

MEETINGS—G-3.0105 and G-3.0203

Regular meetings of the Session are called stated meetings. A Session is required to have at least four stated meetings (once each quarter). Special meetings, or called meetings, can be held upon request of the pastor (the moderator) or in writing by two members of the Session. Reasonable notice of all special meetings must be given when other than routine business is to be transacted¹⁴. The most common agenda for these meetings is to *receive new members*.

Meetings of councils shall be opened and closed with prayer. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, except when it is in contradiction to this Constitution. Councils may also make use of processes of discernment in their deliberations prior to a vote as agreed upon by the body.¹⁵

Typical Session Agenda

1. There may also be a brief devotional, Scripture reading, or time of sharing.
2. The roll is taken and a quorum declared.
3. Session is then asked to approve granting excused absences to those elders who have requested them.
4. Minutes of previous session meetings are approved as well as minutes of any congregational meetings (unless previously approved by the congregation).
5. For stated meetings, the agenda must be approved; changes can be made in the agenda, by Session vote, at any time during the meeting. For called meetings, the purpose of the meeting must be declared and that is the agenda.
6. The Pastor's Report is received and action taken on items in the report, as appropriate.
7. The Clerk's Report is received. Action is taken on recommended items, as appropriate.
8. Committee or Ministry Team Reports are received. Committees should be encouraged to have written reports submitted in advance and items that require Session action should be clearly marked. Committee or Ministry Team Chairpersons should not read their reports; it should be assumed that each Ruling Elder has read the report and is familiar with its contents.
9. Old and New Business. Any items not previously considered may be brought before the Session at this time. Ruling Elders are encouraged to bring up only items of a pressing nature. Other issues should be submitted to the appropriate Committee or Ministry Team for due consideration before being brought to Session.
10. Closing: Session meetings are closed with prayer.

¹⁴ G-3.0203

¹⁵ G-3.0105

MEMBERSHIP ROLLS—G-3.0204a

There shall be three rolls of members

1. **Baptized:** Those who have not professed their Faith in Christ publically.
2. **Active:** Those who have professed their Faith in Christ Publically.
3. **Affiliate:** Those whose membership are in another church.

If a Session determines it is important to maintain a register for inactive members it is their option with the understanding that the names on the inactive register are no longer considered to be members of the congregation and in order to be restored to active membership they must be received into the life of the congregation by a re-affirmation of their faith.¹⁶

Session Organization

The sessions of different churches can have different ways of organizing themselves. Some Sessions have moved to Ministry Teams rather than Committees. Each church adapts its own structure or no-structure to suit its own needs and available resources. **The only committee required by the Book of Order is a Nominating Committee.**¹⁷

If a Session determines that Committees or Ministry Teams are needed they will be organized by an action of the Session to enhance the mission of the church. Different churches organize themselves in different ways; no one way is the best for everyone. In most, but not all, churches, each of the Standing Committees or Ministry Teams will have an active Ruling Elder as the chairperson and usually one or more active Ruling Elders serving on the committee or team. In addition, each Committee or Ministry Team can recruit other church members or friends to serve as the Holy Spirit gifts them.

Each Committee or Ministry Team carries out the business related to its area of responsibility and oversees its budgeted line items. Committees or Ministry Teams should report to the Session as directed by the Session and seek permission for items not specified in their budget or agreed upon responsibilities.

Every Session will create a **Manual of Operations** that should include the following:¹⁸

1. The Articles of Incorporation
2. Church Bylaws
3. Standing Rules or Church Policies: i.e. personnel (including job descriptions), weddings, funerals, memorials, property use, etc.
4. Sexual Misconduct Policy for Staff and Volunteers
5. See Appendix A for a sample of a Manual of Operations

A copy of the **Manual of Operations** should be kept in the office and be made available to anyone who wants to see it.

