**Two Offices**

**PASTOR | DEACON**

**INTRODUCTION:**

There are only two scriptural offices within every Baptist church: pastor and deacon. This is clearly seen in Paul’s address in *Philippians 1:1*. Baptist churches are distinguished from many of the Christian denominations and organizations, which have a hierarchy of religious positions and ranks. Church leadership is the key ingredient to order.

1. **THE PASTOR**
   1. **His designations**
      1. Titles are important. A pastor is not a priest; he is not a pope; he is not a “father”; he is not a vicar; he is not a “reverend.” *Matthew 23:9, Psalm 111:9*
      2. The word “pastor” means shepherd. A Baptist church is sometimes referred to as the Lord’s flock (*Luke 12:32*). Pastors are the shepherds of the flock. *Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:2-3*
   2. **Three harmonious terms: pastor, elder, bishop** 
      1. These are not three separate offices. They are not three distinct ranks within the one office. They speak to the different aspects and functions of the same office:
         1. The word “pastor” relates to the duty of the office.
         2. The term “elder” refers to the dignity of the office.
         3. The title “bishop” speaks to the design or function of the office.
      2. Proof of their interchangeability
         1. “Shepherd” and “Bishop” are used together (of Jesus Christ). *I Peter 2:25*
         2. The “elders” addressed in *I Peter 5:1* were instructed to perform both the duties of a shepherd and the function of a bishop.
         3. In *Acts 20:17*, we read that Paul called for the “elders” of the church at Ephesus, then reminded them they had been made “overseers” (bishops).
         4. Paul instructed Titus to ordain “elders” and, in the same context, gave him some of the qualifications of a “bishop.” *Titus 1:5-7*
      3. Baptists today generally prefer and use the title “pastor.” The words “bishop” (in particular) and “elder” (in some cases) have been so widely misused by other religious organizations that they tend to create misconceptions and confusion in the minds of people. However, the use of any of these words is scriptural and therefore quite acceptable.
   3. **His purpose**
      1. The pastor is God’s caretaker (or overseer) of the church. The Lord is the Chief Pastor. *I Peter 2:25, 5:4*
      2. The pastor is the “undershepherd.” Pastors are given to the churches as a gift to bring the members into spiritual maturity. *Ephesians 4:12*
         1. “*Perfection of the saints”* – making them complete
         2. *“The work of the ministry”* – preparing them for the ministry
         3. “*The edifying of the body of Christ”* – spiritually building them up
      3. God calls men into the ministry, the church itself ordains them, and the Holy Spirit sets them into position. *Acts 13:1-4*
   4. **His qualifications**

There are 22 qualifications required of a man who would be a pastor. *I Timothy 3:1-7; II Timothy 2:24; Titus 1:6-9*

* + 1. He must be blameless, a husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, a man of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach.
    2. He must not be given to wine, not a striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, patient, not a brawler, not covetous.
    3. He must rule his own house well, not be a novice, have a good report, and not be self-willed.
    4. He must be a lover of good men, just, holy, temperate, and sound in doctrine.
  1. **His duties**
     1. Lead – The exercise of an elder. This is to rule with authority.
        1. The God-given authority to rule is very clear. It is inherent in a pastor’s qualifications. *I Timothy 3:4-5*
        2. The authority is delegated; it is not absolute authority. A pastor is to rule by example, not fiat (commandments or arbitrary order). *I Peter 5:3*
        3. A pastor is responsible for matters such as:
           1. Giving clear direction in the church’s internal affairs. *Acts 1:15-16, 6:2-3*
           2. Giving clear direction to the church’s external activities. *I Corinthians 14:8*
     2. Feed – The exercise of a shepherd/pastor.
        1. The pastor is commanded to teach/feed. *Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-2*
        2. The expectation of teachers/pastors:
           1. Give himself to the ministry of the Word – *Acts 6:4*
           2. Feed the church – *Acts 20:28*
           3. Hold fast the faithful Words – *Titus 1:9*
           4. Preach the Word – *II Timothy 4:2*
           5. Labor in the Word of God – *I Timothy 5:17*
           6. Study the Word of God – *II Timothy 2:15*
           7. Speak the Word of God – *Hebrews 13:7*
           8. Live the Word of God – *Titus 2:7*
           9. Apply the Word of God – *I Thessalonians 5:12*
     3. Heed – the exercise of a bishop.
        1. Take heed of himself – *Acts 20:28*
        2. Take heed of the whole church – *Acts 20:28*
        3. Watch for religious wolves – *Acts 20:29*
        4. Watch for the souls of the people – *Hebrews 13:17*
        5. Pray for and visit the sick – *James 5:14*
  2. **A church’s responsibility to its pastor** 
     1. To submit to his leadership; obey his God-given authority – *Hebrews 13:17, I Corinthians 16:16*
     2. To pray for him – *Hebrews 13:7; Romans 15:30-32*
     3. To provide for his needs – *I Corinthians 9:13-14; I Timothy 5:17-18*
     4. To honor and respect him – *I Thessalonians 5:13*

1. **THE DEACON**
   1. **The meaning of the word** 
      1. The word deacon is found only five times in the Bible. It is from a Greek word which means a “servant,” a “waiter,” or an “attendant.” It conveys the idea of “raising dust by hastening” as in being busy in service. That this is also the Biblical meaning as seen in *Acts 6:2-3*.
      2. A deacon is not a ruler, but a servant of the church. Any deacon or “board of deacons” that “runs” the church—relegating the pastor to a role of preaching and visiting—is blatantly unscriptural.
   2. **The qualifications of the deacon** 
      1. For the deacon:
         1. He must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, and not greedy of filthy lucre (money). *I Timothy 3:8*
         2. He must hold the faith in pure conscience, be a proven man, blameless, the husband of one wife, and rule his family and household well. *I Timothy 3:10-12*
         3. He must have an honest report, be spirit-filled, and be filled with wisdom. *Acts 6:3*
      2. For the wife of a deacon:
         1. She must be grave, not a slanderer, and sober. *I Timothy 3:11, 7:1*
         2. She must be faithful in all things. *I Timothy 3:11*
   3. **The election of deacons** – *Acts 6:1-7*
      1. Deacons are elected when necessary and when called for by the Pastor.
      2. Deacons are to be elected with consideration of qualification.
      3. Deacons are to be elected from within the church membership by the church.
      4. Deacons are to be under the direction of the pastor.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Baptist distinctive of only two offices in the church is very important for the church to carry out its commission. Leadership is key and scriptural leadership is through the pastor. The deacons assist the pastor by serving the church.