

PASTOR/ CHURCH COUNCIL RELATIONSHIPS

**(God's Way of Maintaining Harmony in Local Church Leadership)
Acts 6:1-8 / I Timothy 3:1-13**



“UNITED WE STAND”

- ◆ Pastor And Deacon Defined (Why we exist)
- ◆ Pastor And Deacon Responsibilities (What we do)
- ◆ Pastor And Deacon Harmony (How we relate)

“I will give you pastors according to My heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jeremiah 3:15)

“Those who serve well as deacons gain a good respect for themselves and also a great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”
(I Timothy 3:13)

Bill Kirk

INTRODUCTION

I still remember the day when my grandfather suffered a stroke. He was pastoring the Pentecostal church in Hamilton, Virginia and it was a hot summer day. Two board members of the church were in “discussion” over whose turn it was to mow the church lawn. To keep peace, my elderly grandfather (their pastor) volunteered to mow the law. Following mowing with a push mower, he had a stroke and his ministry was over. He never once complained or placed blame for what occurred!

Could it have been avoided? God only knows! But one thing we do know, it is never God’s will to be in strife, contention or division. It is always God’s will that the pastor and church board work (and walk) in **harmony** and in **unity**. It is always God’s will for the pastor and board to **serve in one accord**. (Psalm 133)

And yes, you can disagree and express your conviction without being contentious. You can differ in opinions without being labeled as disloyal or a traitor. You can disagree without becoming disagreeable or angry. You can be a “team player” while remaining an individual on a united team marching forward for God.

Why address this subject?

(Because of two tragedies that are taking place and causing conflict)

1. Pastors that are too insecure to allow their board to get close enough to give counsel and share the work load are suffering the following consequences.
 - Burnout from trying to “do it all” as pastor.
 - Dictatorial leadership and an “I’m the boss” mentality.
 - Jealousy when others are honored before them.
 - Whispering to get others “on their side” when conflict arises.
 - Strife, tension, disunity and a breakdown in harmonious relationships.
2. Board Members who are insecure, defensive and too afraid to allow their pastor to exercise his God given leadership are experiencing the following:
 - Feeling it is their “calling” to somehow protect the people from their pastor.
 - Acting as “owners” and “bosses” over the pastor and congregation.
 - Usurping authority that God never delegated to them.
 - Failure to hold up their pastor’s hands as Aaron and Hur did for Moses. (Exodus 17:12)

The two tragedies in plain vanilla:

1. When the pastor refuses to humble himself and receive counsel, help, advice and instruction (which is born or rooted in pride and self-preoccupation).
 - The result or fruit is insecurity that expresses itself in having to always be right and always have its own way.
2. When the board member refuses to relinquish power and uses authority God never gave to him.
 - The result, or fruit, is a withdrawing from the leader and failure to support the pastor of the flock.

Let’s pray it together: “Oh God, help me be a biblical (spiritual) leader under you and die to having to have it “**my way**” so that you can have it “**your way**”.

PASTOR AND CHURCH BOARD HARMONY

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell **in unity.**” (Psalm 133:1)

“And the servant of the Lord **must not strive**, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.”
(II Timothy 2:24)

Fact: Harmony and unity between the pastor and church board is **contagious!**

Fact: This harmony will flow over to the entire congregation. People will sense the spirit of “**one accord**”.

Fact: A spirit of strife, contention and disunity will, on the other hand, defile and destroy the family of God, and **hinder God’s witness.**

It Is Okay

“Differences of opinion will occur. Wise leaders welcome other viewpoints. Strong convictions are worthwhile. Good leaders don’t want rubber stamp people working with them. When differences arise, neither should assume the “I am right, you are wrong” attitude. All parties involved must bear in mind that internal dissention is far more serious for the church than any attack from without.”

