

Start or revitalize a ministry in your church

QUICK START GUIDE



DEACON AND DEACONESS



Quick Start Guide for the Deacon and Deaconess

Available from:
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Introduction

Being chosen for the position of deacon or deaconess is an indication of your church's confidence in your character and abilities. The role of a deacon and deaconess covers a wide range of activities and involves important and sometimes challenging responsibilities.

Traditionally, men have performed the duties of deacons and women have performed the duties of deaconesses. However, in some Adventist churches today both men and women serve in both roles, as in many instances the work of the deacon and deaconess overlap. In fact, both English titles come from the same New Testament Greek word. Regardless of your title, the God who calls you to service will enable you to fill that role in the best way you can.

Overview

Traditionally, the work of a deacon and deaconess includes greeting and ushering, upkeep of church property, security, assisting with baptisms and communion, and generally caring for the physical needs of the congregation. However, many churches are now expanding the roles of the deacon and deaconess to include using their spiritual gifts in a variety of innovative ways to minister to the emotional and social needs of new members, people in crisis, families with small children, and the pastoral staff. Depending on the size of your congregation you may also be involved with bridal showers and weddings, greeting card ministries, fellowship dinners, baby showers, caring for people who experience illness, and funerals.

Getting Started

To be effective as caring Christians and leaders in the church, we must first have a personal relationship with God. Nothing can substitute for this. When we know God and stay connected with Him every day, we can trust Him to meet our needs and lead us in meeting the needs of other people.

In order to reach our highest potential in serving others we need to be aware of our strengths, weaknesses, and spiritual gifts. If you haven't already done so, take a temperament test and a spiritual gifts inventory. This will give you a better understanding of your talents and hopefully lead to opportunities to develop them more fully.

Main Responsibilities

Greeting and Ushering

Some churches assign deacons and deaconesses to open doors for people who arrive with their hands full, especially on Sabbaths when there is a fellowship dinner planned. Elderly individuals and parents with young children also appreciate having someone hold the door for them. If it is raining or snowing, deacons and deaconesses can meet people in the parking lot with an umbrella and walk them to the door. (This is a great job for junior deacons and deaconesses!) All these thoughtful little acts of kindness add up to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere in your church.



Deacons and deaconesses also often serve as greeters, especially in smaller congregations. This gives you the opportunity to ensure that people's first contact with the church is positive. By following Jesus' model of ministry, you can communicate caring concern for each person. Smile and look people in the eyes. Offer a warm handshake and words of welcome. Be sensitive and tactful, paying extra attention to those with special needs. If any people stop in the doorway while talking and block the entrance, gently and kindly guide them the rest of the way inside.

When guests arrive, welcome them graciously and stay with them past the first hello. Introduce yourself and learn their names. Listen attentively to any information they offer about themselves, such as "recently moved" or "looking at churches." If they seem interested, give them a packet with information about your church and its ministries. Some guests like to sign the guest book; some don't. Be sensitive and take care not to make a guest uncomfortable. If possible, introduce them to other people. Invite them to fellowship dinner or the home of a church member prepared to host visitors. Alternatively, your church may wish to provide beverages after the service to encourage guests and members to mingle. This can be especially nice if the weather is pleasant and you have a place outside to offer refreshments.

If your church prefers to designate specific people to be greeters, the deacons and deaconesses can back them up by connecting with guests as they move on from the entrance. If they have children, offer to walk them to the appropriate Sabbath School rooms. If they look like they might need it, assist them in finding seats in the sanctuary.

Upkeep of Church Property

The care we give to our church building and grounds tells a story to all who view it. It is a reflection of our devotion to God and our community. Generally, the deacons and deaconesses take responsibility for the care and upkeep of church property, including either the oversight of or actual doing of the janitorial work, general maintenance and repairs, and maintenance of the grounds and landscaping.

