthew 20:26-28

Mark 10:43-45

Galatians 3:28

Matthew 25:34-46

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Galatians 5:22

Philippians 1:1

Romans 16:1-2

Romans 12:15

Paramount qualifications are a reverent orientation of one's whole life to God and an inclusive loving spirit which reaches out to others. Deacons must be members of First Christian Church of Sebring who give evidence of seeking to grow in their understanding and practice of the Christian life.

They are sensible and dignified in their inward temperament and outward attitude. Deacons are truthful and consistent in their dealings with others. Their nature is temperate - not given to excesses or greed. Deacons witness to their strong sincere convictions, and conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities.

Mutual support and cooperation characterize relations with clergy and elders. A charitable spirit is shown in a willingness to assist the poor, the sick, the lonely, and others in need. Humility is reflected in a willingness to serve the Lord no matter how unaccustomed or small or unimportant the task.

NATURE OF DIACONATE

The word deacon comes from diakonia which is translated "servant or minister". So, a deacon is one who ministers or serves or waits upon others. Their ministry in New Testament times is primarily one of service: assistance of worship, pastoral care

of church members, and works of charity for those in need. Jesus Christ called himself diakonos (servant). So deacons are to symbolically represent the servant ministry of Christ.

Servant ministry points in two directions at the same time. It has first of all been sent by God in Christ and therefore has God as its reference point. Secondly it has been sent to serve others, all others, but especially those in the church. When Christians are genuinely concerned to love one another, this love overflows into the world and the world is drawn to seek the source of such love.

Under the Old Covenant all were well aware of the "service" they were to render to God in worship and obedience to his law. However, they had little consciousness of being sent by God to serve the needs of their fellow human beings. Like the Gentiles, they thought of greatness in terms of rank, power and authority.

Jesus clearly reversed this system of values. In the great picture of the judgement, Jesus makes humble service to others the ways of entrance into heaven. Those who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and those in prison did it to Jesus. "As you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me."

The "varieties of service" (diakonia) mentioned by Paul includes "the ministry"(diakonia) "of the word", (Acts 6:4) "of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:8), and "of the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:8). In 2 Corinthians, Pauls calls the offering of the church at Corinth for that at Jerusalem "outreach" (diakonia).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIACONATE

1. Cooperate with Elders in promoting the physical and spiritual growth and welfare of the church.
2. Develop goals and objectives which will encourage spiritual growth within the Diaconate.
3. Give thoughtful consideration and support to the policies of the church enabling it to fulfill its mission.
4. Encourage, by example and word, the missionary, evangelistic, educational, worship and stewardship responsibilities of the Church.
5. Minister to families in times of sickness and bereavement.
6. Show concern for, and minister to, the morally delinquent and spiritually indifferent.
7. Prepare and serve the elements of communion.
8. Receive the offering and present it for dedication.

9. Assist the Minister and candidates in baptismal services.
- 10 . Represent the Diaconate at General Board meetings.
11. Perform such other duties as may be assigned by the General Board.