¹⁶ G-3.0204b

¹⁷ G-3.0111

¹⁸ G-3.0106

Responsibilities of Being a Good Ruling Elder

- **Absences.** If you need to be absent from a stated Session meeting, notify the pastor, the Clerk of Session, or the church office, you will be given an "excused absence".
Note: Sessions can make a rule or policy that if a Ruling Elder has more than three or more unexcused absences that Ruling Elder will be counseled by his or her peers and be requested to step down for a lack of commitment if their absences continue.
- **Decisions and Actions.** It sometimes takes a while after a new class of ruling elders joins the session for the group to learn how best to work together. We are all working toward the same goals so our discussions should take place in an atmosphere of Christian love and respect. We will not always agree but we all have agreed to abide by the church's polity which is that *we* abide by *the majority's vote*. **Sometimes we need to agree to disagree.**¹⁹

Required Session Actions

The *Book of Order* is written so that a Council's actions can be done decently and in order. The intent is to ensure that the church's government functions fairly and efficiently with careful consideration being given to all issues and that biblical principles are followed.

In this *Book of Order*

- (1) **SHALL and IS TO BE/ARE TO BE** signify practice that is mandated,
- (2) **SHOULD** signifies practice that is strongly recommended,
- (3) **IS APPROPRIATE** signifies practice that is commended as suitable,
- (4) **MAY** signifies practice that is permissible but not required.
- (5) **ADVISORY HANDBOOK** signifies a handbook produced by agencies of the General Assembly to guide synods and presbyteries in procedures related to the oversight of ministry. Such handbooks suggest procedures that are commended, but not required.²⁰

Some Special Cases

There are times when it is the duty of Session to see that all requirements of the *Book of Order* are met. This is sometimes difficult because the requirements may be distributed in various places. There are four important examples.

1. **Receiving New Members.** Members are received into a congregation by Session action. Session may not deny membership to anyone if the basic conditions are met, namely profession of faith in Christ. This condition can be met by actual profession of faith, by reaffirmation of faith, or by letter of transfer from another Christian church. It is assumed that a person who is a member of another Christian church has previously made a profession of faith. The procedure by which a new member is received includes welcoming and recognizing that person during a service of worship.²¹

¹⁹ F-3.0205

²⁰ Preface to the Book of Order

²¹ G-1.0301-G-1.0303 and F-3.0102 Corporate Judgment; W-4.2000—services of welcome and reception

2. **The Lord's Supper.** The Session is given the responsibility to authorize the Lord's Supper at appropriate times. This appears to mean that the Session must take the responsibility to see that all conditions are met. While there is a lower limit to the number of times in a year (once per quarter) the Lord's Supper is to be observed, there is no upper limit other than what is reasonable. The responsibility of the Session is to see that this sacrament is observed and is observed in an appropriate atmosphere and setting. Other requirements include the following. The bread and cup may be served by those in the ordered ministry of the church, **or by other church members on invitation of the session or authorizing council.**²² Also, when both wine and grape juice are served (if wine is served, grape juice must also be served), the *Book of Order* requires that they be clearly distinguished. Some churches place a statement in the bulletin "light is wine, dark is juice" (using white wine and regular grape juice, of course). The Sacrament must be administered by an ordained minister or commissioned ruling elder (when approved by Presbytery).²³ The observance must be announced at least one week in advance.²⁴ The procedure for the actual ceremony is given with parts of that being suggested and parts mandatory. This means that many variations in the ceremony are possible. The Lord's Supper may be taken to shut-ins by the pastor, ruling elders, deacons, and members of the congregation authorized to represent the church.²⁵ **For missional concerns, a presbytery may authorize Ruling Elders to administer the Lord's Supper if a Teaching Elder or Commissioned Ruling Elder is not available.**²⁶
3. **Baptism:** The Session is to authorize all baptisms. The *Book of Order* states that the reason for having Session authorize all baptisms is "for reasons of order". It is this author's opinion that this means that it is the Session's responsibility to see that all requirements of the *Book of Order* have been met just as in the case of the Lord's Supper. A person is to be baptized only once; the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) accepts all forms of baptism with water. The Sacrament is to be administered in a public service of worship but arrangements can be made for other situations as long as the congregation is represented. Baptism must be administered by an Teaching Elder or Commissioned Ruling Elder when approved by presbytery. The procedure for the sacrament is set and is mandatory. There are parallel portions for the person being baptized (or the parents of the child being baptized) and the congregation. Both confess their faith followed by declarations of intent. Following this section, the *Book of Order* lists the Session's responsibilities and the Church's responsibilities toward the person just baptized.²⁷

