

First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Lord's Day September 11 Anno Domini 2005

Acts 6:1-7 & 1Tim 3:1-15 **Diaconal Ministry: Mercy and Management**

The Diaconate is a spiritual office responsible for the ministry of mercy and stewardship of the congregation. It is neither a ruling nor a teaching office. Its exercise, like the whole life of the church, is under the oversight of the session and its function is administrative. Directory for Church Government, RPCNA.

- I. God is a God of orderly peace. 1 Corinthians 14:33.
 - A. Order shows God's design and hinders God's enemies.
 - B. The Lord has commanded that the church be orderly, peaceable, led by elders and served by deacons. Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1; Mark 9:35; 10:45.
 - C. The church is organized to accomplish God's purposes. Ephesians 4:16.
- II. The ministry of the church: worship, word, mercy.
 - A. Worship: oriented toward God, John 4:23.
 - B. The ministry of the word: oriented toward all people, John 17:17-18; 1Thess 2:13
 - C. The ministry of mercy: oriented toward the needy, James 2:15-17; Matthew 25:35-36, 40; Romans 12:13; 2Cor 9:12; Hebrews 6:10; Luke 6:27-28; Luke 6:35-36.
- III. Diaconal ministry is spiritual service applied to material needs of people.
 - A. Management: serve in a way that frees the elders for their service. Acts 6:2; 1Cor 12:28.
 - B. Mercy: serve in a way that frees the saints of their suffering. Acts 6:1ff, 1Cor 16:3; 2Cor 11:9; 1Cor 9:14; Acts 9:39.
 - C. The difference between a member and a deacon is that the deacon is ordained to serve in the name of the Lord on behalf of the church. 1Cor 16:3-4; Rom 16:1-2.
- IV. Duties of deacons, RPCNA Directory for Church Government.

The duties of deacons include:

 3. Maintaining an active ministry of mercy, such as:
 - a. Leading the congregation in discerning and ministering to needs such as: (1) local needs of individuals and institutions, (2) national and international needs.
 - b. Gathering and distribution of funds.
 - c. Training the congregation in the use of the members' gifts in the ministry of mercy.
 - d. Helping the congregation evaluate requests for funds by organizations outside the denomination.
 4. Maintaining an active ministry of stewardship, such as:
 - a. Overseeing the work of the treasurer.
 - b. Appointing a finance committee as needed.
 - c. Keeping the congregation informed at least quarterly of financial needs.
 - d. Securing an annual audit of all the congregation's accounts.
 - e. Preparing an annual budget in conjunction with the session.
 - f. Offering family budget counseling.
 - g. Teaching principles of giving.
 - h. Overseeing the maintenance of property.
 5. Developing these ministries by personal visitation.
 6. Performing other duties assigned to them by the session, congregation or presbytery.
 1. Regular attendance and participation in the meetings of the deacon board.
 2. Meeting jointly with the session periodically for prayer, evaluation and growth in their respective ministries.