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Train & Multiply™

Project WorldReach (T&M™ ministry operation)

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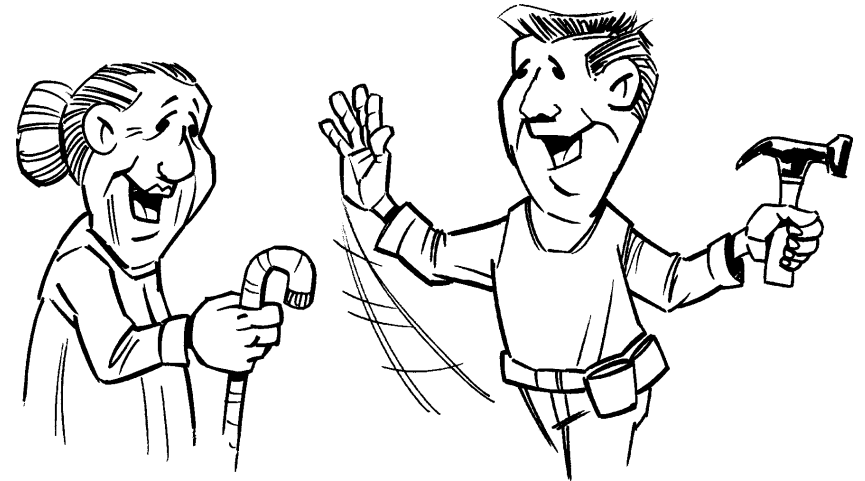
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Deacons in Action



Pastoral Leader Training Booklet

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Ask the Lord to help you, through this study, to mobilize the deacons to serve more effectively.

Note: In this study we use the word “Deacon” to mean a person who carries out some practical form of service. In some churches, the word “deacon” is not used in this sense, but rather for those in pastoral work. Whatever the name you give to those who serve the Lord by helping others in practical ways, each congregation needs to mobilize them.

OBJECTIVES

- That your church choose its deacons according to need, as the Apostles did.
- That your church train the deacons, men or women, to carry out their respective responsibilities.
- That your church express its Christian witness through practical works of love.

PRACTICAL WORK

- Inform your church about the role and function of deacons. (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13)
- Find out needs in your own church and community.
- Together with your congregation, name deacons, to coordinate the ministry of service.
- Give responsibilities to each deacon, and training to carry them out.
- Ask the deaconesses to counsel women.
- Write down what the deacons (men and women) of your church will do.

Whose is the principal responsibility of caring for widows?

(1 Timothy 5:4-16)

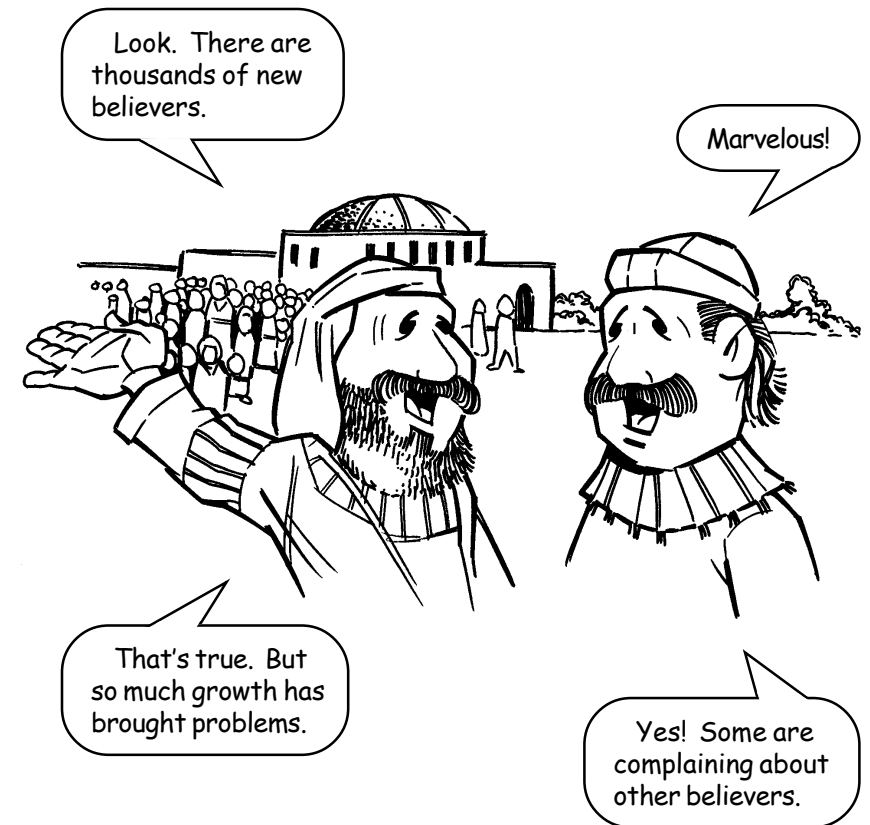
What kind of widow is worthy of being helped by the church?