²² W-3.3616d

²³ W-2.4012

²⁴ W-3-3609

²⁵ W-2.4010

²⁶ W-2.4012c

²⁷ W-2.3000 and W-3.3600

4. **Examination of Ruling Elders-Elect and Deacons-Elect.** The congregation elects church officers (Ruling Elders and Deacons) but before ordination/installation the Session is charged with examination of those persons to ascertain that they are ready, willing, and able to serve. It is appropriate to use the nine questions in the ordination/installation service as a guide to cover the pertinent topics of personal faith, knowledge of doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the Church, and duties of the ministry appropriate to the order.²⁸

The Congregation

The Session has full responsibility for the areas of the church listed in the previous section. The congregation cannot usurp those responsibilities. For example, the Session is responsible for the finances of the church and the congregation cannot tell the Session how to set the annual budget or how to spend, or not spend, funds. If the congregation has serious concerns, the Session would be wise to listen to the congregation's counsel.²⁹ Some Sessions allow the congregation to vote on the budget to show their agreement in supporting the budget for the coming year. This is not the normal procedure as outlined below, but if the Session believes it is important to have congregational agreement an exception to the rule can be made by the Session.

Business to be transacted at meetings of the congregation shall be limited to matters related to the following:

1. electing ruling elders, deacons, and trustees;
2. calling a pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor;
3. changing existing pastoral relationships, by such means as reviewing the adequacy of and approving changes to the terms of call of the pastor or pastors, or requesting, consenting to, or declining to consent to dissolution;
4. buying, mortgaging, or selling real property;
5. requesting the presbytery to grant an exemption for terms of service as permitted in this Constitution (G-2.0404).

Whenever permitted by civil law, both ecclesiastical and corporate business may be conducted at the same congregational meeting.

The pastor moderates all congregational *meetings without vote* since the pastor is not a member of the congregation *and the Clerk of Session is the secretary of all meetings.*³⁰ If it is impractical for the pastor to moderate the meeting (the most common occurrence of this is when changes to the pastor's call are discussed), another pastor or a member of the session may preside at the invitation of the moderator.

²⁸ G-2.0402

²⁹ G-3.0205

³⁰ G-1.0504 and G-1.0505

9 W-4.4003i (1) (For ruling elder) Will you be a faithful ruling elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

W-4.4003i (2) (For deacon) Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need? In your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

Q: What does it mean to be a faithful Ruling Elder or Deacon?

Q: How can we show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

Q: What might be a teaching opportunity for a ruling elder or deacon?

HANDBOOK FOR Deacons IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Compiled by in 2012 by Rev. Dr. William K. Knudsen
Executive Presbyter
Northumberland Presbytery

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR DEACON HANDBOOK	
The Role of Deacon	24
Deacons in Scripture	24
Qualifications for Deacons	26
Moral Qualifications	27
Suggested Character of a Good Deacon	28
The Book of Order and the Deacon—G-2.02	
Deacon Defined	28
Under Authority of the Session	29
Some Additional Thoughts about being a Deacon	29
How will you carry out your ministry as a deacon?	29
Looking into the Future—being a deacon in the 21 st Century	30
Additional Questions to be considered	30
PRE-TEST ANSWERS	30

Called by God to Serve..... A class to help equip those who have been called to be Deacons in the Presbyterian Church (USA)

ROLE OF THE DEACON DEFINED

The word deacon is defined by Wikipedia as:

The word deacon is derived from the Greek word diakonos, which is often translated servant or more specifically waiter. Some believe that the office of deacon originated in the selection of the seven men (among them Stephen) to assist with pastoral and administrative needs of the early church (Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6). Deaconesses are mentioned by Pliny the Younger in a letter dated c. 112. The exact relationship between Deacons and Deaconesses is ecclesiologically unclear; in some traditions, a deaconess is simply a female deacon; in others, deaconesses constitute a separate order.

The role of deacon in the New Testament is indeed somewhat ambiguous. As it has been stated previously, the word literally means servant, but the word can also be translated as minister and there is no further elaboration of the office given. The role of deacon in the Christian Church is generally associated with service of some kind, but the type of service rendered by the deacons varies among theological and denominational traditions.

