

The church is a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship. We are continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of Jesus, the Son of God.

We are called to serve and witness in our local church and to the community we live in. When we do this we are sharing Christ's love and the good news of salvation.

God calls every church member into ministry, to be servants of God sharing in and supporting the activities of the church. There are different roles in the church but the status of all leaders is the same. It is a "sacred calling" and the contribution we make is to glorify God.

God promises to supply you with resources to help build church community. These include scripture that reveals God's character, spiritual power and spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit.

A Few More Notes

Offerings: The deacons have, as a general rule, been responsible for receiving the church offering and working with the treasurer to guarantee the security and proper handling of the money on Sabbath. Churches are, however, free to work out the most appropriate procedure to suit the size of their congregation and the personnel available.

Communion Service: Good quality unfermented red grape juice can be purchased in most grocery stores. Under normal circumstances, it should not be diluted. After the service the remaining blessed unleavened bread should be burned or buried and the blessed grape juice poured out onto the ground. Often the pastor or elders will need a small portion to take to shut-ins so they can have the communion experience in their homes.

Training Younger Members: The deacon and deaconess ministry is an ideal way to train younger members in church responsibility. Involving the youth in church life encourages, shares skills and develops confidence. It is a way of passing on church tradition while, at the same time, the church is benefited with the vigour and freshness of the young.



THE MINISTRY OF **Deacon & Deaconess**

Have you been asked to serve your local church as a deacon or deaconess? Or perhaps you serve on a church nominating committee and are wondering what a deacon or deaconess is expected to do. This guide has been designed to help you understand these roles within your local church.

Becoming a Deacon/ Deaconess

A deacon or deaconess is elected by the church nominating committee on a yearly basis.

Responsible to

The head deacon and head deaconess supervise the work of their teams and report to the church Board. The deacons and deaconesses, being a part of a team ministry, report to the head deacon or head deaconess.

Time Commitment

- 2 - 3 hours a week for church duties
- 1 - 4 hours a month for visitation and special projects
- A monthly or quarterly meeting to plan and organise. (eg. a Sunday morning breakfast) Small churches require only one meeting per year.



Term of Office

Two years and depending upon the church's structure, possibly longer.

The Role of the Deacon and Deaconess

Deacons and deaconesses care for the physical needs of the congregation. This includes but is not limited to:

- greeting and ushering
- coordinating the collection of offerings
- maintaining church property. This may include cleaning, repairs, ground maintenance, decorating or renovations and organising a "working bee" for the church

- preparing a flower roster
- security/ safety of church buildings
- visiting the sick, disabled and widows
- supplying food for bereaved and their visitors at a funeral when required
- caring for visitors, new members and the aged during special church services



Communion Service

Deacons: positioning the communion table and other furniture requirements

Deaconesses: preparing the unleavened bread and supplying grape juice, setting, arranging and covering items on the communion table, cleaning and storing linen

Footwashing Service

Deacons: arranging the bowls, towels and water and assisting male candidates

Deaconesses: dispensing water, assisting female candidates, cleaning and storing linen

Baptism

Deacons: preparing the baptistry, assisting male candidates

Deaconesses: preparing the robes, towels, assisting female candidates, washing and storing robes and towels

Recipe for Communion Bread

- 1 cup finely-ground plain flour (whole grain preferred)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- 1/4 cup olive oil or other vegetable oil

Sift flour and salt together. Pour water into the oil. Mix the liquid through dry ingredients with a fork. Roll between two

sheets of waxed paper to the thickness of pie pastry. Place on an ungreased, floured baking sheet. Mark off into bite-sized squares with a knife and prick each square with a fork to prevent blisters. Bake at 230°C for approximately 10 minutes. Watch carefully and do not brown. Makes bread for about 50 people.

Skills and Spiritual Gifts

God has gifted each of us in different ways. The following gifts are valuable when considering the choice of members for the role of deacon or deaconess.

Service: Unselfishly meeting the needs of others through practical help. This gift can be used to assist a person who has the gift of teaching or evangelism, enabling them to focus on ministering the Word of God while other needs are met.

Administration skills: To organise and manage church members who are assisting with church activities.

Hospitality: To provide an open house to those in need of food, lodging and fellowship. This helps both the physical and spiritual needs of others.

Mercy: To empathise with those in need. This may involve a listening ear or a practical activity such as improvements around their home. Those who are suffering or discouraged can benefit from a visit and encouragement.