

Looking for more resources?

Visit <http://diaconalministries.com/living-justly/>

or contact our staff

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WHAT IS JUSTICE?



Equality!

People getting what they deserve!

Respect and dignity!

Helping where help is needed

Holding people accountable for their crimes!

Giving to the poor and the needy!

The restoration of relationships!



Justice is a big concept and everyone has a different idea of what it is and how it's done.



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JUSTICE 101

In society, there are three major “spheres” of justice...

1. Level Playing Field (Welfare)

Justice is...

- the addressing of “root causes” that keep people in need and powerless
- getting rid of systemic barriers that lead to injustice

2. Doing What is Right (Virtue/Morality)

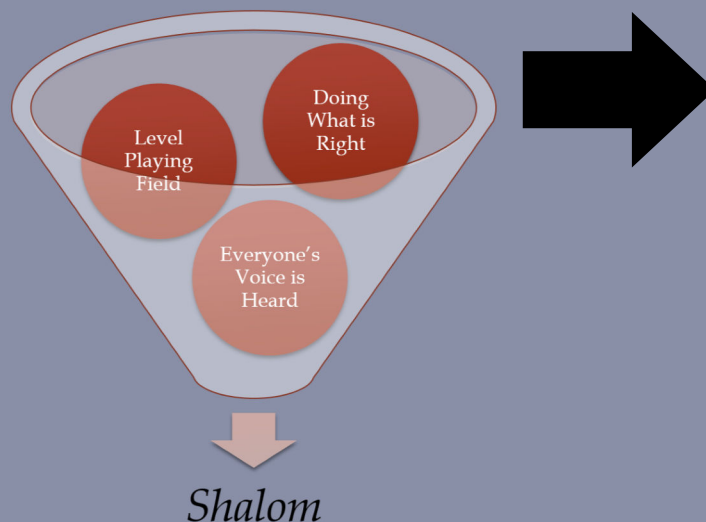
Justice is...

- holding those who break laws accountable
- people getting the reward or punishment that they deserve

3. Everyone’s Voice is Heard (Freedom)

Justice is...

- each person exercising their individual rights and freedoms to live as they choose
- fairness and quality for all people, based on what each person believes is fair for him or herself



WHAT CAN DEACONS DO?

Find ways to address injustice...

- Get to know a person in your community who is marginalized
- Attend community events to encourage services which reflect justice
- Work together to find affordable housing for all
- Sponsor and support a refugee family — for the long term
- Pray intentionally for wise responses to injustice
- Distribute prayer requests for those in unjust circumstances
- Serve fair/direct trade coffee and/or share with your congregation why it is important
- Purchase items that empower and enhance the lives of those who helped produce them
- Invite people who need assistance to your home— build genuine relationships with them
- Advocate to the provincial or federal government. Write letters; sign petitions
- Host a Bible study on justice
- Host a social justice film series
- Invite an expert on poverty to speak about local responses

HOWEVER, not one aspect of justice is more important than another. Justice is a form-filling concept – It changes depending on the situation and the context.

As Christians, we believe that

- justice is based on the character of God (Psalm 33:5)
- through Christ, justice brings about restoration and renewal of relationships – In Hebrew, this is called *shalom* (Isaiah 9:6)

What God desires for us, as His image-bearers, is *shalom*. We need to recognize the inherent value of all three “spheres” of justice, and use them to work towards a Kingdom vision of *shalom* within our communities: reconciling relationships with God, with others, with ourselves, and with creation.