Some may argue that the deacons administrated the physical needs of the church because of the example of the seven men selected in Acts 6. While the word deacon is used in v. 1 (ministry or distribution), and the verb form is used in v.2 (to serve) the noun form is also used in v. 4 to refer to the apostles proclamation (ministry of the word). Therefore, there is reason to believe that the ministry of the deacon is limited to administration.

Deacons are usually thought of as under-shepherds who were responsible for shepherding a smaller group of people within the local church, while the elders were responsible the overall leadership of the church. Deacons are to be under the authority of the elders, which is evident from the fact that they are always mentioned after the elders, and also because the requirements for deacon are slightly less strict than for elders (ruling and teaching presbyters).

DEACONS IN SCRIPTURE

The office of the deacon is introduced in the New Testament in Acts 6. Although, the seven men appointed in Acts 6 were not actually called “deacons”, most students of the Bible generally agree that the “seven” were the prototype of today’s deacons. In the early days of the church, the tremendous growth through the ministry of the apostles was accompanied by many demands of service, which the apostles could not adequately provide. Specifically mentioned were the increasing complaints by the Grecian Jews

against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Thus, the appointment of these dedicated individuals provided support and service for the ministry of the gospel by meeting practical needs within the church body.

Acts 6:1-7 (NRSV)

¹Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. ²And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, ⁴while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." ⁵What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

The work of Stephen and Phillip strongly suggests that gifted deacons became a permanent part of the church's outreach to the world very early in its history. The thrilling activities of these servants of the church sound much like the work of a traveling evangelist, missionary, or lay preacher. Stephen is described as a man "full of faith and power" who "did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8). So convincing were his words and miracles that "they were not able to resist the wisdom and Spirit by which he spoke" (Acts 6:10). While some responded in faith, Stephen's zeal for Christ stirred up powerful enemies (Acts 6:11-13). Undaunted by false witnesses, Stephen glorified the Lord even as he was put to death for his convictions (Acts 7:59-60). Phillip was also an evangelist who "preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:9-13). After preaching to eager crowds in Samaria, Phillip witnessed to a solitary Ethiopian in the desert and baptized him (Acts 8:26-38).

It is important to note that, in the first introduction, emphasis is placed upon the character of the men chosen to serve as deacons. Seven men were chosen who were "known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom". Among those chosen was Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit". No matter what the ministry to be performed was to involve, in this case the waiting of tables and service to the widows, the life, and character of the man chosen to perform it was the determining factor.

In addition to the passages Acts 6, which refer to the role of the deacon, there are two other passages that make reference to deacons: Philippians 1:1 and I Timothy 3:8-12. The primary focus of these passages is the order and structure in the church. The appointment of a deacon can best be understood in relation to the role of co-worker and fellow servant in the Gospel.

(NRSV) Philippians 1:1. *¹Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*

(NRSV) I Timothy 3:8-13. *⁸Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; ⁹they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹²Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; ¹³for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

In summary, there are several aspects of the position of deacon, which are referenced in the New Testament, that need to be understood. First, the deacon is selected to serve by their fellow members of the church and church leaders. Next, he or she should be recognized to be faithful. Finally, the deacon is to be seen as an extension of the pastoral ministry. The deacon has the responsibility of making the truth of God's Word come alive within the church.

These standards are essential to the services that the deacon is expected to perform. In our life and indeed, in our Christian walk, what we do is normally a reflection of who we are and each deacon is expected to nurture his or her own personal life and relationships so that they are able to fulfill the responsibilities of ministry that have been outlined by God in the New Testament. ***A deacon must demonstrate a heart for God through scriptural attributes and demonstrated spiritual maturity and service as described above.***

QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

Spiritual Qualifications

Acts 6:3(*Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom*)

- Someone with a **Good Reputation** – Known by the community
- Someone who is **Full of the Spirit**
- Someone who demonstrates **Godly Wisdom**.

Moral Qualifications

1 Timothy 3:8-13 (NRSV)

⁸Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; ⁹they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹²Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; ¹³for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Worthy of respect – The deacon is to be a person whose moral and spiritual character evokes esteem from others; a person that is considered honorable or noble. A deacon should be a person that has a respectful reputation especially in spiritual matters.

