

CCC Deacons

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1. Purpose and Introduction

This document outlines the role of deacons in Christ City Church (CCC), drawing on the biblical insights of Matt Smethurst and Tim Keller, it highlights both the theological foundation and practical expression of the Diaconate. This paper outlines how CCC intends to recognize, appoint, and deploy deacons within our church, affirming those already functioning in these roles and preparing for future growth in both internal care and outward mercy ministry.¹

2. What is Deacon?

The word diakonos ("servant" or "minister") appears 29 times in the New Testament, mostly describing all Christians (Matt 23:11; Mark 9:35) and most famously describing Jesus, the chief deacon: "if anyone would be first, he must be last of all and deacon of all" (Mark 10:45).

There are however three references to the office of a deacon (or deaconess) - Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8–13, and Romans 16:1 (talking about Phoebe). Christians have long seen precedent for deacons in Acts 6:1–7:

¹ This document is slightly different in format and content than the other leadership documents (e.g., [Eldership](#), [Leadership Team](#), [Congregation Team](#)) because the Diaconate is a new initiative for CCC planned for September 2025. Accordingly, this document provides the evolution of thought on this matter, and how it applies to the CCC context.

It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to deacon tables. . . . But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to deaconing the word. (Acts 6:2, 4)

2.1 Theological Perspectives on Deacons

The background for CCC's view on Deacons comes from Matt Smethurst and Tim Keller.² They agree on the biblical basis and definition of a deacon and there is plenty of overlap in their application, however they emphasise slightly different aspects of the role and work of a deacon:

- Smehurst focuses more on the practical needs within the church that the deacons do to support the elders, including promoting church unity.
- Keller has a broader focus which includes pastoral care and practical care within the church but also mercy ministry outside the church.

As others in church history have pointed out, there is flexibility of models and approaches that can be taken, given that the New Testament doesn't give many specifics about the Deacon role - intentionally one assumes!

2.2 Smehurst's Deacon Perspective: Practical and Pastoral Needs

From Acts 6, Smehurst identifies three main roles of a Deacon:

1. Spot and meet tangible needs,
2. Protect and promote church unity.
3. Serve and support the ministry of the Word.

Deacons are model servants who excel in being attentive and responsive to **tangible needs** in the life of a church. They serve by assisting the elders, guarding the ministry of the word, organizing service, caring for the needy, protecting unity, mobilizing ministry, and more.

Deacons must have a knack for solving problems to safeguard unity. On top of godly character and practical wisdom (Acts 6:3), an ideal deacon will have a track record of embodying and encouraging this cycle:

sees a problem → wants to safeguard unity → thinks creatively → solves the problem

Smehurst's description of a deacon focuses on the way deacons function internally to the church, to support the elders, and empower the congregation. In summary he says:

- The congregation does ministry.

² This initial paper relies heavily on Matt Smethurst's writings [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). And Tim Keller, from The Redeemer Diaconate Manual (now a [book](#)) or see summary article's [here](#) and [here](#)

- Deacons facilitate ministry.
- Elders lead ministry.

For more information on how CCC views Deacons working alongside Congregation and Leadership teams, see the [CCC Polity & Governance document](#).

2.3 Keller's Deacon Perspective: Mercy Ministry

Whilst including many of Smehurst's points, Keller builds a bigger theology of mercy ministry into which deacons fit within the broader biblical narrative

- **Creation:** God made a physical world for us to steward
- **The Fall:** Our alienation from God affects us spiritually, psychologically, socially, and physically
- **The Old Testament:** God's people were given laws promoting social responsibility, care for the poor, justice, Sabbath rest, and jubilee.
- **The Person of Christ:** Jesus came preached good news to the poor, served in both word and compassion healing body and soul. and Most importantly through his bodily incarnation, he ate with the poorest in society.
- **The Early Church:** Modeled the social righteousness of the Old Testament laws and emphasized the seriousness of the sin of materialism and the importance of Christian generosity. The church is to be a 'pilot plant of the kingdom of God,' demonstrating the fullness of new life we have in Christ, that others might see Jesus through our love for our brothers and sisters, and our love for those outside the church.

The Diaconate reflects the way God's people meet the many 'needs' of the people inside and outside the church. Whether these needs are due to injustice, calamity, or sin, we are called to love and serve others. Building on this biblical theology, Keller argues (following thinking from the church Reformer Jean Calvin) that Deacons are those involved in both administration of resources for the poor (e.g., money, resources, shelter, clothes) and minister directly to the poor, sick, aged, widows, and orphans.

Alongside mercy ministry outside the church, Keller's definition and application of a deacon's role also includes pastoral care inside the church - such as praying after the service, interviewing new church members, and being the first point of contact for anyone who comes with pastoral or practical needs.

2.4 CCC Vision for Role of Deacons

The initial appointment of CCC Deacons will focus primarily on practical and pastoral needs inside the church, (Smehurst's emphasis), though would include mercy ministry outside the church (Keller's emphasis). Our hope is that, in the coming years, CCC will become more actively involved in mercy ministry. As this develops, It is likely that

different deacons will be appointed for these two distinct roles: some focussing internally on the needs within the church and others focussing externally on social needs outside the church (e.g., in the city of Dublin). In this way, different deacons can have different focuses.

