

Rev. Bill Shishko



“Diaconal Leadership Today”

Pastor Bill Shishko is a church planter in the Deer Park, New York region. He has served on many presbytery committees and several denominational committees, including Coordination, Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, Home Missions, and a long tenure on the Committee on Christian Education. He served for 35 years as pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Franklin Square in Franklin Square, NY. Under his leadership the Franklin Square session gave birth to five daughter churches in New York City and Long Island. He has mentored dozens of young men in preparation for the Gospel ministry. In addition to his appointment as adjunct professor at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, he has taught homiletics and pastoral theology in the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC. Short-term mission service has taken him to Suriname, Cyprus, Egypt, Uganda, China, Eritrea, and Wales. He’s also the host of the weekly radio program, *A Visit to the Pastor’s Study*. Shishko has been a frequent contributor both to *New Horizons* and *Ordained Servant*, as well as for the magazine *The Banner of Truth*. In 2009 he moderated the 76th General Assembly of the OPC, meeting in Grand Rapids, MI.

A native of Putnam, CT, Bill was raised in a nominal Greek Orthodox home, although he received some early religious instruction at a local Episcopal Church. He attended Bob Jones University and Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He and his wife, Margaret, have one daughter and five sons (one of whom, Jonathan, has followed his father into ministry in the OPC), and five grandchildren. Bill and Margaret count it their greatest privilege to be servants of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to serve Him in the Church of which they are a part.

DIACONAL LEADERSHIP TODAY

PLENARY ADDRESS #1: - Thursday, June 2, 2022 – 6:30 p.m.

INTRODUCTION

I. *Today*: Male Leadership- The Great Void in Our Day

Some Reasons; The Matrix

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

NOTE: The Church is meant to be light! See John 1:5 – and be encouraged!

II. *Leadership* (Refer to *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*)

III. *Diaconal Leadership*

*The grand, overarching, fundamental principle: You represent

_____ . Matthew 20:28

A. _____ : The Model for Deacons

B. Filtering this down to YOU:

1.

2.

3.

IV *Lagniappe*: A Little Something Extra

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

CONCLUSION: Your Great Opportunity Today
Some reflections on Psalm 11

A DEACON CATECHISM

Q. 1. *What is a deacon?*

A. An official representative of Christ, the great Servant.

Q. 2. *Where did the diaconate begin?*

A. In Acts 6, when the church got too large for one group of officers.

Q. 3. *What do deacons do?*

A. They free the elders to give attention to their work of prayer, ministry, and government by the Word of God; and they manage church temporalities and ministries of mercy.

Q. 4. *Where do we find the qualifications of a deacon?*

A. They are given generally in Acts 6:3 and specifically in I Timothy 3:8-13.

Q. 5. *May women be ordained as deacons?*

A. No. Office in the Christian church is confined to men; but women have always helped deacons with their work.

Q. 6. *How do deacons make their decisions?*

A. As a body (known as the Board of Deacons), in communication with one another, and always under the final authority of Holy Scripture.

Q. 7. *How are our deacons trained?*

A. They go through a course of study in doctrine as it applies to diaconal work, in the qualifications of a deacon, and in the deacon's various duties; they are also tested to find out if they serve faithfully.

Q. 8. *How do deacons assist others?*

A. By a combination of relief in emergency situations, assistance in rehabilitation when necessary, and discipleship that helps those in need to develop in living all aspects of their lives to God's glory.

Q. 9. *Do deacons have people to whom they are specifically responsible?*

A. Yes. To the poor who come within the sphere of our ministry, to brothers and sisters who become providentially impoverished, and to widows, orphans, and the fatherless.

Q. 10. *How should I respond to appeals from the Board of Deacons?*

A. As if Christ Himself is calling you to that assistance.

Q. 11. *How should a person respond to the assistance that comes from deacons?*

A. As if Christ Himself is assisting him or her.

Q. 12. *What things should I look for in a prospective deacon?*

A. Godliness, good sense, and the heart of a servant.

DEACON TRAINING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION:

The following outline presents the major headings and sub-points of the Deacon Training Program I used for the preparation of men for the office of deacon in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Franklin Square, NY. I used this program for over 15 years and have found no reason to significantly modify it even in the second decade of this new millenium. Customarily I go over this material in a six-week period, using a “lecture” format followed by discussion. The accompanying prospectus presents the way I divide the material over the six-week period, together with the reading material which is required of the men who participate in this program.

The first half of the material gives an overview of Christian doctrine using various heads of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Unlike typical doctrinal overviews, however, this one seeks to use the confessional standards as a grid through which principles for diaconal ministry are garnered. This is a unique approach to a field in which I have found that too often principles are developed by more or less sanctified imagination wedded to benevolent intentions rather than by a systematic study of the doctrines of the Scriptures.

The second half of the material deals with the deacon and his work, beginning with the character of the deacon as a man, then proceeding to general and more specific applications of the diaconal task. Particularly the last lesson in this second half is very much “Franklin Square OPC specific”, but insofar as that congregation in suburban Long Island, NY is representative of other congregations with Presbyterian government it will provide, I trust, a good example for others.

The material is given in outline form. The advantage is that the material is available in a more succinct form. The disadvantage is that undeveloped points may be less clear (or even unclear). I hope that these disadvantages are kept to a minimum. Perhaps at some future point I will have the time to transform the skeleton into a fully body. I encourage you to modify the material as you desire and use it as freely as you like. Where the contents are useful I give glory to the God of grace; where it is not I accept full responsibility.

May God bless you in your work of training deacons who, in their office, represent the great Deacon of His Church, Jesus Christ, cf. Matthew 20:27f.

