

# Calvary Baptist Church of Santa Barbara

## The Ministry of the Diaconate

### The Biblical Function and Responsibilities of Deacons and Deaconesses

The New Testament words which refer to a *deacon* simply mean “servant” and “service.” *The role of a deacon is one of serving.* The first picture we see of deacons in the New Testament was probably those men chosen by the church in Acts 6 for the purpose of caring for the widows. There are two principles in this passage that help us understand the duties of deacons:

1. The first is that it was very important for the church to look after the needy in the congregation. The church had a responsibility to look after the widows; however, the widows were being neglected, and something had to be done about it.
2. The second principle is that those who were the spiritual leaders of the church were not to sacrifice the time they spent in the ministry of the Word and of prayer, even for such an important responsibility as caring for the widows. Therefore, the church chose seven men to fulfill this role so as not to hinder the spiritual leaders from their responsibilities.

Deacons and deaconesses (the diaconate), therefore, serve in such a way that the elders can devote their time to the oversight of the church, to the ministry of the Word, and to prayer.

- The primary role of the diaconate is to assist the elders in works of ministry so that the elders can devote their time to the oversight and shepherding of the church (Acts 6:1-6).
- Deacons and deaconesses shall assist the elders in the shepherding of the congregation. Each deacon and deaconess shall be assigned to a shepherding team led by an elder. As a member of that shepherding team, they shall assist the elder in the oversight of a specific shepherding group. Shepherding groups are segments of the congregation that consist of individuals and families, members and attenders of CBCSB. The deacon or deaconess shall assist with visitation and care, coordination of assistance for physical needs, regular prayer for shepherd group members, visitor follow-up, as well as other tasks delegated by the elder.
- They shall also aid the elders as called upon in the administration of church body needs, such as administration of the Lord’s Supper, baptism, worship services, prayer meetings, ministries of outreach, mentoring and discipleship, or serving on various commissions, committees, or ministry teams.
- The deacon and deaconess will have regular contact with the elder of his/her shepherding group. They shall meet as a shepherding team on a monthly basis or as needed. The deacon and deaconess will meet with the Council of Elders on a quarterly basis for communication, evaluation of needs, and oversight.