In some churches different families or Sabbath school classes will adopt a section of the churchyard, caring for its plantings and upkeep. If your church is maintained this way, you may want to organize a churchyard dedication service at a set time after each group has completed work in its assigned area. Considering having everyone sing a special hymn together (such as 640) or take turns offering prayer. A responsive reading is also a nice way for everyone to participate.



SAMPLE CHURCHYARD DEDICATION *(Responsive Reading)*

Bless this churchyard, O Lord.

**The soil has been turned over and carefully planted.
May these plantings grow and beautify your house.**

Bless these hands and hearts, O Lord.

**As we have use our labors and our means to glorify you,
Endow us with heavenly longing for your recreation.**

Just as this soil has been weeded, planted and watered,

**May our lives emulate how we have been changed by Your care.
Grow in us. Expand our minds with Your thoughts.**

We give all glory to you, our King.

**As these plants lift their heads to heaven
So we lift our souls to You, the Holy Trinity.**

Keep this churchyard, guard it, protect it as we dedicate it to You.

**Help us to maintain it as You maintain us.
We dedicate ourselves to You.**

Amen and amen.

(by Peggy Harris, adapted)

Beautification of the church facility is another area where deacons and deaconesses can lend a special touch in enhancing the worship experience. God is a lover of beauty, and is pleased when we create an attractive environment for worship. Some congregations post a sign-up sheet for members to bring flowers for the sanctuary in celebration of a special occasion or in honor or memory of a loved one. Members who have gardens can be asked to bring fresh arrangements in season, which contribute greatly to the beauty of the worship services. For holiday décor, poinsettias or Easter lilies make great additions to the church.

A church's kitchen is often the center of its social life. While in most churches anywhere from a few to many different groups may use these facilities, the people who oversee their regular maintenance are usually the deacons and deaconesses. This job can be made more manageable by posting in a prominent place a list of things to be done before those using the kitchen leave. Having an annual church cleaning bee also helps.

Tip: Once the kitchen is thoroughly cleaned and organized, put labels on all the shelves and drawers indicating where to store items. Also, post specific directions for using and cleaning equipment, along with procedures for replacing supplies. Having one person who is willing to manage the kitchen is a huge blessing!



Security

Deacons and deaconesses care for the security of those in attendance at church activities, always being vigilant for the safety and comfort of all persons. This includes opening the church building(s) before meetings and locking the facility at the conclusion of activities. It also includes prompt removal of ice and snow from the parking lot and sidewalks. Be sure that lighting in the parking lot and around the building is adequate.

In today's world, it is important to have a plan for dealing with emergencies such as power outages, equipment failure, bomb threats, etc. Decide ahead of time what supplies your church will need during these situations and what actions it will need to take. The location of your church and size of your congregation will be key factors in your planning. Find resources for creating a church safety plan at AdventistRisk.org.

Assisting With Baptismal Ceremonies

Baptisms are a great time for celebration! The deacons and deaconesses can help make this day very special for new members through their kindness and thoughtful attention to details.

Below is a list of ways deacons and deaconesses can assist with baptisms:

- Prepare and fill the pool and help with other physical labor related to the service,
- Prepare robes for all participants (be sure robes are opaque and weighted)
- Assist candidates as needed (men should help male candidates and women should help female candidates)
- Launder and store robes and towels after the service

In some churches the deacons and deaconesses give cards or small gifts to candidates after their baptism as a means of welcoming them and encouraging them spiritually.

Sometimes the families of those being baptized may wish to provide refreshments or even a complete meal for guests after a baptismal service and may need assistance with this celebration. Making a collage or scrapbook for candidates including photos of the baptism and cards and notes from friends is another way to make the event special and remind each candidate of his or her connection with the church family.

Once the baptism is over, have the leaders of the church surround the new member(s) and kneel in prayer together, placing their hands in blessing on those just baptized and asking specifically for the Holy Spirit to give them the spiritual gifts of service and ministry. This can be a life-changing experience for those involved as they prepare to take their places in the family of God.

