

# WANTED: CARING DEACONS

Deacons can provide much of the care that is needed by a congregation.  
The very word *deacon* points to service to persons in need.

## Qualities Needed by Caring Deacons

- A caregiver knows Jesus Christ.
- A caregiver is sensitive.
- A caregiver is selfless.
- A caregiver is patient.
- A caregiver is alert.
- A caregiver gets involved.
- A caregiver is teachable.
- A caregiver grows spiritually.

## Opportunities for Giving

The following listing is only representative of the many needs that exist in most churches. Your deacon group might compile its own list.

### **Assimilating new church members.**

- Be willing to become personally involved.
- Assign specific responsibilities. If your deacon group wants to minister to new church members, an approach can be developed of assigning a deacon to each new member.

**Helping newcomers to the community.**—Your deacon group could find ways to reach out to newcomers to your community. Newcomers need to know where to find various support systems needed to carry on daily life. This support system includes doctors, attorneys, schools, shopping, recreation, and repair shops.

**Caring for the pastor, church staff and their families.**—Who meets the emotional and physical needs of those in your church who serve the Lord vocationally?

- Provide encouraging words and helping hands.
- Encourage your church personnel committee to meet at least twice a year with the pastor and staff to evaluate salaries, time off and work expectations.
- When a mistake is made by the pastor or a staff minister, encourage the congregation to deal with the mistake by following the guidelines given in Matthew 18:21-35 and Galatians 6:1-10.
- Encourage the pastor and staff to take time off weekly.
- Pray daily and at each deacons meeting for a strong level of trust to develop among pastor, staff, and deacons.
- Covenant together as deacons and fellow ministers to have a relationship of love, trust, and support for one another and to the work God has called you in Christ.

**Providing for benevolence needs.**—Performing acts of benevolence in the name of Christ aligns today's deacons with their counterparts in the New Testament church.

- Be alert to spot benevolent needs when visiting in homes.
- Develop guidelines to follow for the benevolent ministry.
- Investigate all requests. Obtain information regarding needs, eligibility, and amount of assistance required.
- Determine available help from community agencies. Sometimes certain kinds of long-term help can be given by such agencies. Have available a list of these agencies and the kind of assistance they can provide.
- Review periodically all assistance being provided.
- Make monthly reports to the deacon group regarding assistance given.

**Ministering to specific need groups.**—Singles, teens, students, the mentally challenged, hearing-impaired persons, nursing-home residents, and shut-ins are examples of special need groups.

**Providing care in times of crisis.**—At one time or another, the crises of sickness, bereavement, estrangement, or loneliness trouble most folks in the church family. Your ministry does not replace the pastor's ministry but enables the pastor to spend more time with the individuals who have the greatest needs.

**Ministering to the needs of families.**—Deacons are the natural group to provide care for families in the church through:

- Encouraging family worship.
- Shepherding new families into the fellowship of the church.
- Witnessing to families.
- Meeting special family needs such as homes broken by separation and divorce, problems with children, aged parents, substance abuse, physical abuse, crisis counseling, premarital pregnancy.
- Discovering families in need.
- Alerting the Church Council of general family needs.
- Maintaining a relationship between the church and community agencies.