



VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE

Witnessing Christ's Love

Be an Effective Deacon in Today's Church April 24, 2013



Mission Statement: *“To enable churches to be Christ’s servants in their community.”*

Founded in 1986 to provide training and support for Grand Rapids area deacons.

The Role of a Deacon in the Early Church

The office of deacon was developed because of a specific charge of injustice in the early church.

Acts 6:1-4 The Choosing of the Seven

- Being a deacon means to serve others.
- Jesus modeled servant leadership and practiced what he taught.

“For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” (John 13:15)

“the Son of man came not to be served but to serve.” (Mark 10:45)

“I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:27)

How exciting that in accepting the role of deacon you are doing what Jesus said he came to do... Serve!

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men.” (Ephesians 6:7)

The Deacon in Today's Church

Article 25c of the CRC Church Order:

The deacons shall represent and administer the mercy of Christ to all people, especially to those who belong to the community of believers (church members), and shall stimulate the members of Christ's church to faithful, obedient stewardship of their resources on behalf of the needy—all done with words of biblical encouragement and testimony which assures the unity of word and deed.

In the form of ordination Deacons are charged with:

- Being ministers of mercy.
- To inspire faithful stewardship.
- Minister to rich and poor alike within and outside the walls of the church.
- Weigh the needs and causes and use the church's resources wisely.
- Be compassionate to the needy and poor.
- Be prophetic critics of the waste and injustices in our society and sensitive counselors to such evils.

As you carry out these tasks in your role as a deacon you will fulfill the final words of the charge you were ordained with:

1. Let your lives be above reproach.
2. Live as examples of Christ.
3. Look to the interest of others.

You are not alone!

You are not called individually to meet all the needs of the congregation.

You are called to lead the congregation to meet those needs in the church and in the community.

You are called to equip and teach the congregation to share in the work of ministry.

The office of the deacon is a unique and divine calling within the church.

Although you were chosen by members of your church, you have been called and appointed by God himself to this role.

Deacons . . .

“What does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your
God.” (Micah 6:8)

Congratulations, Deacon, on being appointed to this very important,
God-ordained role in *HIS* church!

Take time to reflect and thank God that He has chosen you to be His
servant!

How to work together as Deacons

1. Charge your individual spiritual batteries regularly by:
 - a. Devoting yourself to prayer!
 - Pray for yourself in your role and for those in your district
 - Pray in every situation for wisdom and discernment.
 - Prayer calms, refreshes, replenishes and strengthens.

-Prayer helps us focus the attention away from ourselves and puts it on God and what He is able to do through us.

b. Stay grounded in the Word of God!

-Think of the Bible as your GPS!

-Wisdom, knowledge and understanding come from the Word of God. The more you know God's Word, the better prepared you will be to serve.

-Know the Word of God so you will know the will of God when helping others.

(How to work together as Deacons Cont'd)

2. Be in the Word together as Deacons and spend time in prayer.
3. Understand each other's spiritual gifts.
4. Communicate regularly.

How to Engage with your Congregation

1. Build relationships by talking with them.
2. Know your congregation's skills and abilities.
3. Create a positive attitude of serving.

How to carry out the tasks assigned in the charge to Deacons

1. Show compassion
2. Facilitate community ministry
3. Encourage stewardship
4. Show Justice

Show Compassion

1. Be compassionate to those who are hurting within the congregation and community.
2. Use words that encourage and bring hope.
3. Act in ways that bring joy into their lives.

Facilitate Community Ministry

1. Model to the congregation to reach beyond the walls of the church.
2. Encourage and equip the congregation to engage in ministry with the community.
3. Lead the congregation in ministering to rich and poor alike within and outside the church.

Stewardship

1. Encourage church members to be stewards of God's creation with time, talents and money.
2. Remind church members that “from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded.”
(Luke 12:48)
3. Teach church members to be merciful in their giving.

Justice

1. Be prophetic critics of the waste, injustice and selfishness in our society.
2. Be sensitive counselors to the victims of such evil.
3. Model and encourage the congregation to be advocates for and with marginalized and vulnerable people.

Benevolence: Going Beyond the Crisis

1. Benevolence literally means to want people to be well, to work for them to flourish.
2. Benevolence is far more than handing out money and should never have the stigma of charity.

Three principles to follow when practicing Benevolence:

1. Be a coach, not a fixer.
2. Be proactive not reactive.
3. Discern between short-term and long-term needs and help accordingly.

Encouraging thoughts for today

1. As a deacon you will experience times of disappointment, confusion and frustration. But you will also see great joy when you experience God working through you.
2. Keep your eyes open and look for God.
3. Share stories with your church family as you walk together in faith.
4. Your role is important in the eyes of the Lord.
5. Thank you for serving the Lord in the role of a deacon.

Reference Books:

The Deacon's Handbook – Lori Wiersma and
Connie Kuiper VanDyke

*Changing Times, New Approaches: A Handbook for
Deacons* – Jay Van Gronigen

When Helping Hurts – Steve Corbett and Brian
Fikkert

Community Ministry – Carl S. Dudley

Firstfruits – Robert Heerspink

Online References:

www.diaconalministries.com – Diaconal Ministries of Canada

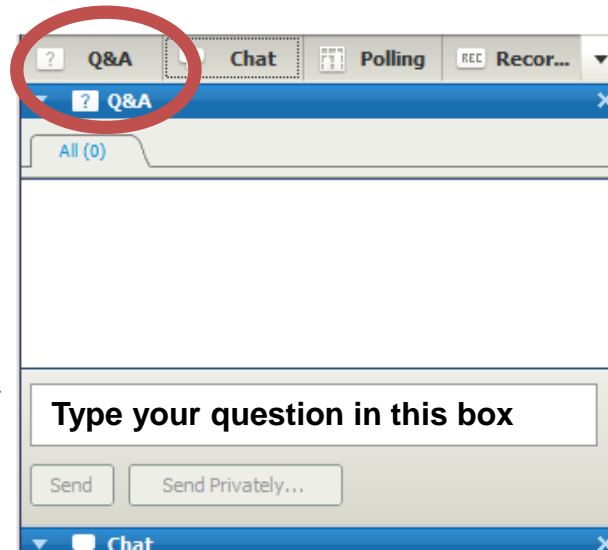
<http://network.crcna.org/content/deacons> - The Deacon's Network of CRCNA, Melissa Van Dyke – Deacon Guide

www.visgr.org – Volunteers In Service (VIS)

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Q & A

Please send your questions to
"All Panelists"



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