Assisting with Communion Services

Taking the time to carefully and beautifully prepare for communion service will help make the celebration special. Deacons and deaconesses oversee the physical arrangements, such



as positioning the communion table and placing towels, basins, and water in the appropriate rooms for the ordinance of humility. Many churches provide space for couples and families to experience the ordinance of humility together, in addition to separate rooms for men and women.

Deacons and deaconesses also prepare the bread and grape juice and arrange the emblems and covering on the table. Those who have been ordained may assist in distributing the emblems and uncovering and recovering the table during the service.

During the ordinance of humility deacons and deaconesses dispense water and basins, giving particular attention to visitors, new members, and older members. Low stools can be provided for those unable to kneel. Some members may prefer to remain seated and wash one another's hands; this is particularly suited to those with disabilities. Offer assistance wherever needed so everyone who desires to participate in this beautiful, cleansing experience may do so.

Many churches find that encouraging partners to pray with each other before leaving the room promotes a thoughtful and caring atmosphere. Sharing scripture verses or singing together as a group is also meaningful.

Ideas for Communion

1. Have a Friday evening communion service with an agape feast and time for special musical presentations and reflective readings. Candlelight helps to create an atmosphere for reflection and worship. If space allows, arrange the tables in the shape of a cross.
2. Provide music or an appropriate reading for those who choose to remain in the sanctuary during the ordinance of humility.
3. Provide music in the rooms where the ordinance of humility is taking place.
4. Invite the youth group to prepare a short drama about the Last Supper or another relevant topic. This can be a meaningful addition to the service.
5. A Christmas communion can be especially meaningful, as can a service held on New Year's Eve or Easter. Making communion a part of holiday celebrations can become a great tradition.
6. Make first communions special for newly baptized members by planning ahead. Make sure the new member is specifically invited to participate. Consider commemorating this event by giving them a card, book, or some other tangible reminder of this special occasion.
7. Many churches take up a love offering at the close of communion services to benefit members in need of financial support. The junior deacons and deaconesses could stand at the doors to collect this offering as people leave.



Communion Bread Recipe

Ingredients:

2 cups finely ground whole wheat flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons pure vegetable oil
9 tablespoons ice water

Directions:

1. Add salt to oil and put into a blender. Add water slowly while blending until thick and white. Blend until the mixture is about the consistency of whipped cream.
2. Add the blended oil and water all at once to flour in a bowl. Mix lightly.
3. Place the dough on a lightly floured board and begin kneading it, turning it over or folding air into it while pounding it with a rolling pin or the edge of a wooden spoon. If you need to add a little more flour to handle the dough, use it sparingly.
4. Spray two cookie sheets (12" × 15") with non-stick cooking spray, or oil lightly. Wet a piece of paper towel and lay it under the cookie sheets so they won't slide. Form the dough into two long rolls and lay one on each cookie sheet. Use a rolling pin to roll dough out until it covers the entire sheet. It should be paper thin.
5. With a clean metal ruler, mark the dough into squares. Score lightly with a knife, if desired. 2" × 2" squares make about 720 pieces. Some people may prefer a thicker or larger square.
6. Bake in a moderate oven at 325 to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Watch carefully to prevent browning, except for a slight tinge. The darker the bread, the stronger the flavor.
7. After baking, give the cookie sheet a slight twist to loosen the bread. Carefully lift it off with a pancake turner or spatula, being very careful not to break it except along the marks. Save several unbroken pieces for the pastor and elders to break during the service. You can store the bread in airtight containers for up to a few days.

Caring for the Congregation

Deacons and deaconesses often join with the pastor and elders in visiting local church members or any person who has a need. Some churches assign a certain number of individuals or a geographic area for deacons and deaconesses to visit on a regular basis in teams of two or three. Some of the situations that would necessitate a visitation include when a new baby is born, when new members join the church, when a family loses a loved one or experiences other types of loss, when members are ill or hospitalized, and when members become discouraged or stop attending church. Bringing small gifts such as baked items, a book, or flowers is a thoughtful gesture. It is also a visible symbol to remind the person of your care.



