

## **Draft of Revised Description of Deacon Ministry at First Baptist Church - 09/2020**

### **2. Deacons *(Replaces this section in the current Organizational Manual)***

#### **(1) Purpose and Composition:**

Deacons (or “Care Leaders”) exist to make sure each person in the fellowship is cared for in Christian love. Every adult LifeGroup will have at least one member of the group serving as a Deacon or Care Leader for the group. In addition, the church at large will elect two people to serve as Deacons At-Large to oversee care for those who are not connected to any LifeGroup. The student ministry is also encouraged to select one or more students to serve as Care Leaders for their group. These Deacons/Care Leaders should serve a maximum of 3 years, then taking a year off to allow others to serve. Short-term groups should still select one or more members to serve as Deacons/Care Leaders even though the group may only meet for a few weeks. Even in those short-term settings, caring for group members is a top priority of every group.

Those nominated to serve as Deacons must be active members, at least 18 years old, and must have been a member of the church for at least two years. (The one exception is that students serving as Deacons/Care Leaders within their group may be younger than 18.)

#### **(2) Election:**

A. Existing LifeGroups: LifeGroups will be asked to select their Deacons/Care Leaders on the first Sunday of November for service the upcoming calendar year. The persons chosen and agreeing to serve should be reported to the church office. (A LifeGroup may have more than one Deacon/Care Leader, and larger LifeGroups are encouraged to enlist more than one Care Leader.) On that same Sunday, the church will elect two or more persons to serve as Deacons At-Large to oversee care for those not connected to any LifeGroup.

B. Deacons At-large: For Deacons At-Large, members present in worship on the first Sunday of November will be presented with a ballot listing the names of those being nominated and the number of persons needed. In the weeks prior to this election, church members will be encouraged to volunteer to serve if elected, or to nominate others who are willing to serve. There will be three At-Large deacons, with one rotating off and one being added each year. (The first year, we will elect all three At-Large Deacons and stagger their terms of service.)

C. New LifeGroups: LifeGroups that form later, but are not in existence on the first Sunday of November, should select a Deacon/Care Leader for their group at the time the group is formed, and should report the names of those persons to the church office as soon as possible. When a group ceases to exist, the service of their Care Leader will also come to a close.

#### **(3) Vacancy:**

Should a LifeGroup find itself in need of a Deacon/Care Leader, or one of the Deacons At-Large find himself/herself unable to continue serving, a new Deacon/Care Leader should be selected by that LifeGroup or, for Deacons At-Large, a new person should be nominated and elected. That new Deacon At-Large will be considered to be starting a new term.

(4) Duties:

Deacons/Care Leaders are spiritual leaders within our church. In addition to their focus on the participants under their care, they are also examples of maturity and godly wisdom for the entire church. They should promote unity and peace, support the ministry and mission of the church, and encourage others in the church to live and work in harmony with one another.

The deacons will meet approximately monthly, and as needed, to coordinate the care of the congregation, to advance the work of the church, to pray and grow in ministry skills, and to attend to administrative tasks of the group.

The pastor and/or the chairman of the deacons may call the deacons into special session whenever the need arises.

Election of officers for the deacon ministry team shall be held at their January meeting at the beginning of the church year. A majority of the elected diaconate shall constitute a quorum.

(5) Qualification:

Deacons/Care Leaders must be saved and committed followers of Christ. They should also be people of spiritual maturity, commitment to the church and especially to the group over which they are providing care. The minimum qualifications for a diaconate member are set forth in Acts 6, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1.

(6) Other Duties:

A. Deacons are responsible to make recommendations regarding the awarding of academic scholarships under their purview annually.

B. Use of the church building and grounds by other than members or organizations of the church is to be approved by the diaconate.

(7) The year of deacon service is January 1st through December 31st.

(8) Deacon Emeritus:

Purpose and Qualifications: The role of Deacon Emeritus is an honorary role for those who have served for a total of ten years or more as a Deacon/Care Leader in our church. They must be 70 years or older. Deacon Emeritus will hold the title of Deacon Emeritus for the rest of his/her life, be invited to attend the functions of the Deacon Ministry Team, and will be a non-voting member of this group for life.

(9) Miscellaneous:

Members and participants who are no longer able to regularly attend, such as homebound members and those who are now permanent residents of a nursing home, should be assigned to a LifeGroup if they are not already members of one. That LifeGroup will take responsibility for staying in touch with and caring for that "away" member under the direction of the Deacon/Care Leader of that group.

**See next page for Implementation Plans:**

## **Plan for Implementing the LifeGroup-based Deacon ministry plan:**

### **Utilizing those currently serving as Deacons:**

1. Those currently serving as deacons will be encouraged to serve as the deacon in their current LifeGroup.
2. Deacons not planning serving in their LifeGroup are encouraged to submit their names for one of the At-Large Deacon positions.
3. Any current deacon not serving as his/her LifeGroup Deacon/Care Leader, and also not filling one of the Deacon At-Large positions is still encouraged to remain as an active deacon to serve out his or her term.

**No one will be removed from their role as an elected deacon in this transition.**

### **Date for Nomination and Enlistment:**

We are too far into the year for us to meet the “First Sunday of November” deadline this year. So we would move this year’s Enlistment/Election to the first Sunday of December.

[END]