

Ordainment Service for Deacons of Tomlinson Run Church of Christ January 1, 2012 - By Paul R. Blake

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

A. We are assembled together this morning as the Tomlinson Run Church of Christ for worship of God, communion with the Lord, and edification of one another. We also purpose in our assembly at this time to appoint Heath Baker, Steve Gorby, and Jeff Rhodes as deacons of this congregation to serve in conjunction with Paul B. Blake, David Dulaney, Sr., Joseph Kendrick, Kenneth Fleeman, and Adam Berdine. Before proceeding with the solemn, authorized work of this church, let us ask the Father's blessings upon us all in a prayer led by Joe Blake. We will follow this with a reading of the two deacon texts from the New Testament by Ron Hennen.

B. Prayer by Joe Blake, elder

C. Reading of Deacon Texts by Ron Hennen, elder

1. Acts 6:1-6; 1Tim. 3:8-13

II. OVERVIEW OF QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF DEACONS

A. You Have Chosen These Men To Serve As Your Deacons.

1. You have named these men.
 - a. You heard the preaching of truth on Deacons.
 - b. You looked out among you and named three men to this task.
 - c. You considered their qualifications for three weeks to make the objections you believed were necessary.
 - 1) Your letters of recommendation will become part of the permanent records of this congregation.
 - d. 23 of you named 9 men
 - 1) 3 men considered themselves unqualified
 - 2) 3 men removed their names to continue growing
 - 3) 3 accepted consideration for this office
2. You have considered these men.
 - a. You applied yourselves to prayer and thought for two weeks.
 - b. You made zero objections to either of these men presented to the congregation on December 11-28, 2011.
3. Therefore, you have accepted these men.
4. All that remains is to appoint them to office.

B. You Must Now Recognize Them as Laborers Among You

1. Before today, objections were requested and welcomed as a vital part of this good work. After today, objections will be viewed as murmuring.
 - a. Unless a deacon fails to do his appointed work or becomes immoral or otherwise unqualified, complaints against him and his work are sinful.
 - b. If any has a difficulty with a deacon, scriptural procedure must be followed every time and in every case.
 - c. Matt. 18:15-17 - "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with

you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”
d. Deacons work under the oversight of elders, and the elders here will be vigilant and loving in their oversight of these men as they begin their new work.

2. None of the newly appointed deacons will have the experience of those who have served for some time now. But as they are scripturally qualified to serve, we can have every confidence in their ability to work.
 - a. Each brings to this work his own strengths and limitations. Each will labor to his utmost to faithfully discharge his office. You must work hard to make this transition peaceful and spiritually healthy.

C. Qualifications:

Known for his honesty

1. Has a high regard for civil law. Does what is moral in business. He is known to be fair in trade and forthcoming in his debts

Full of the Holy Ghost

1. A deacon must be a student of the Bible, having more than just a working knowledge of it.

Wisdom

1. Going to have to make judgment calls in his duties.
2. Must not be naive, partial, or short-tempered. Able to hold his tongue in adversity and to wait patiently until a beneficial solution presents itself.

Grave - Serious and dignified

1. Not a flippant, careless joker, nor a moody, pouting brooder. He is adult and serious, but not negative and sad. He is respected

Not double-tongued

1. Not talking two ways to suit the company he is with. He must have the confidence of the elders and the ability to be discreet. Does not speak softly to those over him and harshly to those under him.

Not given to much wine

1. A Deacon must guard his influence. He cares about what others think and expect; he does not live for himself alone. He surrenders his comfort and appetites for his service. The use of liquor is incompatible with the Christian character.

Not greedy of filthy lucre

1. Must not have an occupation that will harm others or exert bad influence. Needs to be known as generous and hospitable before he practices generosity in the office of deacon.

Not a holder of false doctrines

1. He is not a “yes” man, nor hobbyist, nor errorist. He is known for his personal study habits and willingness to communicate the truth with others. He may hold various scruples of conscience, but he refuses to equate them with revealed doctrine.

Not a novice

1. New converts and Christians who are unlearned and unstudied in the scriptures are not suitable to be given responsibility, and they are vulnerabilities and liabilities to the office.

Blameless

1. One does not become blameless; he is found to be blameless. He is recognized as a true servant and trustworthy leader.

Husband of one wife

1. He is loyal and devoted to one woman, his wife. He has no sexual interest in any other woman. He must be a devout Christian in his home before he can be a deacon in the church.

Ruling children and his own house well

1. Shows the ability to care for the needs of the church by caring for the needs of his family. Children who are known for unruliness or a wife that has a reputation for being outspoken reduce the influence of a man who would serve as a deacon.

D. Duties:

First assigned to look after the poor and distribute the contributions of the church among them fairly. *Acts 6:1-4*

Deacons were teachers.

1. Stephen and Philip of Jerusalem - *Acts 6*
2. Epaphroditus of *Philippians 2* was believed to be a deacon.
3. One would be a great asset to the church if he could teach.

