

## **The Relationship of the Board of Deacons with Each Other and with the Members of the Congregation**

**First:** Many times it is easier for us to work alone rather than in a group. This is because of an ego that is not humble. We must realize that one string can't produce a beautiful symphony but if all strings play in harmony they can produce a wonderful hymn, a hymn of love as we say in the morning praises, "Those whom the Holy Spirit has attuned together as a stringed instrument blessing God united in the true evangelic love like the apostles." Therefore true love must reign over the members of the board so that they may cooperate with each other in the service of the church. This love is manifested in mutual respect and in keeping away from the hateful spirit of conglomerating inside the board.

**Second:** Many problems happen because of belittling the opposing opinion and not giving it due importance. That's why respecting the other opinion-whatever it may be- is important and necessary in dealing inside the board. Also humility and stirring away from the love of praise and honor and the love of the bigger share and the first seat are necessary in the service, always remembering the words of St. Paul, "in honor preferring one another" (Romans 12:10).

**Third:** Service on the board of deacons is commitment towards God. It mustn't be affected by personal grudges or problems if any. Some are quick to resign from the service after any disagreement even if it is in opinion, which is against one's responsibility towards God. Therefore, there must be a positive attitude towards solving problems and differences through prayers, communication, and constructive discussions. As for requesting to be relieved from the service, it requires self-examination lest the reason be self-pity and refusing to endure trouble for the sake of the service.

**Fourth:** Personal issues shouldn't affect the service of the board or agreement on decisions. Many times, rejecting a particular opinion stems from disliking the holder of this opinion which disagrees with the spirit of honesty that the members of the board

should have. Similarly disagreeing on an opinion shouldn't affect my relationship with that person. Many times the results of voting on a particular decision are taken in a personal way which affects the relationship of the members with each other.

**Fifth:** Many times the burden of the execution of decisions falls on the shoulders of one or two members while the rest limit themselves to giving instructions and suggestions which is in disagreement with the spirit of giving, service and sacrifice which should be in each member.

**Sixth:** Board decisions are based on the majority of votes therefore no one should get upset or take a certain position or act negatively if most members are against his/her personal opinion. If the board takes a certain decision, all members must work on its execution even those who were in disagreement. It is also inappropriate for those who are in disagreement to speak negatively of the decision in front of the congregation because such behavior contradicts the spirit of love and commitment to the majority's decision. On the contrary, he/she must support the decision and defend it.

**Seventh:** Members of the board represent the congregation; therefore, the opinion of the majority of the congregation must be taken into consideration and not personal desires. That's why knowing the opinion of the people on some issues is necessary.

**Eighth:** None of the members of the board should independently take hold of the church affairs- This happens sometimes when the church doesn't have a permanent priest- No one should enforce his/her personal opinion on the group. This is in disagreement with the spirit of sharing and group work that must be in each member of the board.

**Ninth:** There is no reason whatsoever not to show the congregation the board's decisions as well as the budget. However, it is better to keep the discussions and the details of the discussions that preceded the decisions, like who agreed and who disagreed a secret. These details are of no use and may negatively affect the unity of the church. The congregation should not feel that there is division or conglomeration in the board. That's

why we must care not to speak about anyone in a way that condemns him/her whether directly or indirectly but we should cover the weaknesses of others, knowing that in many things we all trip.

**Tenth:** The congregation's confidence in the board members as well as supporting them is very important and can push the service forward. Therefore, we must not always blame them for every oversight but encourage them and cooperate with them. It is also inappropriate for the congregation to put many responsibilities on the shoulders of the board without shouldering any themselves or to ask them to do what is not within the scope of their service which are administrative and financial, or within their powers like asking them to interfere in spiritual matters or with their priest. It is better that the congregation speaks directly to their father the priest.

To be continued.