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LEADERSHIP - SO WHAT IS A DEACON..... ?

The following notes are intended to will help you, as you reflect & pray, about who should serve, or, indeed, whether you should accept a nomination, for the position of Deacon.

1. DEFINITION

The term "deacon" is derived from the Greek word diakonos, which is usually translated "servant" or "minister" – it is only translated a few times as "deacon" (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 12), and, in these cases, is used to denote one holding a church office.

The word (as a noun), comes from a verb which means "to serve," originally in the sense of waiting on tables but came to be used to signify a broad range of types of service. In the New Testament, the noun is used to refer to ministers of the gospel (Colossians 1:23), ministers of Christ (1 Timothy 4:6), servants of God (2 Corinthians 6:4), those who follow Jesus (John 12:26), and other similar ways.

2. WHAT'S THE PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING A DEACON ?

The AGM is the time we elect our deacons, treasurer and secretary. All serve for a three-year period, maximum 3 consecutive 3-year terms before a person has an enforced break from the Diaconate.

- ❖ You need to be already a GHBC Church Member.
- ❖ You would need to be proposed and seconded by 2 other church members. All 3 must sign the form. The nominee must sign - confirming that there is no legal reason why they cannot stand for the role of deacon.
- ❖ Application forms available from the Church Secretary. Nominations to be submitted in writing to the Church Secretary by the deadline advised each year.
- ❖ Voting at the AGM is by secret ballot. Postal voting is permitted. 60% of the vote is required, for election to the role.

3. **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF A DEACON**

Lives based on the principles listed in Acts 6 AND 1 Timothy, 3 vv. 8 – 13.

The qualifications for a Deacon

- ❖ known for their walk with Jesus (Acts 6:3)
- ❖ full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3)
- ❖ full of wisdom (Acts 6:3)
- ❖ worthy of respect (1 Timothy 3:8)
- ❖ sincere – not taking or showing partiality (1 Timothy 3:8)
- ❖ honest - not looking to their own interests (1 Timothy 3:8)
- ❖ of sober habits (1 Timothy 3:8)
- ❖ spiritually strong and learned (1 Timothy 3:9)
- ❖ to be tested (1 Timothy 3:10)
- ❖ husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:12).
- ❖ an orderly household (1 Timothy 3:11 - 12).

4. **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

The law considers deacons to be “Managing Trustees”, responsible to the Church Members’ Meeting for the management and control of the church. The Charities Act of 2011 stipulates that A person cannot serve as a Charity Trustee if they;-

- ❖ Are under 18 years of age
- ❖ Have been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty, unless the conviction is spent:
- ❖ Are an undischarged bankrupt or insolvent
- ❖ Have been convicted of a serious offence involving children. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) must now vet all new appointments to the diaconate.
- ❖ Have previously been removed from Trusteeship of a Charity by the Court or the Charity Commissioners for misconduct or mismanagement
- ❖ Have been disqualified from being a Company Director
- ❖ Are unable to manage their own personal business affairs

Before any nomination for the diaconate can be made, the nominee must now sign a declaration that none of these items appertain.

5. **ESSENTIALS OF BEING PART OF GHBC DIACONATE / LEADERSHIP TEAM ?**

- ❖ **You are a follower of Christ:** 2 Cor 4 v 16 Being daily renewed in your spiritual life
- ❖ **You are a Servant:** Mark 10 vv 35-45 How good are you at doing things for which there is no thanks or recognition? How do you respond when the going gets tough ?
- ❖ **You are a Unifier:**Eph 4 vv 1-6 How are you helping to build up the unity of our fellowship?
- ❖ **You are a Leader:**Eph 4 vv 11-13.Its about enabling others to their gifts to the Glory of God
- ❖ **You are an Encourager:** 2 Cor 1 vv 3-4 Be a good encourager of others.
- ❖ **You are an Example:** 1 Cor 4v 16 Set a good example to others. What example do you set in worship, prayer & commitment etc

- ❖ **You are a Thinker:** Rom 12v2 Open to Gods ways....even promoting new ideas too....
- ❖ **You are a Trustee:** This role comes with Legal commitments / responsibilities
- ❖ **You are a Pray-er:** You need to commit to regular prayer for the church. Without prayer our fellowship will be going nowhere.
- ❖ **You are a Team player:** 1 Cor 12 -14 Work well together with other deacons, blending of gifts & giving support. Committed to each other as well as the whole church. Trust needs to grow.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DEACON

Deacons with the minister are to be responsible for

- ❖ The leadership of the GHBC – ie make decisions together, after prayer and consultation
- ❖ The fulfilment of GHBC purpose / mission statement
- ❖ The pastoral care of GHBC Members
- ❖ Day to day management and administration – ie ensure church life is well organised
- ❖ Financial integrity of the Church accounts.
- ❖ Ensuring compliance with Statutory Regulations (as Charity Trustee), Charity Commission Regulations and Licences.
- ❖ Health & Safety, including Food Hygiene.
- ❖ In Law – the Charity Trustees (are Deacons) responsible for church's decisions.

7. DUTIES OF A DEACON

- ❖ Attend all Deacon Meetings – normally one per month (minimum 11 times a year)
- ❖ Lead devotions – at a Deacons meeting when it's your turn.
- ❖ Perform the tasks of 'Duty Deacon' on Sundays when it's your turn. See separate schedule of what's involved and what is expected of you.
- ❖ Serve communion and find someone else to assist – when it's your turn.
- ❖ Lead Pastoral Prayers (at communion) when it's your turn.
- ❖ As discussed with Minister and fellow deacons – be prepared to 'oversee' a specific area of Ministry within GHBC. This may mean preparing and giving reports at Deacons & Members Meetings.
- ❖ Be prepared to give up time to attend the Deacons Away Day (Normally a Saturday) and the Deacons Weekend Away (Friday to Sunday).
- ❖ Always be ready to deal with the unexpected !

8. IN PRACTICE : Charity Trustees (ie deacons) should at all times act:-

- ❖ With integrity
- ❖ In the best interests of the church
- ❖ Without regard to their personal interests

9. **FINAL COMMENTS**

In some churches, the position of Deacon is mainly an administrative or practical function. Happily, this is not the case at Gorse Hill. The diaconate certainly fulfils that function but its role also encompasses that of the spiritual oversight of the church. This arrangement avoids the (often artificial) division between "practical" and "spiritual" matters and creates one body to work alongside the minister in the leadership of the church.

The position of Deacon is a calling from GOD, not just a job to do in the Local Church. It's that important, to know for such a task as this, you believe you are chosen by GOD, not just by fellow believers, to serve in this way.