

Diaconal Ministry at the Classis Level

NEW CHURCH ORDER VISION AND MANDATE

Church Order Article 76a and b

- a. The classes shall implement a ministry plan that advances evangelistic and diaconal witness to Christ and his kingdom in its specific region and, when necessary, assist those churches needing support to fulfill their mission.
- b. Each classis shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.

Church Order Article 41

In order to assist churches, the classis shall allocate sufficient time at its meetings to respond to requests for advice or help from churches and, at a minimum of one of its meetings annually, shall allocate sufficient time to discuss at least one ministry issue that the classis considers to be especially important in the life and ministry of member congregations in the denomination.

The role of Classis

Each Classis has its own geography, context and history to deal with. Over the past few decades a lot of effort has gone into strengthening the role of Classis within a denominational context. Central to all these efforts has been what is now officially encouraged in the Church Order, having a plan that guides the work churches do together. A good number of Classes already include deacons in their meetings and with deacons now officially seated it is a good time to review the strategic process in the Classes to make sure that the diaconal opportunities in the Classis' region have been considered. This should address questions like:

1. How can the meetings of Classis be organized so that the resourcing of local diaconal ministry and planning are enhanced?
2. What is the status of current ministry plans the Classis has developed? Is progress being tracked and reported on? Is it accomplishing what was envisioned? Is the ministry transformational by its very nature (working with the resources already in the community)?
3. Where is God providing additional opportunities for ministry in this region so that people and place are both being transformed? Is the ministry transformational by its very nature?
4. Where is the role of the diaconate at this level working most strategically? What resources do our deacons bring that can enhance current ministry plans of the Classis.
5. What are the key resources in this region that the classis can network with in order to address the areas of ministry that God is encouraging the Classis to work on?
6. Who are the key diaconal leaders that have a passion and vision for accomplishing ministry at the classis level? Many Classes already have great structures and organizations in place. How can classis enhance the connections?

Resources

1. Christian Reformed Home Missions Regional Teams www.crhm.org/engaging
2. CRCNA Faith Formation Ministries www.crcna.org/FaithFormation
3. CRCNA Network Classis site <http://network.crcna.org/classis>
4. Volunteers in Service, West Michigan <http://visgr.org/index.php/howwework/ourimpact>