



# From Needs to Strengths: Practicing Asset-Based Ministry

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." — 1 Peter 4:10*



## What is Asset-Based Ministry

Most ministry focuses on addressing needs: *food, clothing, housing*. Deacons show care and compassion when they meet those needs — but what if we began with strengths?

Asset-Based ministry shifts our focus from what's missing to what's already there. It starts by recognizing that God has already placed gifts, skills, and resources within every person and community.



## Why does this matter

- **Restores dignity:** Every person is a child of God with purpose and ability.
- **Builds community:** Everyone becomes a participant, not a recipient.
- **Creates lasting change:** Solutions grow from local strengths, not outside aid.
- **Honours God's design:** We serve as faithful stewards of the grace already given.



Instead of asking, 'What do people need?'  
**ASK:**  
**'What gifts has God already placed here?'**






## The Role of the Church

Deacons and congregations move from doing *for* to walking **with**. Relief may still be needed, but the long-term goal is dignity, empowerment, and flourishing.



# Asset-Based Ministry in Action



Challenge (Needs-Based)	Transformation (Asset-Based)
<b>Food Insecurity</b> - "We run a Food Bank"	 <b>Community Garden &amp; Cooking Classes</b> - Neighbours grow food, share skills & build relationships
<b>Job Seekers</b> - "We provide clothing for interviews"	 <b>Skills &amp; Employment Partnerships</b> - Churches partner with local businesses for mentorship and training
<b>Isolated Neighbours</b> - "We offer church-run programs"	 <b>Neighbour-Led Support Circles</b> - People share rides, childcare & practical help

These ideas begin with **listening** — to stories, hopes, and strengths already present in your neighbourhood. It takes the deacons and church out of the driver seat and into a more supportive role.

## The Future of Ministry

Ministry begins with what's strong. By recognizing God-given gifts, we nurture dignity, unlock potential, and build lasting hope. **Asset-based ministry is more than a strategy; it's a way of seeing the world**—and it has the power to change everything.



## Ready to Go Deeper?

Diaconal Ministries Canada can help you put asset-based ministry into action:

- Flourishing Together (Online) Cohorts
- Helping Without Harming Workshop
- Community Opportunity Scans (NewGround)



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