To be truly effective in visiting people, we must ask God to give us genuine love for them and the ability to see and meet their needs. We also need to remember to follow Jesus' example of meeting people's physical needs first and then ministering to them spiritually.

Many people are familiar with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is a theory that people's physical needs (food, water, clothing, shelter, etc.) must be met before they can experience companionship and identification with a group. The deacons and deaconesses of local churches are in front-line positions to assist with providing for these needs, either in conjunction with a community services program or by other means.

When people experience dramatic life changes, such as a move or the birth of a child, they need extra assistance and empathy. A caring church can be that center of hospitality. Consider sending a welcome letter to people who move into your community, acknowledging the stress that can accompany a situation like theirs and offering to ease the transition through your support and the development of new friendships. Give them a list of the meeting times and places of small groups such as neighborhood Bible study groups or prayer groups, and invite them to attend. Give them the address of your church and the times of its services, as well as a map and phone number or website address that will be helpful to them. Also, send them a recent church bulletin with details of upcoming activities. If you follow up with a second invitation, people will be more likely to respond. Try hosting a Friend Day to create a special time for inviting newcomers and people who live near the church to experience the warmth of your fellowship. In today's culture friendship evangelism is one of the best ways to grow our churches.

After new people have attended your church a few times, invite them to a Friendship Dinner hosted by a regular member. Have the host also invite the pastor(s) and an elder, and let the newcomers know that they have the ear of the church leaders. To help guests feel more comfortable, invite more new people than established members. Get input from guests by asking them questions like: "What drew you to this church?" "What brought you back again?" "What is important to you?" and "What are your needs?"

The birth of a baby is not only an exciting time for many families, but also a stressful one because of the many changes it can bring. Welcome Baby is a program specifically geared toward mentoring new parents and encouraging them as they raise their children to love and serve God. Additional information on the Welcome Baby program and ways of caring for new members is available in the list of resources.

As the circle of life and death goes around, the church can be the source of support in a fragmented world. Usually, the pastor will be the first one notified when the death of a church family member occurs. The pastor will then contact the head deaconess or deaconess of the month to set in motion the appropriate actions for caring for the family's needs. If a particular deacon or deaconess is close to the family, that person can visit them right away and find out any specific needs they may have, such as: Will out-of-town relatives or friends be coming? Do they need lodging or food? Does the family need help with arrangements? Do they wish to have someone house sit during the service? Is child care needed? Your church may wish to make forms for recording and communicating this information.



When possible, make sure any food taken to the home of those grieving is provided in disposable containers so the family does not have to worry about washing and returning dishes. If a meal is provided at the church or another location, the deacons and deaconesses can create a comforting feeling by arranging the furnishings tastefully and serving the family with a kind and gracious spirit.

The most critical time for the family, however, often comes after close friends and extended family members have left. This is when the whole church truly comes together as a family to support their needs during lonely and often traumatic times. Aftercare should not be haphazard. The deacons and deaconesses can also arrange a schedule for providing visits, needed household repairs, dinner invitations, phone or email chats, etc. for the first year after bereavement.

Remember that holidays are often painful times for people who are grieving. Special attention on birthdays and anniversaries adds frosting to the cake of friendship!

Tips for Visiting Those Who Are Hospitalized or Ill:

1. Be cheerful, but not boisterous.
2. Be sympathetic and caring, but don't ask private questions.
3. Come regularly (if needed), but don't stay too long.

There are different types of families in every congregation—single parent households, dual parent households, grandparent-run households, couples, singles, etc. Each person can contribute something special to the church body, and each should be nurtured in their Christian growth. Sometimes single persons can feel left out or overlooked during church activities and ministries. Remember to include and care for the singles in your congregation, especially if your church is not large enough to have a separate singles ministry.

