

TOP REASONS WHY

Deacons are Needed
at Classis & Synod

To compile our list of reasons, we've used the Bible, the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons (2016), the Church Order, and our own experience.

1 **Deacons Are Equals** God provides the unique gifts and abilities required for each role on Council and none are greater, or more important, than another. We call this "Parity between Church Offices".

- A whole new set of spiritual and practical gifts are represented when deacons are present.
- Given the different gifts, responsibilities and mandates of Deacons, Elders and Pastors, it seems clear that all three ought to be represented at Classis and Synod meetings in order to listen, pray and assist in the hearing of God's voice.
- *Deacons serve by leading and equipping the church to minister to its members and the world in a rich diversity of ministries... The deacons and elders, together with the ministers, are responsible for the general administration of the church. As well, Church Order Article 75 states that each classis shall ensure that deacons and elders are incorporated into the structure and plans for ministry in a manner consistent with their respective mandates.*

2 **Deacons Add Value** It's important to note that the areas of **Service, Justice, Stewardship, Compassion and Prophetic Criticism** are specifically described as the work of Deacons. In order to carry out this part of their calling it is very important that Deacons are well represented at the meetings of Classis and Synod.

- **Service** – Deacons are called not only to serve, but to *inspire faithful ministries of service to one another, to the larger community, and to the world.*
- **Justice** – Deacons are charged with the responsibility of reminding the church *that the Lord requires us to act justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with [our] God (Micah 6:8).* They are to do this by offering *holistic responses that respect the dignity of all people, working to change exploitative structures and systems, equipping the church for ministries of reconciliation and peacemaking, and seeking opportunities for advocacy.*
- **Stewardship** (of Time, Trees, Talents & Treasures) – Deacons are called to prompt the church *to seize new opportunities to love God, our neighbours, and the creation, with acts of generous sharing, joyful hospitality, thoughtful care for the poor, and wise stewardship of all of God's gifts.*

- **Compassion** – The Charge to the Deacons reminds us that, *with respectful compassion for the needy and awareness of the often hidden needs of the wealthy, the Deacons are to teach us to minister to rich and poor alike, both within and outside the church. And Deacons are to encourage with words that create hope in hearts and with deeds that bring joy into lives.*
- **Prophetic Criticism** – Deacons are also entrusted with the responsibility of being *prophetic critics of the waste, injustice, and selfishness in our society, and [are to] be sensitive counselors to the victims of such evils.*

3

Deacons Add Diversity Since diaconates are often more diversified in age and gender than the offices of Elder and Minister, having Deacons “at the table” will help to diversify these denominational gatherings.

4

Deacons Remind the Church to Live into its Missional Calling

Throughout the history of the church, the areas of Justice, Stewardship, Compassion, and Ministries of Service have always had a rich connection to mission.

- For the Church to live into its missional calling, both as individual congregations and as a denomination, decisions that are made in these areas need to involve the people ordained to live into that calling, namely Deacons.

5

Deacons Hold the Church Accountable Given the gravity of the Deacons’ Mandate and their responsibility to animate congregations to live into it, it seems prudent to have them hold the church accountable in these areas.

- For example, if Deacons see the church allowing its most vulnerable members to languish alone, or if they notice apathy within the church for those outside of the church, it is important for them to raise these issues at every assembly of the church, calling it back to its responsibilities.

6

Deacons ~ It’s Not Just Another Meeting Since Deacons are seen as the “doers” of the church, it can seem counterproductive to attend another meeting!

- Without Deacons at the table of the major assemblies of the church, some of the conversations we *must* be having may never be had. Classis and Synod meetings are places where all office-bearers can hear and share stories concerning where God is at work locally and internationally. Being in these meetings allows Deacons to learn from these stories and helps them establish best practices.

7

We are ALWAYS Better Together Seating Deacons at Classis and Synod meetings strengthens God’s Church, the body of Christ.

- “[Christ] makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)

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Diaconal Ministries Canada exists to inspire, equip and encourage deacons, churches and their partners as they join in God’s transforming work in communities.

diaconalministries.com | 1-800-730-3490 | dmc@crcna.org



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