

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DEACON?



*Devotions
for Deacons*



- **Faithfully support** those with financial difficulties.
- **Provide hope and encouragement** through words and deeds.
- **Seek out opportunities to serve** the vulnerable, elderly, sick and bereaved.
- **Offer practical assistance** where it is needed (i.e. rides, fixing appliances etc).

JUSTICE

"For I, the Lord, love justice." Isaiah 61: 8a

- **Offer hospitality** to victims of injustices (i.e. refugees, aboriginal people).
- **Encourage participation** in justice-related ministry and advocacy (i.e. letter writing)
- With church members, **discover** practical, just, and sustainable **services** in our communities.
- **Provide ministry and advocacy**

suggestions on behalf of the vulnerable in our communities.

STEWARDSHIP

"from the one who is entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

Luke 12:48b

- **Inspire people to give** generously of their resources.
- **Invite others to participate** in diaconal opportunities to multiply ministry.
- **Provide awareness of opportunities** for service.
- **Educate the congregation** about the financial offerings and denominational ministry of our churches.



COMPASSION

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all " Gal. 6:10a

- **Discover the neighbourhood** of your church with its assets and needs.
- **Partner**, where possible, with existing community services.
- **Serve your community** with ministries which build trusting, meaningful relationships.
- Always be able to "give an answer for the hope that you have."

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COMMUNITY MINISTRY

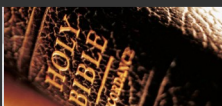
"Always be prepared to give an answer...for the hope that you have." 1 Peter 3:15



Community Ministry

Devotion #1

Leadership



Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:35-10:7, 10:26-31

It could not be clearer. The disciples are called to follow Jesus. Jesus is their leader and teacher. He chose them, He called them, and He will equip them, too.

Rarely is leadership so clearly defined. Think of your church. Leadership is probably as varied and as colourful as the different roles Christ gave to the church. Not everyone is a pastor, elder, deacon or teacher; we cannot all be administrators or coordinators. Praise God that we are gifted differently and that we have opportunity to lead where we are gifted.

With so many leadership roles, however, how should they all work together? In Ephesians 4: 11-12, Paul gives an answer. The goal of leadership in the church, says Paul, is "to equip [God's] people for works of service." "Diakonia" is the Greek word used for "works of service" - the word from which we derive "deacon." Essentially, the leadership of the church

works together to provide the resources and equipping for all of the people in the church to be able to serve like deacons in the community.

So what does it look like for deacons and other leaders to equip the church for service? How do you do that? The simple answer is to follow Jesus, just like His disciples.

Model: In Matthew 9:35-36, and elsewhere, Jesus exemplifies what the disciples will be sent out to do. Not only does He meet needs and bring the good news of the Kingdom, Jesus also looks with compassion on the crowds around Him. What a beautiful model of diakonia.

In the church and community, serving looks differently for each person. Peter urges Christ-followers to "use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10). Those gifts might be hospitality, encouragement,

compassion, prayer or others. Deacons, as you discern gifts within the diaconate, and assume different roles to match those gifts, you will be "faithful stewards of God's grace" for your congregation. Serve your community with the compassion of Christ, and others will follow.

Mentor: Jesus taught His followers, giving them tools to continue His work. And they learned from Him. The apostle Paul also spent quite a bit of time with Timothy, teaching him to take on leadership in ministry. He then told Timothy, in turn, to "entrust" his words to "reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." Equip new deacons, then, by mentoring and walking with them as they begin their ministry.

Encourage: Jesus did not just model ministry and mentor leadership, He also equipped His disciples through encouragement. He told them not to be afraid; He reminded them of their value.

So, how do you, as deacons, encourage people in the church to use their gifts to serve others?

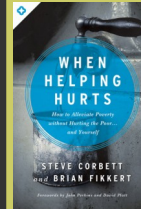
In the "Charge to the Deacon," there are a number of important verbs: inspire, remind, teach, prompt, minister, be compassionate, respect, and encourage. All of these are only accomplished through prayer, and the equipping of the Holy Spirit, in humility and with dependence. The Holy Spirit gives encouragement (Acts 9:31), so that you may encourage others. May your goal be like Paul's, that the church "be encouraged in heart and united in love." (Col. 2:2a)

Deacons, you have an important leadership role in the church! As you are examples and mentors of service, and encourage your congregation to serve, you will bless your community and be blessed in return. Commit this to God and resolve to lead as God has called you.

For Discussion:

1. Divide into groups or discuss as a diaconate at least 2 ways in which you might encourage people in the church to use their gifts in service to others.
2. Discuss how your diaconate might mentor new deacons as they begin their terms. If you already do this, what are the strengths and areas of growth in your current practice?
3. Identify at least 1 way in which your diaconate models servant leadership. Then identify how you might grow in this area.

For Further Reading:



When Helping Hurts

by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

The Deacons' Handbook

By L. Wiersma and C. Kuiper VanDyke



Ministries of Mercy

By Timothy Keller

For Related Resources:

Leadership begins in your diaconate and in the relationships that you cultivate within the community of the deacons in your meetings.

Diaconal Ministries Canada has developed a number of resources, free on our website, that will help your diaconate grow in leadership and community.

Find them online at

www.diaconalministries.com/wp/resources/

About Diaconal Ministries Canada:

We seek to inspire, equip and encourage deacons, churches and their partners as they join in God's transforming work in communities.



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C A N A D A

For the blog, free resources and much more,
go to www.diaconalministries.com