Don't forget that caring for your pastoral staff is important too! In today's society, the demands on your pastor's time and energy are huge. Like any person, your pastor will be encouraged by words and actions from the church that express appreciation. October is designated as *Pastoral Appreciation Month*. That is a good time to take a few minutes during the church service to thank your pastor(s) for all the effort and energy he or she invests in your congregation. Inviting the pastor's family to join you up front is a nice way to recognize their supporting roles as well. Giving them tangible items such as flowers or a gift certificate to a favorite restaurant or bookstore is a great way to show them your appreciation. Remember to celebrate the anniversary of your pastor's arrival as well. For example, you could say, "This month marks the beginning of your third year ministering to our congregation. We want to thank you for your dedication and service!"

Sending birthday cards to your pastor and family members is another good way to support them. If your pastor is married, send them an anniversary card with enough money inside for a meal out. Or, work as a team to bring a meal to the pastoral couple's home. Arrange for babysitting, if needed. If you can, occasionally help them plan a weekend away for resting and recharging their energy levels.



If You Are the Head Deacon or Deaconess

Being in charge can be both demanding and time consuming. The amazing thing is that when we give our best to God and His service, all our efforts are blessed and multiplied. However, we must always remember that ministry without prayer becomes work in the power of the flesh. Becoming a serious prayer warrior, and enlisting the support of others who know how to pray as well, is essential to the success of this ministry.

After the praying comes the planning. Compile a list of needs and ideas for how to meet those needs. Get together with your pastoral staff and develop a workable ministry plan, which should include the following elements:

1. A compelling mission statement. Try to state your mission in one clear sentence. It will help the ministry stay focused and organized. It also affirms your mission's value.
2. Practical goals. Goals provide some detail about the mission plan.
3. Specific action plans. Action plans further define the ministry by highlighting the steps needed to carry out the goals. Review them regularly to keep on track.
4. Adequate job descriptions for key responsibilities. Job descriptions let people know what is expected of them.
5. Basic organizational chart (who is responsible to whom). In most churches, deacons and deaconesses work closely with the elders and pastoral staff.
6. A basic budget. Whether you will need a small or large budget depends on the size of your church and how many areas fall under your umbrella.

Potential Barriers to Progress and Ways to Combat Them

Most of us have plenty of ideas about what should be done. Usually, the biggest challenge is finding people willing to help. Many church members are too busy, are too burned out, or feel they lack the skills needed to serve as deacon and deaconess. Encourage all church members to take a temperament test and a spiritual gifts inventory. Then, offer training sessions on developing those spiritual gifts. For detailed information and resources pertaining to temperaments and spiritual gifts, contact *AdventSource* at AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800.

Sometimes people have a limited idea of what deacons and deaconesses do. Make your ministry visible by regularly reporting its positive results in an appealing way, both from the front of the church and by using the church's bulletin board, newsletter, website, etc. Show that being a deacon or deaconess is much more than just taking up the offering or cooking funeral dinners!



Another barrier can be the phrase “We’ve never done it that way before.” A changing society requires new methods that may mean nudging some of us out of our comfort zones. Remember, principles do not change, but the application of them must if we want to reach people successfully in today’s world.

One example of a good way to reach modern audiences is the widespread use of the internet. Communication is essential, and technology has made it easier in many ways. You can use email to send the minutes of your deacon and deaconess meetings to those who weren’t there. You can add a page to the login section of your church’s website providing information and encouraging new people to join. You can post service sign-up sheets and send out an e-newsletter or even use social media like Facebook to keep people informed.

Take a class to learn new skills, if you need to, or ask someone to help you. Enlisting a young person’s assistance in using this technology is a good way to recruit them to be future deacons and deaconesses themselves. It’s also a good way to involve new members.

If you are willing to try new methods but those around you aren’t, be patient. Try to think of creative ways to inspire them, and pray for the Holy Spirit to lead their thoughts.

Organization

Doing things in a systematic way will make your work more efficient. Divide the areas of service into categories and establish set procedures that fit your particular church. It’s good to have this in writing for future reference.