Sincere – The deacon is to be truthful and trustworthy. They should not say one thing to one person and something different to another. A deacon's word must be honest; not a person that takes part in gossip, tale bearing, idle talking, or slander and does not use manipulative, insincere, or deceitful speech. A deacon is not a liar.

Not indulging in much wine – For the deacon, there is to be no abuse or dependence on any drug – may include the regular use of alcohol even though not getting drunk, if inappropriate dependence is demonstrated. There should be a demonstrated freedom not to drink. Paul is prohibiting the abuse of wine or any other substance that could damage a deacon's testimony and make ineffective his or her Christian witness.

Not pursuing dishonest gain – Not willing to manipulate or resort to illegitimate means for personal gain, either for money or for recognition, especially in the area of ministry. A deacon should demonstrate a proper values system, including a willingness to give up money making opportunities for the sake of the gospel. The deacon is not to be controlled by a greedy obsession to obtain all the material possessions he or she can.

Must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience – The words "keep hold" speaks of knowing the Word of God and "clear conscience" speaks of doing the Word of God. This simply means that a deacon's life must be consistent with Christian doctrine. The deacon should believe in sound doctrine, and should hold firm to his or her convictions. A deacon's spiritual integrity should be beyond reproach.

Must first be tested – The deacon must demonstrate their spiritual qualifications before being elected to serve in the position of deacon. The elders of the church should observe their daily attitude, speech, and conduct for an appropriate period. The deacon should have a proven ability to do the work of caring for the sick, the needy,

Married only once ◦ – It means in principle that the deacon has his or her sexuality resolved and under control. This should not be interpreted to mean that a man or woman must be married in order to serve as a deacon or that a man or woman that has been divorced is ineligible to serve as a deacon.

Manages children and household well – The primary application is to those who are married meaning that their family life is good. The deacon should act as a responsible Christian father, mother, husband, wife and household manager providing for their family financially, emotionally, and spiritually in an active ever-present role through example and service. Because the home is often referred as a microcosm of the church, it is imperative a deacon is able to care for his or her family before they can care for the church of God. In the case of the unmarried, it means that they have close relationships and that those relationships are generally healthy and stable.

When a Nominating Committee is looking for Deacons they should consider the following:

- ◦ Faithful attendance at the worship services of the church.
- Faithful steward of their time, talents, and treasures.
- ◦ Faithful in their attendance at the meetings of the Board of Deacons.
- ◦ Faithfully participates in the life and ministry of the church.
- ◦ Demonstrate Christ-like behaviors and attitudes with others.
- ◦ Is willing to visit the sick and needy of the church and community at large.
- ◦ Is willing to take on additional responsibilities as requested by the session.

THE BOOK OF ORDER AND THE DEACONATE

G-2.02 DEACONS: THE MINISTRY OF COMPASSION AND SERVICE

G-2.0201 Deacon Defined

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 Under Authority of the Session

Deacons may be individually commissioned or organized as a board of deacons. In either case, their ministry is under the supervision and authority of the session. Deacons may also 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. (W-3.3616). 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.

SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS:

1. Why did you decide to become a deacon when the nominating committee contacted you?
2. What talents or gifts do you have that especially qualify you to become a deacon?
3. When you look at the list of responsibilities listed in the Book of Order which is the most important which is the least significant to you?

To minister to those who are in

1. need (physically, emotionally, financially)
2. to the sick
3. to the friendless
4. to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith
5. lead the people in worship through prayers of intercession
6. read the Scriptures
7. present the gifts of the people
8. assist with the Lord's Supper

HOW WILL WE CARRY OUT OUR MINISTRIES AS DEACONS?

- ✘ **Do you support the Mission or Vision Statement of the Church?**
- ✘ **Do you agree with the Core Values of the church?**
- ✘ **Are you sensitive or compassionate to the needs of the people who attend your church (nurture).**
- ✘ **Are you sensitive or compassionate to the needs of the people in your community who do not attend your church (mission or evangelism through caring)?**

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: DEACONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