(1 Timothy 5:9-15)

Write down some urgent needs in your church, with which the deacons should help.

WHAT IS A DEACON?

The book of Acts tells of the beginning of the church. In chapter 6, we read why they named the first deacons (the word “deacon” in the New Testament meant “servant”). The church was growing fast...



Some believers quarreled about the distribution of help for widows.

To be able to carry out this ministry of helping others, we give offerings for:

- the support of Christian workers. (1 Corinthians 9:4-14, 1 Timothy 5:17-18)
- emergencies and disaster relief. (Acts 11:28-29)
- needy believers in another church. (1 Corinthians 16:1-4)
- the poor. (Galatians 6:10)
- elderly widows, and orphans. (Acts 6:1, 1 Timothy 5:3-16, James 1:27)
- etc.

In Luke 21:1-4, what did Jesus say about the poor widow's offering?



- Counsel those who have problems.
- Care for and help the sick, widows, elderly and needy.
- Support the work of the church with their offerings and help.

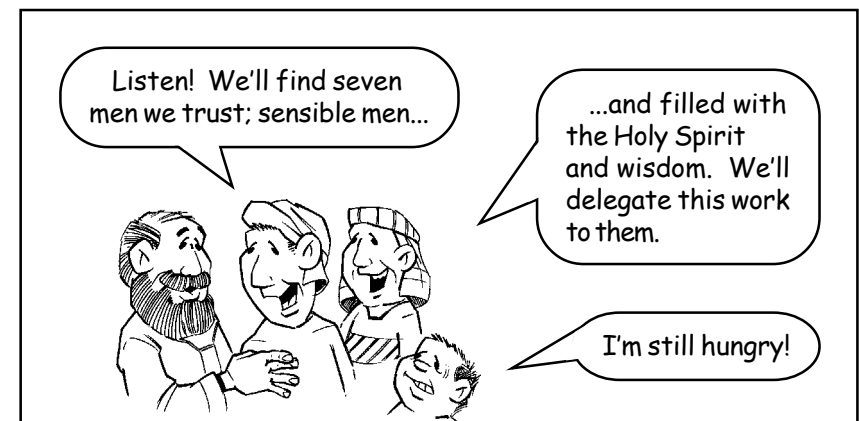
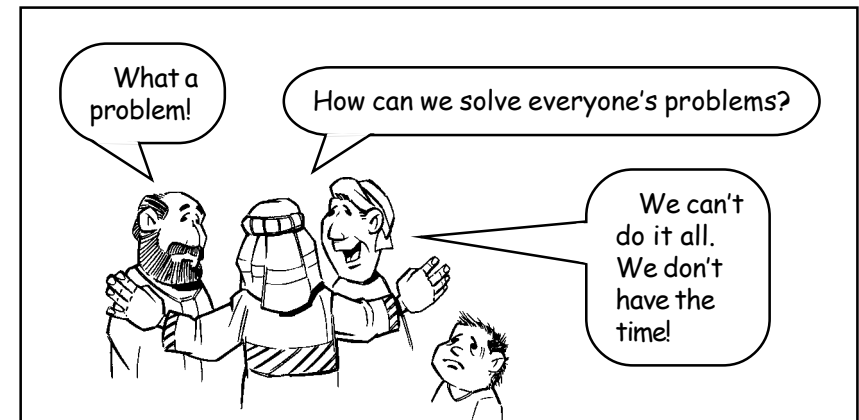
Consider Community Needs That Your Deacons Might Confront.