Sample Communion Service Manual

1. Make bread
2. Purchase grape juice
3. Fill containers
4. Set up rooms
5. Place napkins on table for elders and musicians who will be close by
6. Prepare stories for children
7. Arrange for music and/or a devotional thought
8. Speak with guests or those remaining in the sanctuary
9. Serve the emblems (*any ordained deacon or deaconess may serve*)
10. Gather and wash towels and return to storage
11. Sanitize and dry basins
12. Wash, dry and store communion serving ware



13. Prepare home communion set, if requested
14. Dispose of unused items (*bread that has been blessed should be burned or buried; juice should be poured on the ground*)
15. Return chairs and tables to proper places

Talk about these items at your regularly scheduled meetings so you can answer any questions. Remember to include junior deacons and deaconesses in the communion service activities.

Keep an updated inventory of supplies belonging to the church, especially relating to communion and baptisms. This will make it much easier for you as well as for the next head deacon and deaconess. If your church is large you should also list the location of the supplies.

Designating a deacon and deaconess of the month is especially helpful in larger congregations. These people assist the head deacon and deaconess in his or her duties, and may be responsible for coordinating various activities during the month such as greeting and ushering, visitation, or managing security.

Planning ordination services is also an important event for the head deacon and deaconess to organize alongside the pastor. Depending on the size of your congregation, you may need to have ordinations either regularly or occasionally. Whatever the frequency, take care to plan a service that is meaningful for both the candidates and those supporting them. Having a prayer of dedication in their honor at church, giving them certificates or cards, and hosting a reception for them are just a few ways of welcoming new deacons and deaconesses. If your congregation is small the pastor may wish to include all new church officers in this dedication service, focusing attention on the ministries of the coming year.

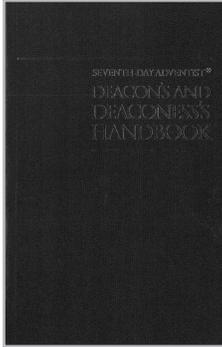
Continue to analyze the deacon and deaconess ministry over time. Review the ministry mission statement and goals. Get some input from the deacons and deaconesses by asking them questions like:

1. Have you completed the temperament test and spiritual gifts inventory?
2. If so, how have you found them to be helpful?
3. In which areas of service have you been able to participate?
4. Do you feel that you are serving in areas where you can use and develop your spiritual gifts?
5. How could you become better equipped to reach your potential in using your spiritual gifts?
6. What comments or suggestions would you offer for improving the deacon and deaconess ministry?



Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource. For a complete list, visit AdventSource.org or call 402.486.8800.



Deacon's and Deaconess's Handbook

GC Ministerial Association (General Conference)

This handbook deals with the ministry of deacons and deaconesses of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and follows the policies pertaining to the beliefs and practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as outlined in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*.

Product #416517

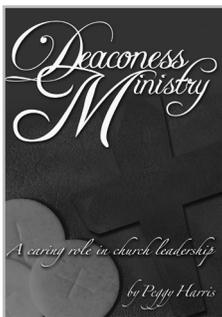


The Twenty-First Century Deacon and Deaconess

By Vincent E. White (AVA's Book Publishers)

This book unveils the sacred biblical model for the ministry of deacons and deaconesses with modern day implications. It covers training for deacons and deaconesses, qualifications and responsibilities, developing a ministry that reflects the biblical model, and more.

Product #416506



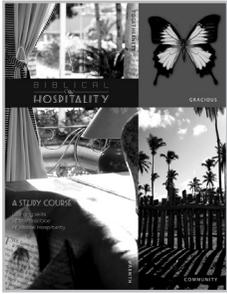
Deaconess Ministry

By Peggy Harris (AdventSource)

The roll of deaconess involves important and sometimes challenging responsibilities. Read this book to learn about baptisms, hospitality, visitation, ideas for service, welcoming new members, and more.

Product #416229



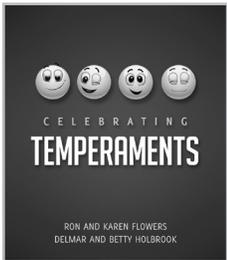


Biblical Hospitality

By Peggy Harris (AdventSource)

This course will help you prepare church members to practice the art of biblical hospitality. You'll find a hospitality inventory to complete, sample programs, and examples from the Bible and what works in other Seventh-day Adventist churches.

