**DEACONS 101**

**Introductions and Prayer**

“Lament Psalm Two” in Ann Weems, *Psalms of Lament.*

**Book of Order Description:**

**G-2.02** *The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.*

**G-2.0202** *Deacon ministry is under the supervision and authority of the session. Deacons may be given special assignments in the congregation, such as caring for members in need, handling educational tasks, cultivating liberality in giving, collecting and disbursing monies to specific persons or causes, or overseeing the buildings and property of the congregation. Deacons shall assume other duties as may be delegated to them by the session, including assisting with the Lord’s Supper. A congregation by a majority vote may choose not to utilize the ordered ministry of deacons. If the congregation has neither a board of deacons nor individually commissioned deacons, the function of this ordered ministry shall be the responsibility of the ruling elders and the session.*

*Ordained for life.*

**Scripture Passages:**

Isa 42:1-9; 61:1-4; Luke 4:16-21; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Acts 6:1-7. *In many congregations each deacon is assigned families to contact and minister to on a regular basis. In other churches, programs such as the Stephen Ministry are adopted to shoulder some of the caring. It is also possible for deacons to assume other functions such as administering programs for the elderly or working with the handicapped or those economically deprived. In some parts of the country the board of deacons also monitors the finances of the church.* (*Selected to Serve: A guide for Church Officers.* p. 9)

**Examples of Deacon Duties:**

**FPC Frankfort – Deacon of the Month**

**Deacon Responsibilities – RPC**

**Others?**

**Helpful Hints**

Hospital Visitation

Home Communion

**Recommend:** *The Gift of Encouragement: Restoring Heart to Those Who Have Lost It.*

*As ordinary mortals, even the most persistent optimists among us become discouraged at times. To be discouraged means to lose heart.* (p. XI) *The heart is the core of human energy, emotional connection, and drive for life. When we lose heart, we may become bored and restless with life, fearful of the future and anxious in the present, cynical about people or institutions, passive or distant in our relationships, and low on basic energy for daily tasks. We may even descend into the profound isolation of depression.* Many things contribute to feelings of discouragement and it is our primary job as a deacon (and as a follower of Christ) to help reorient those who are suffering toward healing and wholeness.

We do that through:

* Showing up
* Active listening
* Keeping confidence – confidentiality is important – in minutes that are written and verbally
* Asking good, open-ended questions
* How have you handled adversity in the past?
* What are you learning from this experience?
* What are the big questions in this experience that keeps coming to your mind?

And how do you hear God responding to your questions?

* Keeping our opinions and advice to ourselves – the more anxious we feel in a situation, the more likely we are to revert to advice giving (watch your language of *should, ought, must* and instead, replace with *I wonder If . . .what would happen if you were to consider . . .*
* Reminding people of the expansiveness of God’s love, that God has not abandoned them and loves them even in their questions and anger they may feel
* Recognizing our own worth – it is hard to love others and care for others if you do not love and care for yourself – *Emotional Health Self-Assessment*
* Give yourself sabbath and permission to make mistakes
* If people are stuck, encourage worship, prayer, service, giving, and hospitality – when we are able to move out of ourselves toward others, it frees our heart from depression and anxiety

Good Communication Skills – p. 55 in Thompson’s book

**Covenant of Spiritual Maturity**

**Difference between Responsible For . . . and Responsible to . . .**

**Resources:**

Book of Order

Earl S. Johnson, Jr., *Selected to Serve: A Guide for Church Officers.* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2000.)

Marjorie J. Thompson, *The Gift of Encouragement: Restoring Heart to Those Who Have Lost It.* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013.)

Ann Weems, *Psalms of Lament.* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.)

We cannot fix. We cannot live their life for them. We cannot take on their issues so that it affects *our* life – called “enmeshment.”

We *can* encourage. We *can* remind people of God’s love for them. We *can* show up and be a friend.