

A Job Description for Deacons at the Local Church level

(This is a suggested framework to facilitate discussion)

Setting the Vision

Suggested Charge to Deacons from Synod 2015 TF Report on Elders and Deacons

I charge you, deacons, to inspire faithful ministries of service to one another, to the larger community, and to the world. Remind us that the Lord requires us “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [our] God” (Mic. 6:8). Prompt us to seize new opportunities to love God, our neighbors, and the creation with acts of generous sharing, joyful hospitality, thoughtful care for the poor, and wise stewardship of all of God’s gifts. Weigh our opportunities for giving and service, that we might use the church’s resources discerningly. Offer wise care to victims of injustice, and teach us holistic responses that respect their dignity and mend the broken relationships and exploitative structures and systems that contribute to poverty. With respectful compassion for the needy and awareness of the often hidden needs of the wealthy, teach us to minister to rich and poor alike, both within and outside the church. Encourage all with words that bring hope to their hearts and with deeds that bring joy into their lives. Show us by your example how to be prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in our society, and to be sensitive counselors to the victims of such evils. Let your lives be above reproach, and live as examples of Christ Jesus, looking to the interests of others. And in all your ministries help us anticipate and participate in the renewal of all things when God’s kingdom comes.

Mandate from Church Order Article 25c

The deacons shall represent and administer the mercy of Christ to all people, especially to those who belong to the community of believer. Deacons shall lead the members in ways that inspire faithful stewardship of their time, talents and resources and so give life in this world the shape of God’s kingdom. Thus deacons shall create and encourage participation in structures and ministries of mercy, justice, and reconciliation, both locally and globally, All of this shall be done with words of biblical encouragement and testimony, which assure the unity of word and deed.

A Possible Summary Mandate

The diaconate leads the congregation in giving expression to its ministry of mercy and justice, mobilizing the congregation for this ministry with its members, its community, and its world. The diaconate is vital in helping the church and its members do neighboring with its community well.

Primary Tasks

1. Develop a strategy for the local church that addresses its place in connecting to and building the resources of justice and mercy in the community, so that the church’s role in being an agent of transformation is clearly articulated and advanced.

2. Envision an approach that allows the church to neighbor in such a way that the church is sought out by the community as a vital agent of mercy, justice, and reconciliation.
3. Connect the church to ministries of the denomination, and others as appropriate, at a regional (Classis), national, and international level.
4. Establish clear policies for benevolent ministry so that those receiving services and financial support are not only well taken care of, but are helped with an approach that builds on their God given talents and abilities, and cherishes the image of God in them.
5. Supervise and mobilize, as appropriate, the ministry of one or more staff or volunteer positions that provide the coordinating function between the church and community.

Structure

1. A small group of people selected for their gifts in organization and administration, who have a passion for God's Kingdom work and an ability to encourage and mobilize others in doing ministry.
2. A direct link with the Senior Pastor in the church. The Pastor is regularly present at Deacon Board meetings to ensure coordination with the vision and mission of the church.
3. While it is wise to have diaconal terms, care must be taken to ensure continuity of gifting and vision. Defining the necessary gifting is critical.

Resources

1. **When Helping Hurts** Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
<https://www.chalmers.org/our-work/redefining-poverty/when-helping-hurts-products/>
2. **Helping Without Hurting in Short-term Missions** Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
3. **Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence** Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
4. **Toxic Charity** Robert Lupton
5. www.network.crcna.org/deacons
6. Diaconal Ministries Canada, www.diaconalministries.com/resources
7. Holland Deacons Conference <https://hdccrc.org/resources/>
8. Volunteers In Service, West Michigan <http://visgr.org/index.php/equipping/deacons>
9. Volunteers in Action, Denver http://www.volunteersinaction.info/?page_id=313
10. Communities First Association (and related Asset Based Community Development Resources)
cfapartners.org/tools/archive
and <http://cfaolc.ning.com/professional-development-core-competencies#link1>
and <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/>
and <http://www.abundantcommunity.com/>