We must teach the Christian's biblical duty to help the needy.
(James 2:14-26)

What will the Lord do with false "believers" who do not help the needy? (Matthew 25:31-46)

Works of love are proofs of true faith. (John 14:15, John 15:5-6)
We are not saved BY works but FOR works. (Ephesians 2:8-10)
Deacons help the pastors, coordinating the whole congregation's participation in this ministry of helping others.

The twelve apostles discussed the problem. What should they do?





All the brethren agreed. They named the first deacons in the church: Stephen, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas.



- To pray and study God's Word, and set an example in speech, in faith, in life, and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12-13)
- To dress modestly, wearing the beauty of a gentle, quiet spirit. (1 Peter 3:3-4, 1 Timothy 2:9-10)

Deaconesses should encourage all the women to:

- Keep the meeting place clean; provide flowers, etc.
- Care for and teach the children during the service.
- Give hospitality to Christian workers who travel.
- Evangelize their neighbors.
- Teach neighboring women to feed their children properly, care for their houses, make clothes, etc.
- Teach their neighbors to grow vegetables and flowers, or make useful things for their homes.
- Teach reading and writing to illiterate adults.

younger women how to behave with male friends.” Using the Bible, they teach them the responsibilities of brides, wives, mothers, workers, businesswomen, cooks and housekeepers. A deaconess also counsels women who have personal problems.

Which mature Christian woman in your church or group could counsel the younger women, biblically?

Let’s see what the women elders and deaconesses can teach the younger women.
(Titus 2:3-5)

They teach the younger women:

- To be good wives and mothers, and to be self-controlled and pure in everything they do. (Titus 2:4-5)
- To marry only another believer. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)
- At work, to show that they can be fully trusted; to be eager to do what is good. (Titus 2:9-12)

...and so there were two types of ministries in the church; those of the apostles and the deacons. It worked...

The Apostles gave themselves to prayer, evangelism and teaching.



The Deacons concentrated on practical needs.



“So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased...”

(Acts 6:7)

Today, too, churches must help the needy, spiritually and materially. A division of labor can make work more efficient. The elders (pastors) carry out their ministry; they visit, teach, take time to pray, and study God’s Word.



LYDIA was the first person converted to Christ in Europe. Through her good example, all her family was converted. After her conversion, she began to serve the Lord, giving hospitality to missionaries. (Acts 16:13-15)

PRISCILLA gave hospitality and advice to Christian workers (Acts 18:1-3, Acts 18:24-26); she evangelized with Paul and his team; lent her house for services and risked her life for workers, along with her husband Aquilla. (Romans 16:3-5)

In the Old Testament, the SHUNNAMITE WOMAN provided a room for Elisha with a bed, table, chair and candlestick, so that the prophet could sleep comfortably when he traveled by there. (2 Kings 4:8-11)

TYPICAL MINISTRY OF DEACONESSSES

Ask the deaconesses to instruct other women, and to be an example to younger women.

Through her example, a deaconess shows other women how to behave with their husbands and with other people, and instructs

- She helps in the practical work of the church, especially in ministry to the needy. (Acts 6:1-7, Acts 9:36-39)
- She cooperates with the pastors or elders in any work she can do. (Romans 16:12, Titus 2:3-5)
- Deaconesses counsel women, and share with others in home visitation and evangelism.
- According to 1 Timothy 3:11, which particular temptation should deaconesses avoid?

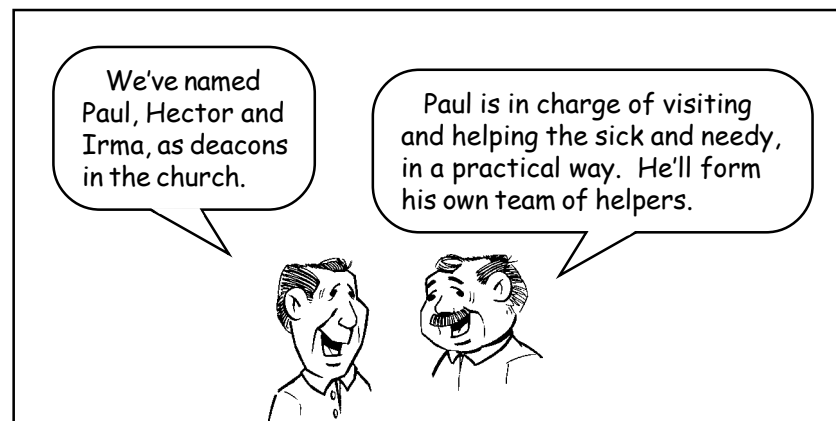
EXAMPLES OF DEACONESSSES AND WOMEN IN MINISTRY