(G. Raymond Carlson, Pg 484 in “And He Gave Pastors”)

It’s That Important

“The entire church will feel the positive effects of a strong and trusting relationship between the pastor and the board. The harmony that exists in this relationship will soon be copied by the membership of the church.” (Richard L. Dresselhaus, Pg 41, in “The Deacon And His Ministry”)

Jesus Did It

“As Jesus did with his disciples, the wise pastor will spend time cultivating strong healthy relationships with board members.” (Charles T. Crabtree, Pg 82 in “The Contemporary Pastor”)

Let’s Ask Ourselves:

- ◆ What is it that causes tension between a pastor and church board members?
- ◆ What is it that fosters friction and misunderstanding?
- ◆ How can division in leadership be subdued?
- ◆ How can we protect ourselves from a spirit of unrest?
- ◆ How can our conflicts be our stepping stones instead of our tombstones?
- ◆ If conflicts at times are inescapable (and they are) how can we use them as opportunities to grow?
- ◆ What qualities will build cooperation between the pastor and board and bless the church (and the Lord) they serve?

We Can Get Along!

- ◆ Because no two personalities (people) are exactly alike, **we must be flexible** in serving God together.
- ◆ Because resentments will destroy us from within and angry outbursts will destroy us from without, we must strive at all times to maintain **good relationships with one another.**

**Basis Christian Principles That Produce Harmony
(And help church leaders get along with one another)**

1. We must treat each other with **mutual respect** at all times.
2. We must place the welfare of “**His church**” above any personal considerations.
3. We must seek to always bring about the **unity of the Spirit** rather than to foster division.
4. We must never engage in **intimidation** or **manipulation**. When decisions are made by the board, we must abide by them and not promote an adverse position, regardless of how we personally voted.
5. We must keep confidences entrusted to us and **ever be on guard** of the chit-chat gossip trap.
6. We must stay **teachable** and **open** to wise counsel, avoiding tunnel vision and seeing things from only “my” perspective.
7. We must never strike the second blow, **because no provocation ever justifies an unchristian response**.
8. We must not allow frustration to dictate our actions, but exercise **patience and self-control** at all times.
9. We must refuse to harbor a **grudge** or **ill-will** and never allow an unforgiving spirit to develop. If we do, it will bankrupt us spiritually.
10. We must **resist every temptation to whisper and slander** which is satan’s tool to discredit spiritual leadership and separate friendships.
11. We must motivate one another through affirmation and encouragement. The best way to compliment someone is “frequently”. Remember, **encouragement is oxygen to the soul**.
12. We must maintain a **good attitude** no matter what, and accept full responsibility for what is going on within our hearts.

Never Forget It:

- ◆ God chooses what we go through; we choose how we go through it!
- ◆ Differences of opinions are okay, but attitudes are not okay!
- ◆ It is not our position that gives us influence, but our disposition!
- ◆ A bad attitude makes a person a prisoner of their own experience!
- ◆ Unforgiveness is the poison we drink while we wait for the other person to die!
- ◆ Our offenses will either be a **tombstone** or a **stepping stone**; our choice makes the determination.

Gifts From God

Fact: “Deacons and Trustees are gifts from God to serve the church, chosen by the membership to carry out the ministry of the church and conduct its necessary business.

Fact: They are not a legislative body, but are chosen to carry out the will of the entire church body.

Fact: “Genuine spiritual leaders in the local church will experience and enjoy a harmonious relationship between the pastor and the church board.” (Joseph Flower, Pg 2 of “The Relationship Between The Pastor And The Church Board”)

WHAT IS A DEACON (or) DEACONESS?

- ◆ The word “deacon” comes from the Greek word (DIAKONOS) which means “**to serve**”.
- ◆ When deacons were chosen in Acts 6:1-8, their function was clearly given:
“It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and **serve** (DIAKONEO) tables” (v. 2)
- ◆ When the deaconesses were chosen, their function was also clearly given”
“I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister, which is a **servant** (DIAKONON) of the church which is at Cenchrea.” (Romans 16:1)

Fact: In John 2:5, DIAKONOS is translated “**servants**”

Fact: In Matthew 20:26, DIAKONOS is translated “**minister**”

Fact: In Luke 10:40, DIAKONOS is translated “**serve**”

In Other Words

- ◆ The deacon and deaconess were chosen to serve the local church body in whatever capacity the circumstances dictated.
- ◆ The original meaning of the word “deacon” is “**attendant, assistant, helper**”.

