

**PASTOR-DEACON RELATIONSHIP:  
LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR CHURCH GROWTH**

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## Conclusion

The basis for the writing of this essay has so far been established, that the church must grow and that it has potential for growth and the instruments to be used for accomplishing this task are the pastors and deacons.

The researcher has observed that the work of evangelism is not flowing the way it ought to, because the leaders, as it has been stated, are always at the throat of one another. The expected cordial relationship that ought to serve as catalyst in bringing growth to the Church never existed before them. Whereas, harmony is without doubt the ultimate goal of the Christian life. From this research, it is clear that a cordial relationship between the pastor and deacons is necessary because it is the injunction of the Bible that "for we are God's fellow workers" (I Corinthians 3:9a) and so we cannot settle for less. It is also important to note that the basis of a cordial pastor-deacon relation, according to Gideon Oyibo, is based on the fact that, pastor and deacons are children of one God as Father (John 1:12), followers of one Lord and Saviour, possessed by the same Spirit, having similar qualifications (cf. Acts 6:3, 5; I Timothy 3:1-13), and indeed both human beings that are accountable to God.<sup>147</sup> Furtherstill, Howard Foshee adds that pastors and deacons share in the same mission of Christ, thus:

Each serves as a proclaimer of the gospel, a caring and compassionate minister, and a builder of Christian fellowship. Both serve to help God's work increase through his Church. Energies are dedicated to building up the body of Christ. Pastors and deacons depend on each other and the power of the Holy Spirit as they move together toward God's dynamic spiritual purpose.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup>Gideon Oyibo, Pastor Deacon Relationship: A Key to Promoting Church Growth (Effurim: Infinity Printing & Publishing, 2002), pp. 34-36.

<sup>148</sup>Foshee, Now That You're a Deacon, p. 27.

It is expected of all Baptist pastors and deacons to now wake up and see themselves as ONE. Jesus never worked in isolation. His footsteps must be followed. He said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30a). Pastors and deacons should humble themselves, walk as a team and be the kind of leaders the followers will be proud of. Leaders that are tested and proved, leaders with integrity, leaders that are ready to sacrifice their total being for the cause of Christ and can promote church growth. They are the ones needed for growing a purposeful, dynamic and Spirit-filled church.

### **Recommendations**

In order to foster the relationship between the pastor and deacons for the furtherance of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the following are the summarized recommendations from oral interviews conducted among deacons and pastors in Lagos State Baptist Conference and the researcher's personal recommendations.

First, it is high time proper education on pastor-deacon relationship begin from the grassroot through seminar and worship. This beginning from the local church, to the association, to the conference and to the Convention levels. This will afford the two parties the opportunity to know more about the challenges in the ministry to which they are called into.

Second, pastor-deacon monthly meeting becomes essential for every local church that desires cordial relationship. This meeting period will afford them the opportunity to evaluate their own personal performance and that of the church and then use the occasion to plan for the future. It is a period when the

pastor who is the visionary leader presents his plan for the new month to the deacons for prayers and suggestions where necessary. The execution of such a plan is done by the two parties. From the researcher's experience, the closest persons next to his wife are the deacons in the running of God's business. Any attempt by the pastor to hide his strategies from the deacons is tantamount to failure and frustration. The common language from the diaconate is "we are not carried along."

Third, deacons should move closer to the pastor in order to know his areas of need and be his mouthpiece in presenting such needs to the church. This they should do by occasional visit to the pastorium unnoticed and by way of interaction. In other words, they should be concerned about the welfare of their pastor. In like manner, the pastor should visit his deacons as he visits other church members. It is an opportunity to relate with the family members, share in their period of joy and adversity.

Also, every local church should organize spiritual retreats at least twice in a year for the pastor and his deacons. One at the beginning of the year while the second should be at the commencement of the second half of the year. The spiritual retreat will help sharpen their spiritual life and more mission focused than thinking of having time to fight one another. When pastors and deacons are Spirit-filled, there will be less argument.

Finally, the pastor should design evaluation form for himself and the deacons for self-evaluation. The pastor will assess the deacons while the deacons will assess the pastor. The content may be in the following areas:

Sermon preparation and delivery, timing, honesty transparency, visitation, dressing, social interaction, sense of duty, family life, temperament, etc.