Product #416697



Celebrating Temperaments

By Ron and Karen Flowers & Delmer and Betty Holbrook (AdventSource)

Understanding temperaments will lead to unconditional acceptance of those around us, making human relationships a better metaphor for what God is really like. If you'd like to better understand yourself and the people around you, *Celebrating Temperaments* is where to begin.

Product #351220



Welcome Baby

By Kay Kuzma (Family Matters)

Learn how to operate a Welcome Baby program to support the new parents in your church and community.

Product #351828



Deacon and Deaconess Ministry Description

Introduction

As Jesus gives insight into the nature of His church using the symbol of the body in I Corinthians 12, so it is that when we join the Church we become “members” of the body of Christ and are equipped for specific functions by the Holy Spirit. God wills that the various “body parts” (members) function effectively toward the common goal of the church: making disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is an erroneous concept that the clergy have a “sacred calling” and the general membership only a “secular calling.” This concept impedes the progress of the church by leading some to believe their contributions are less important. In fact, the New Testament teaches that all members of the body of Christ are ministers of Jesus Christ. There are necessary differences in function, but the status of all leaders is the same.

You have been called to function as a deacon or deaconess in your congregation. The God who calls is able to sustain you as you cooperate with Him.

While in many instances the work of the deacon and deaconess overlap, distinctions will be described. Though deacons have traditionally been men and deaconesses have been women, in some Adventist churches today both men and women serve in both roles. We derive both English titles from the same New Testament Greek word.

Duties of the Deacon and Deaconess

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes a deacon or deaconess includes the following duties:

- 1. Greeting and ushering.** Especially in smaller congregations, the deacon and deaconess will serve as greeters and ushers for the services held in the church. They will also help the pastor and other event leaders maintain the smooth operation of church meetings.
- 2. Upkeep of church property.** They will take responsibility for the care and upkeep of church property, including the oversight or actual doing of the janitorial work, repairs, grounds maintenance, interior decorating and small renovations.
- 3. Security.** They will care for the security of those in attendance at church activities, always vigilant for the comfort and safety of all persons. This includes opening the church building(s) before meetings and locking the facility at the conclusion of activities.
- 4. Visitation.** They will join with the pastor and elders in visiting church members. Some churches assign a geographic area or certain number of members for deacons and deaconesses in teams of two or three to visit.
- 5. Assisting with the baptismal ceremony.** The traditional roles for this service are described below.

- a. The deacons will
 - Prepare and fill the pool.
 - Assist male candidates.
 - Do the physical labor related to the service.
- b. The deaconesses will
 - Prepare the robes for all who are participating.
 - Assist female candidates.
 - Launder and store robes, towels, etc., after the ceremony.

6. Assisting with the communion service. The traditional roles for this service are described below.

- a. The deacons will
 - Provide the physical arrangements, such as placing the communion table.
 - Place the towels, basins and water in the appropriate rooms for use in the ordinance of humility.
 - Dispense water and basins for the men during the Ordinance of Humility, giving particular attention to visitors, new members, and the aged.
- b. The deaconesses will
 - Prepare the bread and grape juice.
 - Arrange the emblems and covering on the table.
 - Dispense water and basins for the women during the ordinance of humility, giving attention and assistance to visitors, new members, and the aged.
 - Clean and store the linens and serving pieces used in communion.
 - It is appropriate for either deacons or deaconesses, who have been ordained, to assist in distributing the emblems and uncovering and recovering the table during the service.

7. Caring for the congregation. In many churches an unwritten tradition gives the women who serve as deaconesses or deacons the responsibility of organizing hot meals for any church family that experiences a death or other tragedy. This may mean simply taking food to the home or, in some cases, the serving of an entire meal to family and guests after a funeral. Often the planning of wedding and baby showers is also done by this group. This is an important aspect of a caring ministry in the congregation.

