

Appendix C: Visits by the Deacons

Although deacons' work is different from that of elders many of the same points could also be applied to the visits made by the deacons.

Making regular visits

It is advisable that the deacons make their way through the congregation once every two or three years. In this way they can "acquaint themselves with existing needs and difficulties and exhort the members of Christ's body to show mercy..." At these visits the deacons shall promote "the unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit which the congregation enjoys at the table of the Lord" (Church Order Art. 22).

The deacons are advised to use a theme for their regular visits. They may wish to address such themes as:

- Proper stewardship of the time and talents the Lord has entrusted to his people (Luke 12)
- What does it mean to seek God's kingdom first (Matthew 6 and Luke 12)
- What to do about worry (Matthew 6 and Phil 4)
- The proper manner of giving (Malachi 3)
- Building the church of God; being involved in the communion of saints (passages from the book of Nehemiah; Romans 12)

The deacons should use the regular visits as an opportunity to encourage the members of the congregation to use their talents and gifts for the benefit of other members, to show hospitality, generosity and mercy so that all may share abundantly in the joy of God's people.

Visiting Schedule

It is important that there be good communication between elders and deacons so that visiting can be carried out in an orderly fashion.

Deacons should advise elders (and minster) of visits that are planned to avoid conflict in visiting schedules.

Visits should be coordinated in such a manner that the widowed and single members are visited at least once every three months by either the deacons, elders, or minister.

All official visits should be done by two deacons. A visit should be opened with scripture reading and prayer. Visits in addition to this are encouraged and may be made by individual deacons (with their wives) as seems appropriate. Discretion, however, should always be exercised when visiting widows and single women. No office-bearer should go alone if he knows beforehand no one else will be at home.

If members are in special circumstances (such as sickness, disabilities etc.) the deacons should make regular visits as seems appropriate. The shut-ins should be visited at least once a month. In this manner the pressure is taken off the minister who can concentrate on the work of preaching and teaching.

Sources

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