1. It be necessary for elders and deacons to be more active in taking the roles currently reserved for ordained clergy?
 - a. There will be a shared ministry rather than a pastor dependent or dominated ministry as we move into the 21st century
 - b. More pastoral care will be done by the deaconate
 - c. More pastoral visitation will be done by the deaconate
2. Deacons will need to share in the responsibilities of church administration which may include financial and clerical (shared responsibilities)
3. Deacons will need to do more than just provide meals for funerals? How can deacons provide pastoral ministry more effectively to the bereaved? (Stephens Ministry)
4. Deacons will need to do more than just hand out money to the needy? What about providing classes in budget management, or developing skills for new employment opportunities?
5. Deacons will need to know the resources that are available in the community to help the needy especially in times of disaster.
6. Deacons will need to take advantage of the internet and email to provide a better communication between those who have and those who need, and establish communities of caring people connected by social media like twitter and facebook.
7. Deacons will need to have a strategic plan to help those who are socially & financially impoverished? Can the church provide opportunities for free clinics with lawyers, doctors, and CPA's for legal, medical or tax needs?
8. Deacons will need to identify the social injustices in their communities that need to be addressed and challenged?

Additional thoughts to be considered:

1. Encourage your Board of Deacons to adopt some specific goals and objectives that deal specifically with the needs of the people who attend your church or live in your community.
2. Yearly evaluate your ministry or service projects to determine those that are really effective and truly meet the needs of your community.
3. Prayerfully ask God to show you some of the needs that need to be addressed in your church and in your community, and ask yourself if you are willing to move out of your comfort zone in order to meet those needs.

Pre-test answers:

1. b,d 2. grace alone, scripture alone, faith alone 3. session, presbytery, synod, general assembly 4. false 5. true 6. false 7. false 8. false 9. false 10. true 11. false 12. false 13. true

APPENDIX—A

SUGGESTED MANUAL OF OPERATIONS

- (1) *Originating Documents*
 - (a) organizing covenant,
 - (b) list of charter members,
 - (c) articles of incorporation,
 - (d) bylaws,
 - (e) mission and vision statement
 - (f) core values
- (2) *Nominating, Electing, and Ordaining/Installing*
 - (a) description of the work of the church officer nominating committee,
 - (b) elements in the examination by the session of those elected,
 - (c) procedure on the day for ordination/installation.
- (3) *Membership*
 - (a) procedures for contact and invitation for membership,
 - (b) procedures for removing names from the roll.
 - (c) procedures for notifying members who were on the inactive roll that they are no longer members of the church
 - (d) baptismal policies for infant or adult baptisms
- (4) *Committees or Ministry Teams and other Organizations i.e. PW, Sunday school, Youth, VBS, choir*
 - (a) job description of the work of each committee and organization,
 - (b) description of annual sequence of the work required for each committee and organization,
 - (c) time, place, and frequency of meetings of each committee and organization,
 - (d) expectations of persons serving on committees and organizations.
- (5) *Contact with the Presbytery (call the Presbytery to get these forms if you include in your manual)*
 - (a) description of the procedure and report from the triennial visit,
 - (b) catalogue of resource library,
 - (c) directory of committee membership,
 - (d) list of presbytery commissioners,
 - (e) form to nominate persons to serve on presbytery committees.
- (6) *Personnel*
 - (a) position description for each church staff position—paid or volunteer,
 - (b) personnel policies,
 - (c) forms used in hiring, including disclosure forms for prior charges or conviction in sexual misconduct and sexual abuse,
 - (d) criminal background check for all volunteers
 - (e) description of performance review and compensation review procedure.
 - (f) sexual misconduct policy for church staff and volunteers
- (7) *Finances*
 - (a) church budget,
 - (b) description of procedure for stewardship and pledging,
 - (c) procedures for counting the offering.
 - (d) procedures for annual financial review (we have a samples at the presbytery)
- (8) *Calendar*: church calendar of events during the year.
- (9) *Annual Meeting Instructions*: description of preparation for the annual meeting with copy of last meeting.
- (10) *Property*
 - (a) church building use policy
 - (b) key control policy
 - (c) maintenance policy
 - (d) insurance coverage policy
- (11) *Worship and Sacraments*
 - (a) instructions for ushers,
 - (b) instructions for greeters,
 - (c) instructions for those serving communion,
 - (d) instructions for those preparing communion,
 - (e) procedure for elder assisting in baptism.
 - (f) funeral policies or guidelines
 - (g) wedding policies or guidelines