Too often we think that all a deacon has to do is count the money and handle the physical work in the local church.

1. In his capacity as a teacher, he can take some of the burden from the preacher by teaching new converts classes.
2. He can teach wayward Christians about faithfulness.
3. He can conduct Bible classes in the homes of shut-ins.
4. Help with Gospel meeting preparation.
5. Be alert to the physical and financial needs of widows and shut-ins.
6. He can go out and teach and preach where needed if he has ability.

IV. APPOINTMENT OF HEATH BAKER, STEVE GORBY, AND JEFF RHODES BY PAUL R. BLAKE

A. HEATH BAKER

Brother Baker has been a member of this congregation from his youth. In that time, it has been quite evident that he is conscientious, dedicated, and sincere. His manner of life has been known as honorable to all here. He is a serious minded student of the Word, a talented preacher and teacher, and is kind and brotherly in his relationships with other Christians. It was no surprise to anyone here that Heath was named frequently by the saints, and that no objection was raised against him.

Brother Heath Baker, would you please stand before this assembled body of Christians? Will you serve this local church as a deacon, faithfully discharging all scriptural duties in a godly manner?

Having met the New Testament qualifications of a servant of Christ and his church, and having indicated your desire to do this work, by the authority of the word of God and as an evangelist of Jesus Christ, I now appoint you as a deacon of the Tomlinson Run Church of Christ to serve in that office until such time as you are no longer able or until you cease to be qualified. God protect and bless you in this work.

To the congregation: Please give your recognition, acceptance, and the right hand of fellowship to this man at the close of services this day, and give him your support for the term of his office.

B. STEVE GORBY

I have known brother Gorby for most of my life and find him to be a man of calm and humble spirit, pleasant nature, and steadfast will. He is to Tomlinson Run what Epaphroditus was to Philippi; because he is so humble, he is the kind of person who will not be noticed, but his work and fruit will be.

Brother Steve Gorby, would you please stand before this assembled body of Christians? Will you serve this local church as a deacon, faithfully discharging all scriptural duties in a godly manner?

Having met the New Testament qualifications of a servant of Christ and his church, and having indicated your desire to do this work, by the authority of the word of God and as an evangelist of Jesus Christ, I now appoint you as a deacon of the Tomlinson Run Church of Christ to serve in that office until such time as you are no longer able or until you cease to be qualified. God protect and bless you in this work.

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C. JEFF RHODES

Since coming to TR, brother Rhodes has exemplified the definition of deacon in the original text, that is: "one who raises dust by hastening." Jeff has been willing to accommodate any request made of him and to do so with an eager, pleasant attitude. And whatever task he puts his hand to is done well, whether teaching a Bible class or servicing our ancient cooling system. This spirit will serve him well in his new work as a deacon in the Lord's Church.

Brother Jeff Rhodes, would you please stand before this assembled body of Christians? Will you serve this local church as a deacon, faithfully discharging all scriptural duties in a godly manner?

Having met the New Testament qualifications of a servant of Christ and his church, and having indicated your desire to do this work, by the authority of the word of God and as an evangelist of Jesus Christ, I now appoint you as a deacon of the Tomlinson Run Church of Christ to serve in that office until such time as you are no longer able or until you cease to be qualified. God protect and bless you in this work.

To the congregation: Please give your recognition, acceptance, and the right hand of fellowship to this man at the close of services this day, and give him your support for the term of his office.

D. To The Wives And Children Of The Men Ordained This Day As Deacons

You have a larger duty as the family of the deacons than do the other members. To you is given the task of helping to maintain the credibility of the deacons by conducting your lives in a manner that will not harm the influence of your husband or father. You are faithful Christians who meet the qualifications of the families of deacons, so you should already be accustomed to being looked to for an example. Be doubly aware of the cost of your decisions to engage or forbear any activity. Your consistent, moral behavior will increase the confidence this congregation has in your husband or father. Unrighteous conduct will undermine what he has worked his whole life to become... a servant of your Savior. God's richest blessings on you as you support their work.

Wives: Kerry Baker, Beth Ann Gorby, and Cathy Rhodes

Children: Isabella and Mia Baker, Tanner, Hunter and Cassie Gorby, Zach, Tia, and Lexi Rhodes.

V. GRATEFUL THANKS

A. To the congregation of God's Children here at Tomlinson Run.

1. For being at peace, for being Christ-like, for cooperating and working together at every step along the way.
2. For continually lifting up prayers to the Father for this good work, and for the many kind words of encouragement spoken along the way.
3. To the 23 members who submitted names of men they believed capable of doing this work of the Lord.
4. To the 6 men named who removed their names from consideration. It is hard to say no to others who have confidence in you, but I acknowledge before this body that you did so because you care about this church.
5. My personal thanks to the other elders for their counsel and to Gary for assisting in this work.

B. Prayer by Gary Berdine, elder