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What is the role of a church trustee?

A church trustee usually refers to a church volunteer who oversees physical aspects of a church such as finance, property, and buildings. Trustees are usually voted on by a local church or selected by elders representing church members for certain periods of time.

In the early church, seven men were selected to oversee particular needs within the church (Acts 6:1-7) so the apostles could focus on teaching and prayer. Deacons were later added to local churches as official servants who handled certain areas of church ministry. While deacons generally dealt with the needs of people within the church, the role of a church trustee has developed in recent generations to serve the needs related to finance and property issues.

Since the role of the trustee is not defined in the Bible, a church can choose to use trustees in a variety of ways. This role is not required in Scripture, though some U.S. states legally require trustees for organizational purposes. Certainly, those who serve as trustees should be people of high character and have abilities in appropriate areas, such as skills in finance, construction, or building maintenance.

In some churches, trustees also serve on the official board of directors of the church as a non-profit organization. In these cases, those serving should be people with organizational and leadership abilities who are able to successfully conduct the business of the church according to biblical principles. Accountability should also be set up and provided, as trustees will likely oversee church finances and spending.

Many churches with trustees also include the responsibility of risk management and liability issues. In these cases, involving trustees with knowledge of insurance, liability, and legal issues related to non-profit organizations would be of tremendous assistance.

Still other trustees are involved in long-range congregational planning and church vision. While this planning should also include the church's other leaders, such as elders and deacons, these combined efforts can greatly assist a church to best navigate future plans and communicate them effectively with church members.

As trustees, each individual must also be willing and able to work together as a team. First Corinthians 12 notes that each person is important, yet must also work together to operate effectively.

First Peter 4:10 also comments about fitting the roles of church members with their abilities: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

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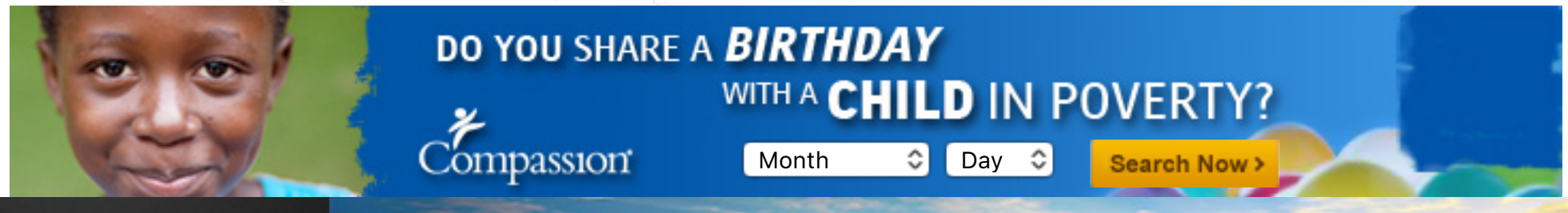
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