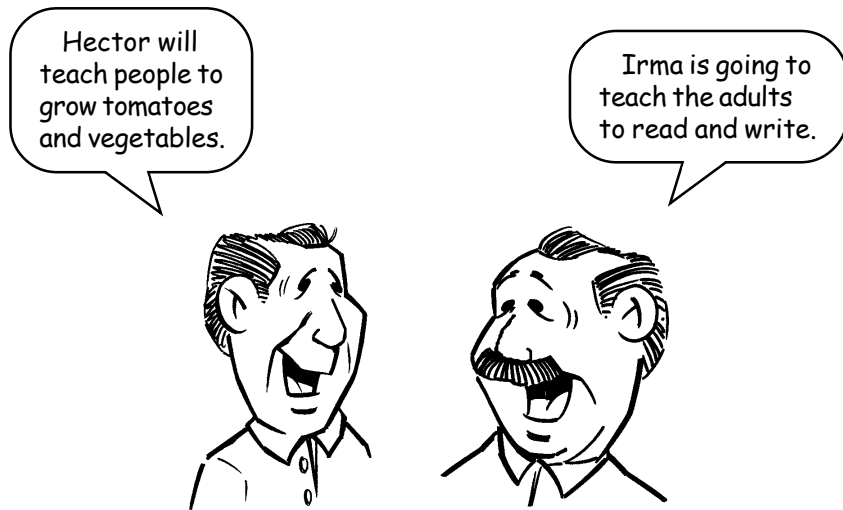
PHOEBE was a deaconess in the church at Cenchrea. She helped the Christian workers and took a letter to Paul at Rome. (Romans 16:1-2)

DORCAS was always doing good and helping the poor, including making clothes for them. (Acts 9:36-39)



The word deacon means “servant” in the New Testament. The deacon helps the elders (pastors). He serves everyone. Each church should name deacons as soon as the need appears.





Let's be clear about the difference between a deacon and an elder:

In the apostolic church, the deacons served in ministries that did not involve public leadership. For example, in Acts 6:1-6 the church named men who were filled with the Holy Spirit to do an important job. What did they do? (Acts 6:1-7)

What should younger widows do? (verse 14-15)

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15. To whom should we refuse help?

THE ELECTION OF DEACONESSES

The church chooses deaconesses to do the same sort of work as deacons. Probably, they will be more involved in helping families, and working among women. They are chosen the same way as the men, according to your church's practice.

BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DEACONESSES

- A deaconess fulfills the same requisites as a deacon. (1 Timothy 3:8-13, especially verse 11)

What are we to the world? (Matthew 5:13-14)

S _____ and L _____.

Salt adds flavor and prevents corruption. Light both shows the way and reveals what has been hidden. We need to do all these things in our church and in the community.

WHICH PROBLEMS SHOULD BE AVOIDED WHEN HELPING THE NEEDY?

Material help may awaken greed. This is why God gives rules and limits about help. Deacons give help among the needy with great care. Read 1 Timothy 5:3-16.

Whose is the primary responsibility of supporting a needy person?
(verse 4, 8 and 16)

What kind of widow does the church help? (verse 5-6 and 9-11)

What did the elders (pastors) do? (1 Peter 5:1-4)

- The ELDER does the PASTORAL work; teaching and leading.
- The DEACON deals with the PRACTICAL or MATERIAL side.

Note: The practical work of the church is also a spiritual ministry.

“Spiritual” means “related to God”; practical work should be this, too.



It needs the power of God's Holy Spirit to be fair in giving out help to the needy, according to Acts 6:3.

How did the deacons help the apostles? (Acts 6:1-3)

Whom did the deaconess Phoebe help? (Romans 16:1-2)

How did Dorcas help her neighbors? (Acts 9:36-39)

WHOM SHOULD THE CHURCH NAME AS DEACONS?