A Beautiful Illustration of God’s Wisdom

(In the Jerusalem Church in Acts 6:1-8)

1. A need arose and the Lord gave the method to solve the tension in the early church. (v. 1)
2. The apostles established their priorities in the Word. (v. 2)
3. Deacons were chosen by the church from among their own number. (v. 3)
4. The choices were made based on stated qualifications (honest report, full of the Spirit, full of wisdom). (v. 3)
5. The results were pleasing to all that were gathered. (v. 5)
6. There was a dedication service as the Jerusalem church, “Set (the newly selected deacons) before the apostles, laid hands upon them and prayed.” (v. 6)
7. The church was free to grow God’s way. (v. 7)
“And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly.” (Acts 6:7)

In Other Words

- ◆ The Lord ordained it that deacons and deaconesses were chosen to “wait on tables” to free the apostles hands to carry out their ministry; without distraction from prayer and the Word.
- ◆ While the pastor was called to oversee (**supervise**) the Lord’s work (I Peter 5:1-3), the deacon was called to **serve** that same work. (Acts 6:1-8)

It Is An Awesome Privilege From God

“The pastor is God’s man serving the church as overseer and shepherd for Christ’s sake. (Acts 20:28)
The deacons are his helpers, caring for temporal affairs, **releasing him to devote the bulk of his time to spiritual activities**: (G. Raymond Carlson in “And He Gave Pastors”, Pg. 483) The deacons also share with the pastor in the spiritual oversight of the church.

“Deacons are **God’s gift to ministers** so the latter may give themselves more fully to the ministry; they are **God’s gift to the congregation** for their service will help the church to benefit from the ministry of an unencumbered minister.” (G. Raymond Carlson in “And He Gave Pastors”, Pg 481)

Why The Deacons?

1. The deacon was appointed to serve the church in any area of need that might arise.
2. The deacon was called to a supportive role in the spiritual ministry of the church.
3. The effectiveness of the deacon’s service was determined by the measure of his commitment and faithfulness.
4. “The deacon was expected to serve the church by the example of his character as well as by his deeds.” (Richard L. Dresselhaus in “The Deacon and His Ministry”, Pg 13)

Deacon and Deaconess – The Pastor Needs Your Support Exodus 17:8-16

- ◆ In v. 8, Amalek came to fight against Israel in Rephidim.
- ◆ In v. 9, Moses gave battle instructions to Joshua.
- ◆ In v. 10, Moses, Aaron and Hur (a team) went to the hilltop.
- ◆ In v. 11, when Moses hands were up (in prayer) Israel prevailed.
- ◆ In v. 12, Aaron and Hur hold up Moses’ weary hands in battle.
- ◆ In v. 13, the battle was won by God through a unified team.

In Other Words

- ◆ Deacon and deaconesses are not to direct the activities of the pastor, but are to join him side by side, in support to see God bring great victories in “His” church and,
- ◆ Deacons and deaconesses have the responsibility and honor to serve under God with their leaders in a way that will benefit the entire church body and build God’s Kingdom.

The Deacon’s Two Encouragements:

“For they that have used the office of deacon will purchase to themselves a **good degree**, and **great boldness in the faith** which is in Christ Jesus.” (I Timothy 3:13)

God Gives Two Promises To Faithful Deacons and Deaconesses

1. “**A Good Degree**” (BATHMMOS) means:
 - ◆ Good standing in the eyes of God and man
 - ◆ Good reputation within the church family
 - ◆ Advancement of influence to help more people
(A faithful deacon who serves well over time will obtain deep respect from those around him and eternal reward in heaven.)
2. “**Great Boldness**” (PARRESIAN) means:
 - ◆ Confidence
 - ◆ Boldness
 - ◆ Assurance
 - (A faithful deacon who serves well will be given (by God) greater and greater confidence in their faith.

Be Encouraged Deacons As You Serve

- ◆ Your influence will be known on earth as you faithfully serve people around you and your influence will be known in heaven when you are rewarded for your faith and works on earth.

What Is A Pastor?

“And I will give you **pastors** according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jeremiah 3:16)

“And He gave **pastors**...” (Ephesians 4:11)

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers**, to **feed** the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

“The **elders** which are among you I exhort...feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being **examples** to the flock.” (I Peter 5:1-3)

“This is a true saying, if a man desires the office of a **bishop**, he desires a good work.” (I Timothy 3:1)

Five Meaningful Words Are Given

(As synonyms for the word pastor)

1. **Shepherd** (Acts 20:28) The word for “feed” means “shepherd”
2. **Bishop** (I Timothy 3:1)
3. **Overseer** (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28)
4. **Elder** (I Peter 5:1-3)
5. **Presbyter** (Titus 1:5) The word for “elder” is PRESBUTEROS

What Is The Pastoral Gift?

