

# HARVEST ROCK CHURCH

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## PASTORS AND DEACONS THE BOOK OF ACTS SERIES

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**TEXT: Acts 20:17** From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them... 28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

**INTRO:** Today we are going to look at Pastors and Deacons from the book of Acts. In Acts 6, the needs of the growing early church were so overwhelming that the apostles recommended that faithful leaders would be chosen and set aside to serve the people of God in a practical way. The word *deacon* comes from the Greek word *diakonos*, which means a servant. By Acts 14, Paul is planting churches in his first missionary journey and appointing elders to lead the churches under his apostolic oversight. **Acts 14:23** When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Today we are briefly going to give the biblical basis for ordaining or commissioning pastors and deacons at Harvest Rock Church and then proceed with what is always a highlight of our church life, ordaining new pastors and deacons. By the way, I use the words “ordaining” and “commissioning” interchangeably.

### I. PASTORS/ELDERS/BISHOPS

#### A. THE GREEK WORDS FOR PASTORS, ELDERS, AND BISHOPS ARE USED INTERCHANGEABLY IN THE BIBLE

1. Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the *elders* (*presbuteros*) of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them... 28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you *overseers* (*episkopos*), to *shepherd* (*poimaino*) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”
2. 1 Peter 5:1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder (*presbuteros*) and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd (*poimaino*)



the flock of God among you, exercising *oversight* (*episkopeo*) not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

- B. Peter gives three directives to pastors who are to shepherd or care for God's people.
1. **“Not under compulsion, but voluntarily.”** Don't do this as a duty, but out of love. This is who you are.
  2. **“Not for sordid gain, but with eagerness.”** Not because it is your job and you are getting paid.
  3. **“Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge.”** We lead by example and by grace. We are servant-leaders. You never pull the “I am the pastor' card so you must submit to me.” I have never pulled the “I am the apostle” card. If as a husband, you have to say, “Submit because I am the head of the home,” you have misused your authority. You are lording over.
- C. The foundation for Christian leadership was established by Jesus in the Gospels, and the writer of Hebrews encourages how the church should respond to their leaders.
1. **Mathew 20:25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 26 It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”**
  2. **Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.**
  3. **At Harvest Rock Church we emphasize servant leadership and good followership.**
- D. **HOW THESE THREE WORDS DEVELOPED BY THE SECOND CENTURY**
1. **BISHOP – Became the Office and a Title. Usually overseeing several churches.**
  2. **SHEPHERD – Job Description, Your Function.**
  4. **ELDER – A Title.** For example, Elder John. 2 John 1 “The elder to the elect lady and her children.” 3 John 1 “The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.”
- E. **HOW WE USE THESE WORDS IN HIM AND HRC**

1. **A bishop is a pastor who is also an elder.** But we don't use the word *elder* because we intentionally try to raise up the next generation of young pastors. And we don't call anyone a bishop because so many denominations have used that office to oversee several churches. So, we call our leaders "pastors" at HRC.
2. We have chosen to call those who oversee several churches "apostles" instead of bishops in HIM (Harvest International Ministry).
3. When you address the pastors, we try to balance formality and family. Pastor Gwen. A little history, when Harvest Rock initially started, we were a Vineyard church. When we left the Vineyard, we decided to ordain our spouses: Sue, Lou's wife Therese, Debbie Malouff, and Pam Wright. To recognize them as pastors we encouraged our people to address them with the title of pastor (e.g., "Pastor Sue," etc.). Before we just called each other by our first name. I liked the change because we wanted to teach our people the culture of honor and reinforce our value of women in leadership.

## II. DEACONS

- A. Acts 6:1** Now at this time while the disciples were increasing *in number*, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic *Jews* against the *native* Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving *of food*. **2** So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God to serve tables. **3** Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. **4** But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." **5** The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip... **6** And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.
- B. Acts 6:7** The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.
1. The fruit of raising up more leaders, more people will be cared for.

## III. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF PASTORS AND DEACONS

### A. PASTORS

1. **1 Timothy 3:1** It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. **2** An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent,

respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. 4 *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 6 *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. 7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

## B. DEACONS

1. 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 *but* holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women *must likewise be* dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of *only one wife, and* good managers of *their* children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

### Reading of the Names:

- David and Sandi Hildreth – HRC East Bay Area
- Augustin and Geta Murar (“Augustine” and “Jetta”) – HRC Sacramento

### Deacons’ Commission (read by Senior Pastor):

- Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge Him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through Him believe in one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church and God’s Word to you?
- Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by the Holy Spirit and the leadership of Harvest Rock Church?
- Will you in your own life seek to follow Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world following Christ’s commission to go and make disciples of all nations?

- Will you promise to live a peaceable life, free from sin, watching over your own household to lead them in the ways of God?
- Will you be a faithful deacon, demonstrating generosity, showing mercy, caring for those in need, and displaying the love and grace of Jesus Christ?

**Turning to the Church (Senior Pastor leads):**

“Please stand and stretch out your hands.”

- Leader prays.
- Anoints / blesses the deacons by the laying on of hands. *HRC Pastors participate by surrounding the new deacons and laying on hands during prayer. Anoint as part of prayer.*

**Reading of the Names:**

- Carlos and Vashti Huertas
- David and Suzy Gunn

A Word of Witness from a friend for the Huertas: Jacqueline Wilson.

A Word of Witness from a friend for the Gunns: Cielo Ruiz.

**Pastors’ Ordination (led by the Senior Pastor):**

- Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge Him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through Him believe in one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church and God’s Word to you?
- Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by the Holy Spirit?
- Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working alongside them, faithfully following leadership, subject to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit?
- Will you seek to serve the people of God and Harvest Rock Church with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?
- Will you promise to live a peaceable life, free from sin, watching over your own household to lead them in the ways of God?
- Will you be a faithful minister, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, teaching, and caring for the people of God?

- Will you in your own life seek to follow Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world following Christ’s commission to go and make disciples of all nations?

**Turning to the Church:**

“Please stand and stretch out your hands.”

- Senior Pastor prays.
- Senior Pastor anoints / ordains the pastors by the laying on of hands.  
*Pastoral Team gathers around to lay hands and pray.*
- Pastoral Team offers prophetic words.