

Section 2. Biblical Qualifications

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Acts 6:1-6: Although scholars disagree whether Acts 6:1-6 is the forerunner of the “office” of deacon, we can clearly see that Acts 6 is important in setting men apart for service in the church. Therefore, we conclude that these qualifications are also important for a man Central Baptist Church sets apart for service. These qualifications as seen in Acts 6:3 are:

- 1) **Good Repute...** The body of believers must recognize these men as men who are reliable witnesses. The congregation has witnessed that these men have a good reputation and are witnesses for the Lord.
- 2) **Full of the Holy Spirit...** There is an evidence that God has “blown upon his life.” There is a radical difference from the world. It is evident that this man is Spirit-filled. Galatians 5:22-23 tells of the fruit of the Spirit which must be evident in the life of one set apart in Christ’s Church.
- 3) **And of Wisdom...** The Greek word means full of wisdom and intelligence. He should be one that people look to for answers. His counsel is trusted by his peers.

1 Timothy 3:8-12: Outlines nine qualifications important in the calling of a deacon:

- 1) **Dignified (v. 8):** This term normally refers to something that is honorable, respectable, esteemed, or worthy. This word can also be translated “revered.” This is a man who is serious about the Word of God and people respect him because of his proven love for God and His Word.
- 2) **Not Double-Tongued (v. 8):** Those who are double-tongued say one thing to one person but then say something else to someone else. Or they may say one thing but are not authentic in their statements. They don’t believe what they say. In other words, they are two-faced and insincere. Their words cannot be trusted, so they lack credibility. A deacon is one whose words are trusted by the church. His yes is his yes and his no is his no.
- 3) **Not Addicted to Much Wine (v. 8):** A man is disqualified for the office of deacon if he is addicted to wine or other strong drink (or addicted to any mind-altering medications). Such a person lacks self-control and is undisciplined. Therefore, the Bible does not directly prohibit deacons from drinking in moderation. However, because in this culture, drinking alcohol can cause someone to stumble in his or her faith and in light of the teaching found in 1 Corinthians 8:13 and Romans 14:21, deacons of Central Baptist Church should abstain from alcoholic beverages in that such could affect their witness.
- 4) **Not Greedy for Dishonest Gain (v. 8):** If a person is a lover of money, he is not qualified to be a deacon. Thus, if a person’s business practice is known to be “shady” and this person is known to “cut corners” so that he may make a lot of money, this person does not have the reputation or the godly focus needed to be a deacon. Furthermore, greed can be seen in what one does with the possessions in which God entrusts him. A man who is stingy in giving to God does not qualify as a spiritual leader (see Malachi 3:8). A deacon must be a consistent, generous giver of his resources through the local congregation in which he has been called to serve. A deacon must be obedient to tithe as all believers are commanded to do.

- 5) Hold the Mystery of the Faith with a Clear Conscience (v. 9):** The phrase “the mystery of the faith” is simply one way Paul speaks of the revealed truth found in the Gospel. Thus, deacons must not waver from the truth that Jesus is God’s only Son who died for the sins of the world, was buried, raised on the third day (see 1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Specifically, a deacon must hold firm to the true Gospel without wavering. Yet this qualification does not merely involve his belief, for a deacon must also hold these beliefs “with a clear conscience.” That is, the behavior of a deacon must be consistent with his beliefs.
- 6) Be Tested First...Blameless (v. 10):** Paul writes that deacons must “be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless” (v. 10). “Blameless” is a general term referring to a person’s overall character. This “testing” probably does not reference a specific testing. Instead, it more likely is a careful examination of the deacon’s conduct and commitment to sound teaching. Moreover, the congregation should not only examine a potential deacon’s moral, spiritual, and doctrinal maturity, but should also consider the individual’s track record of service in the church. 1 Timothy 5:22 reminds us, “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands.” Therefore, a deacon of Central Baptist Church should be a man who has verified to the congregation through his life that he is a man of character and that he holds true to the teachings of Christ.
- 7) Godly Wife (v. 11):** According to Paul, deacons’ wives must “be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things” (v. 11). Like her husband, the wife must be dignified or respectable. Secondly, she must not be a slanderer or a person who goes around spreading gossip. A deacon’s wife must also be sober-minded or temperate. That is, she must be able to make good judgments and must not be involved in things that might hinder such judgment. Finally, she must be “faithful in all things” (cf. 1 Tim. 5:10). If a man is to serve as a deacon, his wife must be godly and must not be a gossip.
- 8) Husband Of But One Wife (v. 12):** Literally, a deacon is to be a “one-woman man.” In other words, the Bible says he is to be faithful to his wife. That is, there must be no other woman in his life to whom he relates in an intimate way either emotionally or physically. This verse is not intended to limit the office of deacon to married men. Otherwise, Jesus, Paul, Timothy and so forth would not qualify to be a deacon. Instead, if a man is married, he must be faithful to her. Moreover, this verse also does not necessarily disqualify a man whose life has been touched by divorce. Instead, the whole counsel of God must be consulted when dealing with a man (or his wife) who has endured the tragedy of divorce. A case-by-case analysis must be presented to determine if there was a biblical justification for the divorce. Primarily, this verse teaches that the congregation observes by reputation and action that the deacon is faithful to his spouse. A man who has a reputation of sexual infidelity does not qualify to be a deacon.
- 9) Manage His Children and Household Well (v. 12):** Again, this verse does not teach that to be a deacon you must have children. Instead, it further underscores the importance for a deacon to be the spiritual leader of his wife and children. A deacon should be a good father and provider for his family.