

# The Role of the Deacon

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# My Experience

- Conned



- Inner-city church (35 members)

- Dogged



- Tenth (over 1,500 members)

# First Deacons – Core Values

- Acts 6
  - Appointed seven men
  - Filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom
  - Why?
    - Problem: Greek-speaking widows neglected
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# Tasks Generally Performed

- Administration
- Building/property
- Preparing communion elements
- Coffee hour/fellowship
- Greeting
- Ushering

“Busy work”

# Holy Spirit and Wisdom Needed

- Benevolence
  - Caring for poor, sick, seniors
  - Widows, orphans, handicapped
  - Counseling
  - Visitation
  - Mercy
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# John Calvin on Deacons

- *The diaconate is not at all an earthly office, but have a spiritual charge from God. They are not only in a public estate, but they belong to the spiritual regime of the Church, and they are there as God's officers. The deacons are chosen to be like the hands of God, and they are there in a sacred office.*

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# Everything the body of believers—the Church—possesses belongs to God

- *You are not your own; you have been bought with a price . . . .*
    - (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
  
  - *I am not my own but belong to my faithful savior Jesus . . . .*
    - (*The Heidelberg Catechism #1*)
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# John Calvin on Deacons/Members

- *Let us raise in each member of the Christian Community the spiritual problem of his material life, of his goods, of his time, and of his capabilities, in view of freely putting them at the service of God and neighbor*
- How does this occur?



# First from the Pastors

- Teaching not to neglect the “weightier” matters of the law, *Justice and Mercy*
- Teaching to love mercy and act justly.
- Teaching mercy and justice are life-styles.
- Teaching the congregation a vision of compassion ministry.
- Modeling the heart of a servant
- Teaching deacons how to “deac”

# Pastors Must Develop Servant-Leaders

- *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.*
  - *Eph. 4:11-12*

# The Role of the Deacon

*It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty to **develop the grace of liberality** in the members....,*

***To devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts...***

PCA Book of Church Order,

9-2

# Deacons Must Equip/Prepare

- Fixing Nets
- Setting broken bones
  - Coming along side
- Teaching/modeling
  - You want people to “catch” it



# Understand that *Diakonia* is . . .

- An attribute of God.
- The heart of the gospel
- Active compassion
- Proof of love
- How the church should respond as Christ's love lived out
- Gratitude as a result of grace and mercy



# *Diakonia* is . . . .



Everything that was done by the Son of Man who came, Jesus Christ, including humiliation, self-emptying, cross and death is summarized in eight letters: *d i a k o n i a*. The same single word also indicates the pattern of life for all who follow Jesus. *Diakonia*: they go into service . . . . They are other-directed . . . . They find themselves among those in need; it has become their natural milieu . . . . They discover that they are being drawn into Jesus' diaconate and start participating in it.

# Are there only ordained Deacons?

- No
- Every Christian is an agent of Christ
- Every church has *big D and small d* deacons

***Diakonia = Deacons + deacons***

# Deacons' Role: Collect Gifts

## Spiritual gift inventory

1. Mercy
2. Administration
3. Leadership
4. Encouragement
5. Helps
6. Discernment
7. Others





# Deacons' Role: Collect Gifts

## Talent Survey

1. Skill
2. Profession
3. Availability
4. Zeal
5. Blood type



# Deacons Serve the Distressed

- Household of Faith
- Widows, Orphans, Strangers
- Love the one in your path
  - Good Samaritan illustrated

# Deacons Serve the Distressed

- *As we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10)*
- *Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it"—when you have it with you (Proverbs 3:27-28)*

# Deacons Stimulate Ministry with Good People Skills



- Cheerfulness
- Respect
- Empathetic listening
- Pray
- Advocacy
- Putting others first
- Loving patience

# Deacons Stimulate Ministry Dev.

- Sick and Shut in Visitation
- Tutoring
- Elderly and Shut-in Bible Studies
- Girls & Boys Mentoring
- Divorce Recovery
- Single Parents Support
- Auto Clinic
- People Helping People
- Mothers Day Out
- Parish Health Education&Prevention

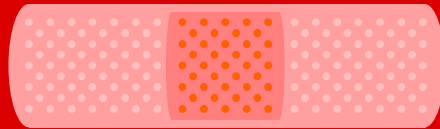


# Deacons Prevent Poverty

- We want to move people beyond their need so that they are equipped to help others (no longer stealing...)
- We want to help people grow in their relationship and dependence on God.
- We want to help people be self-sufficient.

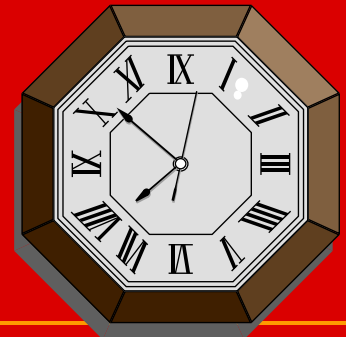
# Questions about SOP

- Who do you help first? (priorities)
- What kind of help will you give?



- What kind of help will you not give?
- What is the limit of your help?

- What structure will you use for members?
- What structure will you use for strangers?
- Who makes decisions on exceptions?
- When do you call in the elders?



# Summary: Deacons show wisdom

- Know people
  - Know resources
  - Update data
  - Delegate wisely
  - Protect members
  - Prepare continually
  - Refer appropriately
  - Think biblically
-



# Resources

- Keller, Tim, *Ministries of Mercy*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1989
  - (Now in Second Edition).
- Sherman, Amy L., *Restorers of Hope*, Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway Books, 1997
- Christian Community Development Assn.
  - (773) 762-0994, [www.cdda.org](http://www.cdda.org),

# More Resources



- Joni and Friends
- P.O. Box 3333
- Agoura Hills, California 91376
- (818) 707-5664
- [www.joniandfriends.org](http://www.joniandfriends.org)



# Resources

- Mercy Ministry News (David's blog)
  - [www.mercyministrynews.wordpress.com](http://www.mercyministrynews.wordpress.com)
- Mission to North America
  - [www.pca-mna.org](http://www.pca-mna.org)
- Biblical Guidelines for Mercy Ministry in the PCA
  - [www.pcahistory.org/pca/2-414.html](http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/2-414.html)