3. Deacon Qualifications

The most comprehensive instruction from the New Testament around Deacons is not to do with their role but rather their character (1 Tim. 3:8–13). As is always the case in Scripture and in CCC's view on selecting leaders, character takes precedence above gifting, charisma, or effectiveness. In addition to the [requirements](#) for all leaders in CCC, Deacon qualifications include listed for the [Congregation Teams](#) with six additional characteristics taken from 1 Timothy 3:

1. Not be malicious talkers
2. Not be indulging in much wine
3. Not be greedy for dishonest gain
4. Keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience
5. Be tested and proved
6. Have a faithful family life³

4. Deacons Function in CCC

Under the [Elders](#) and [Leadership team](#), and often within a [Congregation Team](#), Deacons may be responsible for one or several of the following roles;

1. Oversee operations: Sundays, events, teams, etc
2. Oversee church administration, finance, and/or governance
3. Help with the practical and pastoral care of church members, e.g., organising counselling, housing, hospital visits, hampers, counselling, or the governance and distribution of the CCC care fund.⁴
4. Help welcome new people into church e.g., on Sundays, Connect, and/or Welcome.
5. Coordinate our mercy ministry, for example the banquets in city centre for those experiencing homelessness, financial giving to organisations outside of CCC, connecting people into mercy ministries (such as The Lighthouse or Tiglin or Solas), partnering with Christians Against Poverty (CAP), and/or running money coaching courses
6. Support the pastor(s) of their congregation with practical needs on Sundays and/or other events, such as seminars, Connect, or Belong)

³ Whether single or married

⁴ This is a designated fund set aside within the CCC budget for when practical needs occur within the CCC family and if a CCC member needs immediate and financial support.

Much of their role would be worked out on [a congregation team](#) or the staff team, where they would serve, similar to elders, in their appointed office as deacon. As with eldership, we aim to have at least one deacon per congregation.

While cross-functional communication between teams (such as Human Resources, Trustees, Finance Team, and Ops Leads) is important, initially there will be no 'deacon team' at this stage. Instead, deacons will function within existing structures/teams, rather than as a separate team. Deacon roles vary - though some overlap and communication is needed, their objectives may differ (unlike elders whose role and responsibilities are uniform across the team). Therefore, at least initially, there is no need for a designated deacon leader to be a 'first among equals' or for regular deacon's meetings.

5. Deacon Appointments

The approach we typically take at CCC is to 'recognise and empower what already exists' rather than create something entirely new. So it is with appointing Deacons. Some individuals are already functioning as deacons at CCC, this process is about honouring them and formally appointing them to that role.

The appointment process is proposed as follows:

- Initially a deacon is appointed for a minimum of 3 years, though the term may vary depending on the role they have in church life. Deacons are accountable to the elders and leadership team
- The Leadership team provides pastoral care for Deacons. While deacons may serve within a congregation they remain accountable to the whole church, similar to elders.
- Both men and women can serve as deacons.⁵

The appointment process will mirror that of the elders:

- Candidates are proposed in advance to the church via email, as outlined in [the church polity documents](#).
- If approved, the date for the appointment is announced, with two weeks set aside for prayer and fasting. A specific Sunday is designated for the appointment, which includes vows
- This process will take place as part of the [Renew](#) season in church life.

5. Who are the CCC Deacons?

Here are the suggested roles for those currently functioning as Deacons whom we are considering formally appointing as Deacons of CCC:

⁵For more details, see the [CCC paper on men and women](#), as well as [Tim Keller's paper](#) specifically on this topic.

1. Congregational Ops Leads
2. Finance Treasurer
3. Chair of Trustees
4. Human Resources staff member
5. Safeguarding Officer
6. Kids team leader
7. Sung Worship Ministry Leader
8. Other Congregation Team members who carry a large administrative and pastoral weight

6. Timeline

The Elders and the Leadership Team aim to appoint two deacons per congregation in September 2025

6. Change Log

Date	Summary of changes	Author	Approver
June 2025	Finalisation & review by advisory teams, leadership team & Maria Krump Garib	Steve Vaughan	Leadership Team

7. Appendix

Related documents and additional context relevant to the CCC Deacons:

1. [Vision & Values](#)
2. [Doctrinal Statement](#)
3. [Leadership Matrix](#)
 - a. [Eldership](#)
 - b. [Leadership](#)
 - c. [Congregation](#)
 - d. [Deacons](#)
 - e. [Polity and Governance Framework](#) - structures, appointments & authority
 - f. Summary slides from [Sept 2024](#), [Jan 2025](#) and [May 2025](#) Wider Leaders Gatherings
4. [Membership Process](#) & Church Discipline (see also [The Belong Booklet](#) & [Membership essay with Q&A](#))

5. [Safeguarding](#)
6. [Charitable/Legal Purpose, Objectives & Governance](#) + [Charity Constitution](#)
7. HR Procedures (Last 3 sections of staff handbook and maybe termination part of contract into a PDF)

[The advisory team](#) has no official or governing role within CCC but offers advice and support to the leadership and elders when required, with whom they meet every 6 months, and are available for others in church life to approach as and when necessary.

Trustees oversee all legal and charity governance aspects of the church. They also support HR and finance, in approving the budget and staff salary increases, and where needed can be brought in for other big decisions. The chair of trustees is appointed as a deacon and represents the whole team.