



What is a deacon?

Basis for the role of deacons. The precedent for the position of deacon is from Acts 6:1-6:

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." -NRSV

Description of the office of deacon. The word *deacon* comes from the Greek word that the Bible uses for *servant*. In the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, deacons are church members who commit their time and energy to serve as lay ministers within the organized local church government and operate under the supervision and authority of the session. Each deacon is assigned a group of church members, or parish. The Executive Board of Deacons conducts bimonthly meetings, which deacon ministry leaders and deacons must attend.

The Book of Order states, "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 anyone in distress." This includes the grieving, the homebound, and the homeless within a parish.

Qualifications for the character of deacons. When considering people for deacon ministry, Geneva will choose "Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment," as the Book of Order advises. Along with the characteristics described in 1 Timothy, the personal habits of deacons will include disciplines of prayer and Bible study. If asked, please prayerfully consider becoming a deacon at Geneva.

Summary of the responsibilities of deacons. Among other things, deacons:

- serve for a term of three years
- contact their parishioners regularly, more frequently as need arises
- visit their homebound members monthly
- respond on behalf of Geneva to life-threatening emergencies in their parish and contact the senior pastor immediately
- inform pastoral staff of hospitalizations, bereavement, and other special needs
- identify people whose needs may require extra attention; e.g., the severely ill, parishioners who are greater than 90 years old
- visit their sick members when they are hospitalized
- disburse monies from the deacon's fund to specific persons in need of food or shelter, etc., as directed
- send cards to their parish members on birthdays and special occasions
- review Geneva's weekly prayer list and pray especially for those in their parish
- only with permission, share needs or prayer requests with Geneva's board of deacons and/or prayer warriors
- connect parishioners with other ministries as needed
- submit a record of contacts and visits each month, and
- prepare and/or help serve the elements during communion services and to the homebound twice per year.

If you are interested in becoming a deacon, please contact the church at caring@genevapres.org or call the church office at 949-837-2323.