The gift of pastor is that specific calling and ability that God gives to certain members of His body (church) to assume a long term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a local congregation.

I Timothy 3:1 Is Direct

“This is a true saying; if a man desires the office of a bishop (pastor) he desires a good work.” (I Timothy 3:1)

- ◆ The term bishop (EPISKOPOS) is synonymous with the words elder, overseer and pastor.
- ◆ The bishop mentioned here describes someone who is involved in public teaching and oversight of a local congregation.
- ◆ A pastor may also be a PRESBUTEROS (the word for “elder” in Titus 1:5) which is a title derived from the chief officers in the synagogue. The title itself emphasizes the maturity and dignity of the office. We discover here, that God, out of love and wisdom, has provided pastors and presbyters to oversee and guide His work on earth.

Four Characteristics of The Office of Pastor (From I Timothy 3:1)

1. It is an office of **passion**
 - ◆ The word “desire” (EPITHUMEO) means: “to reach out after with strong passion.”
 - ◆ This is a passion (not for prestige or power) but a strong desire to do God’s will and be faithful to His call.

2. It is an office of oversight

- ◆ The word “bishop” (EPISKOPEO) means “to oversee”
- ◆ A true pastor will give oversight (or lead the flock of God with an anointing from above.)

3. It is an office of worth

- ◆ The word “good” (KALOS) means: the pastoral office will be good for the one fulfilling it, as well to those whose receive it.
- ◆ People will have a sense of trust and security under a godly shepherd.

4. It is an office of work

- ◆ The word “work” (ERGON) means “the output of energy”
- ◆ It means the office of pastor requires hard work and long hours if properly fulfilled. No lazy bone will ever make a great pastor.

The Pastor Is God’s Idea

- ◆ The New Testament teaches us that pastors are provided by God (they are a gift) for every church. (Ephesians 4:11)
- ◆ Paul saw to it that pastors were identified and properly ordained even in young churches he started as a missionary. (Acts 20:17-38)
- ◆ Paul and his fellow missionaries ordained elders **in every church.** (Acts 14:23)

What Is A Pastor To Do? (Three Primary Responsibilities)

1. **Lead The Flock** (I Peter 5:2)

- ◆ Give direction, impart vision and accept responsibility for the spiritual well being of the church, as a pilot accepts responsibility for the plane in the air.

2. **Feed The Flock** (Acts 20:28)

- ◆ Equip the saints with a balanced diet from the Word of God to see them grow healthy, strong and reproduce themselves after Christ’s kind.

3. **Protect The Flock** (II Peter 2:1-3)

- ◆ As a shepherd from the wolves that will come into the church to devour and divide the sheep for personal gain, with a personal agenda.

The Pastor Must Also Bear The Responsibility Under God To:

- ◆ Help heal the wounds of those who are hurting.
- ◆ Help each member to discover, develop and deploy their spiritual gifts.
- ◆ Help promote strong unity within the body of Christ.
- ◆ Help impart a sense of purpose to reach people for Christ.
- ◆ Help develop a great base of prayer support.
- ◆ Help administrate the business matters of the church.
- ◆ Help in delegating responsibility to others so that the church can grow beyond what one man can dominate.

“And He (Jesus) gave pastors.” (Ephesians 4:11)

BOARD MEETING GUIDELINES

(That will enable your meetings to be pleasant and productive)

1. Have an agenda prepared to avoid wasting time.
2. Begin the meeting on time if there is a quorum.
3. Keep proper minutes to verify every decision that is made.
4. Rotate board members for devotions and prayer.
5. Have copies of all reports prepared ahead of time to distribute.
6. Allow time for discussion on those difficult issues.
7. Use secret ballots when personalities are involved (or if sensitive issues are being decided).
8. Don't be afraid to "sleep on it" when there isn't a unified spirit on an issue. (It's better than hastily railroading something through).
9. Avoid surprises, hide nothing and don't threaten to resign if you don't get your own way.
10. Refuse to discuss outside the board meeting what is discussed inside the board meeting. This will kill the trust and openness of input if we are afraid that what we express will be repeated.
Board meetings are confidential!