The deacon should be a mature Christian, who is filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 6:3) He must have proved himself first, as a responsible, serious worker. (1 Timothy 3:10)

Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13 about the conduct of deacons.

What characteristic do they need, according to verse 8?

The Lord's Great Command is to love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-40) This love is practical. (1 John 3:16-18) It serves the needy. (Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 10:25-37)

A church prayerfully names deacons to coordinate this ministry.

Does your church have deacons?

How does your church choose them?

How long do they serve?

An obedient church does not only preach. It puts its love into practice. (Romans 13:8-10, 1 Corinthians 13:1) An obedient believer does good to all, but principally to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:10)

- Act as treasurer or secretary.
- Visit and help the sick, widows and orphans.
- Welcome those who come to the services.
- Come early before the service, to open up, ventilate, clean, put flowers in the chapel for services, etc.
- Give hospitality to Christian workers who visit.
- Teach nutrition and hygiene.
- Help the victims of accidents or disasters.
- Teach the young people some trade or vocation.
- Teach better agricultural methods.
- Teach people to grow fruit and vegetables to get the vitamins they need.
- Teach married people their family responsibilities.

The treasurer is, in fact, a deacon (or deaconess), because he looks after material values. He must be a responsible person. The treasurer should give a monthly financial report to the church council.

Why should a NEW BELIEVER not be a deacon? (verse 9-10)

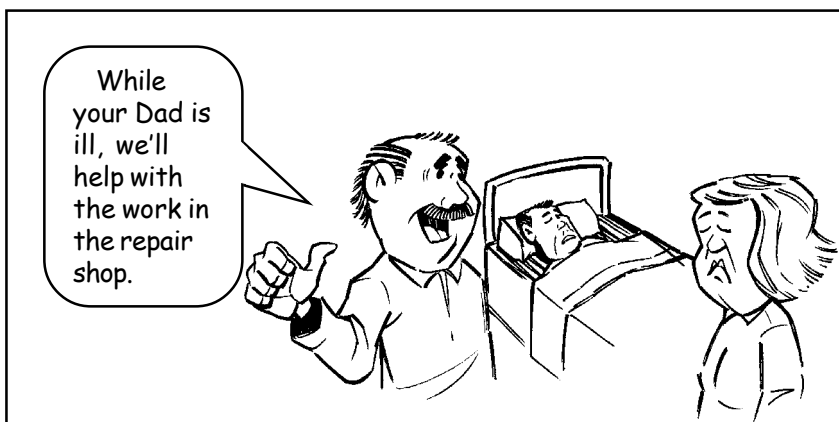
How should a deacon behave? (verse 11)

What should the deacon's home be like? (verse 12,13)

In your church, how are deacons trained?

DEACONS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The deacons serve the congregation and the local community in various ways. They show Christ's love to the needy.



Each deacon has his own responsibilities. He is not elected just to give him a title. He is elected to a ministry of PRACTICAL WORK.

Deacons may work as a team, and coordinate their work with the pastor or elders. They help others in the congregation to serve in different ministries. The deacon's role is to motivate and organize spiritual ministry in practical areas; that is, to participate himself, and involve and delegate to other members, too.

Examples of the responsibilities of deacons and areas they must care for (mark which your church should do):

- Collect clothes, food, etc. to give to the needy.
- Teach illiterate people to read, make clothes, etc.
- Coordinate projects that help the community.
- Coordinate the construction, upkeep or cleaning of the chapel.
- Sell Bibles, Christian literature and hymn books.

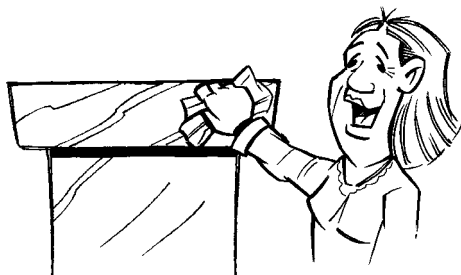
Giving hospitality
to visitors.



Try to eat protein, fruit and
vegetables every day.



Cleaning up...



The deacon
was right.
We are going
to eat better
this year.



...welcoming visitors to the church,
doing the shopping for the elderly, etc.

You should
boil the water
you drink, to
kill microbes
and the eggs
of worms.



