

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DEACON?



*Devotions
for Deacons*



DIACONAL MINISTRIES
CANADA

www.diaconalministries.com



- **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

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.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE MINISTRY OF THE DEACON?

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."

COMMUNITY MINISTRY

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

Bringing Hope

Compassion



Scripture Reading: Mark 2:1-12

Jesus knows the crowds around Him. He has been to Capernaum before. The last time He was here, the crowds had listened and watched Him with amazement, quick to recognize that Jesus was different from other teachers and religious leaders. The people had not been able to contain their amazement at His teaching, His authority, and His power. The news about Him had spread around the entire region.

It is no wonder then, that on His return to Capernaum, Jesus has drawn a large crowd. So large, in fact, that there seems to be no way to get close to Him. For many, it is enough just to hear Him speak. For four determined friends, however, it is not enough. The story is familiar: the friends carry the paralyzed man up to the roof, cut a hole in it, and lower the man to Jesus.

There is urgent need here and clear determination. Like the crowds below them, the friends have likely seen and heard how amazing Jesus is. They also have hope. They hope in the healing that Jesus can provide. But notice that Jesus sees the *faith* of the four friends. Faith goes a step further –it is being sure of what we hope for (Hebrews 11:1a). And what does Jesus do in response to their faith? He forgives and then heals.

Jesus has a different idea of hope. He is the source of all hope, and He knows truest need. Before healing the man who cannot walk, Jesus forgives his sins. Of course He is mindful of the crowds, mindful of the teachers of the law gathered around Him and judging Him. He is teaching them something, too - revealing who He is by showing that both forgiveness and healing are possible with

God. So if the lesson for the leaders seems to be about authority, perhaps the lesson for the four friends is more about hope.

Hope is precious. It is a powerful motivator. It compels us to envision something better. In an imperfect and often painful world, the beautiful promise of Heaven's perfection is the source of our hope. What a privilege it is to share the vision of what is to come. Yet meeting needs and sharing hope are often connected. The hopeful vision of justice for the poor and marginalized, the possibility of a better life or of new possibilities is grounded in a more hopeful vision of a world renewed and redeemed by God, transformed and perfect. This is the true source of hope.

Deacons, you are agents of hope. As you meet needs and

bring your compassion to bear on the needs of your community with the compassion of Christ, you will be bringing hope. And hope does not disappoint because the hope you bring is rooted and grounded in your faith in a God who loves justice and has a heart for the poor and marginalized. Our God will bring reconciliation and justice. This is the God in whom you put your faith. This is the God who will give you what you need to inspire hope.

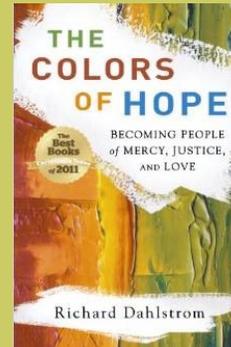
Simply by your love and your actions, your neighbours will begin to envision a different future. As you build and establish relationships, and as trust and love develops, keep your mind and heart open to the prompting of the Spirit to share the source of all hope.

Praise God that He is already at work in your community and invites you to join Him in bringing hope!

Discussion:

1. Reflect together upon how Jesus brought hope and what it means, as deacons, to be agents of hope.
2. Talk about the importance of hope to the people you are helping and loving in your community. Have you seen hopelessness? What was that like? How did you respond?
3. Spend time in prayer, asking God to use you to bring hope. Pray specifically for God to deepen your relationships within the community.

Further Reading:



*The Colors of Hope:
Becoming People of
Mercy, Justice, and Love*
by Richard Dahlstrom

Ministries of Mercy
by Timothy J. Keller



Related Resources:



shalem
Mental Health Network

Shalem Mental Health Network has created a helpful tool for “building relationships through effective listening.” You can find this tool by clicking [here](#) (under “Guidelines for Caring with Compassion”) or by browsing the [Shalem website](#).

This and other resources are available free on the Diaconal Ministries Canada website: www.diaconalministries.com

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.



DIACONAL MINISTRIES
C A N A D A

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