Edward T. Hiscox said it well in 1906

"If the pastor can have with him and supporting him a company of prudent, wise and helpful deacons, it will give him great encouragement and vast influence for good in the church."

(Ed T. Hiscox, in "The Star Book For Ministers" Judson Press, 1906)

Amen!
Bill Kirk

“INSTALLATION SERVICE”

(FOR GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS AND SPOUSES)

(The Sunday following their election)

- The purpose of this installation is to acknowledge the call of God upon members of this church body who have accepted the responsibility of **Spiritual Leadership**.
- These Governing Board members have been **nominated, elected** and **confirmed** by the voting of this congregation.
- Today, we acknowledge that **the Lord is the one** who has placed these men and women to serve God by serving you, God’s wonderful people.
- As these willing servants stand ready to pledge their efforts to fulfill the duties entrusted to them, let us in turn, **pledge our support to each of them and pray God’s richest blessing upon their lives**.

Question: You might ask, “**Why this installation service?**”

Answer: Because, in the book of Acts chapter 6, spiritual leaders were...

1. **Elected** from the local church body (and)
2. They were then **publicly dedicated** for that office and ministry.

(The Scripture Says in Acts 6: 5-7)

“The church chose Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas and set them before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them. And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly.” (Vs. 5-7)

(Request to All Board Members)

Would you and your spouse please stand and come forward to the altar at this time?

(After All Are in Place Quote the Following: The Bible says in Romans 12:6)

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us...let us wait on our ministry.”

(The Bible says in I Peter 4:10)

“As each one has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

(Paul said in I Timothy 3:8-11)

“Likewise must the spiritual leader be grave, not double tongued, not given to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved, then let them use the office elected too, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things.”

(Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 9:10)

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.”

(Paul said in Colossians 4:17)

“Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it.”

(Charge to the Governing Board Members)

- As a Spiritual Leader chosen by God and your peers among you, you are making the following covenant before God:

1. To be faithful to God as a willing servant in all that you do.
2. To be faithful to this congregation as you minister your God given talents.
3. To hold up the hands of your pastor through prayer, counsel and faithful support.
4. To be faithful in attendance at church services, board meetings, annual business meetings and participate in the work and activities of your local assembly.
5. To be a person with a friendly smile and a glad handshake to all who enter here.
6. To live your life blameless before God and man, causing no one to stumble by your example.
7. To live honest, self-controlled, patient, holy, not a gossip, not angry, not greedy, not a lover of position but broken before God and a lover of souls.
8. To honor your marriage vows, love your spouse and children, making Jesus the centerpiece of your home.
9. To seek after harmony, unity and good will; never placing your personal agenda above God's corporate agenda.
10. To serve God with your pastor and this congregation, to win lost people to Jesus and bring them to full maturity as we wait for the expected soon return of our Lord.

(Charge to the Board – “Governing Board Members”)

(If you will accept your God given responsibility, please answer “I do” to the following)

Question: Do you willingly accept your responsibility as a call from God to serve this congregation? (“I do”)

Question: Will you (with God’s help) seek to fulfill your ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit through a life of prayer and the Word of God? (“I do”)

Question: Do you today (before God and this body of believers) say “yes” to God’s will for your life and the life of your local church? (“I do”)

(To the Congregation)

- “Congregation, will you, under God, rejoice with these you have chosen, encourage them as they faithfully serve God and you, and support them with your prayers and assistance in every way possible? (“I do”)

Prayer of Dedication

- Board members and spouses, would you join hands together across the front for prayer.
- Congregation, would you please stand for prayer as we pledge ourselves to God (and to one another) this coming year?
- Together (before God) we will dedicate ourselves to lead, feed, protect the flock of God and live to reach lost people.

Pray

“Lord we recognize those you have called to serve us in Spiritual Leadership”,

“We acknowledge our personal responsibility to support those you have given to serve.”

“We thank you Lord for their availability, teachability, flexibility, vulnerability, and dependability.”

“Empower them to serve You, to rightfully divide the Word of Truth, to be an example of Christ – likeness and bring glory to God.

“We dedicate each Leader now, to serve You and this great church body in the name of Jesus, amen! (Greet one another with a handshake and a word of encouragement) AMEN!