William Shishko, pastor
The Haven, Orthodox Presbyterian Church

DEACON TRAINING PROGRAM (Program Prospectus)

PURPOSES: The purposes of this series of classes are:

1. To give an overview of the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture and containing principles for the general work of the diaconate;
2. To provide an introduction to the qualifications necessary for those who serve as deacons in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
3. To present an outline of the responsibilities of those serving as deacons in a particular congregation such as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Franklin Square NY.

TEXTS & HANDOUTS: Required reading will be from the following:

- *Westminster Confession of Faith, (Free Presbyterian Publications Edition)
- *Berkhof, Louis. SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE (Eerdmans).
- *Berghoef, Gerard & Lester DeKoster. THE DEACON’S HANDBOOK. (Christian’s Library Press)
- *Coppes, Leonard J. WHO WILL LEAD US? (Pilgrim Publishing Company)
- *MacNair, Donald J. THE GROWING LOCAL CHURCH (Baker)
- MacNair, Donald J. THE LIVING CHURCH (GCP)
- Kuiper, R. B. THE GLORIOUS BODY OF CHRIST (Banner of Truth)
- Deacon’s Manual & Policy Manual (OPC, Franklin Square)

CLASS SCHEDULE: Classes will meet on six agreed upon *evenings* from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. at locations to be established:

CLASS OUTLINE:**WEEKS 1 – 3: AN OVERVIEW OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE**

“Deacons must...hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.” (I Tim. 3:8,9)

Week 1: God & Man

Required Reading: WCF, I – VII, IX
Berkhof, pps. 9 – 89

Week 2: Christ & His Work

Required Reading: WCF, VIII, X - XVIII
Berkhof, pps. 93 – 148

Week 3: The Church & Last Things

Required Reading: WCF, XIX – XXXIII
Berkhof, pps. 151 – 198

WEEKS 4 – 6: THE DEACON AND HIS WORK

“Let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless” (I Tim. 3:10)

Week 4: The Deacon as a Man

Required Reading: Acts 6;1-7, I Timothy 3:8-13
MacNair, THE GROWING LOCAL CHURCH, pps. 79-86, 195 (handout)
MacNair, THE LIVING CHURCH, pps. 155-157 (handout)

Week 5: The Deacon as an Officer: General Considerations

Required Reading: Coppes, pps. 105 - 138
Kuiper, pps. 150-157 (handout)

Week 6: The Deacon as an Officer: Specific Applications

Required Reading: Berghoef & DeKoster, pps. 135 - 181
Coppes, pps. 139 - 154
MacNair, THE GROWING LOCAL CHURCH, pps. 109-125 (handout)
OPC, Franklin Square Deacon’s Manual & Policy Manual

- I. **THE DEACON AND DOCTRINE**, I Tim. 3:8,9, *“holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.”*
 - A. Deacons must possess a basic understanding of the fullness of the Christian faith as it focuses on Christ Himself. i.e. *“the mystery of the faith.”*
 1. Office in the Church represents Christ in His offices.
 2. The office is meaningless apart from the faith. The faith guides what is done through the office. The office presents the faith, e.g. Stephen, Phillip.
 - B. This understanding must have become a part of the man, usually through time and experience coupled with regular feeding of the mind, i.e. *“holding the mystery of the faith.”*
 - C. It must be an understanding which inhabits a man who is truly *God’s man*, i.e. *“in a pure conscience.”*
Cf. I Peter 3:16-21.
- II. **DOCTRINAL PROPOSITIONS WHICH MUST GUIDE THE ONGOING AND DEVELOPING WORK OF A DICACONATE** (Based on various heads of the Westminster Confession of Faith, hereafter WCF)
 - A. (WCF I): There must be a dogged determination to align every diaconal practice with the precepts and directives of Holy Scripture, cf. I:VI, I Tim. 3:16f., I Tim. 3:14f.
 1. Some areas: *How* is mercy to be shown? To whom? To what extent? What are the biblical principles that bear on issues like a church budget, salaries, the church building, areas of diaconal involvement, etc.

2. Necessitates: a. Private study, thought, and prayer. b. Diaconal consultation and intercession. c. Consultation with the session.
- B. (WCF II) There must be a wise, sensitive, and increasingly obvious manifestation of various attributes of God in the work of the diaconate.
1. Redemption: Word & deed. Officers officially represent the words & deeds of the Redeemer. Deacons especially represent His deeds, e.g. Mk. 10:45, "I came not to be deaconed to, but to deacon."
 2. Those diaconal deeds represent God! E.g. God-man = Servant. Deacons are servants. God is father to the fatherless & provider/protector of widows. Deacons do this, too, in the name of Christ.
 3. Other attributes: Holy sovereignty, with all advancing the Kingdom of God; Mercy, cf. Jn. 12:6, Gal. 2:10. Justice, II Thess. 3:10, etc. All have reflections in diaconal work.
- C. (WCF III, V) There must be a wise, healthy, consideration of implications of both divine sovereignty and human agency in many of the more difficult matters deacons will face, cf. III:1, V:1,5.
E.g. Issues re. famine relief in certain regimes, cf. Rev. 6:5f. See James 5:14f, I Cor. 11:30.
NOTE: Always seek counsel from Elders. Need of ongoing communication with them.
- D. (WCF VI) There must be an ever-present consciousness of the curse, sin, its multiple effects, and how best to deal with these.
I.e. Specific sin & the blanket effects of sin, e.g. poverty, needs of elderly & widows, cf. I Tim. 5:8-16.
- E. (WCF VII) There must be an unashamed differentiation in our dealings with those who are inside or outside of the covenant of grace
cf. Deut. 15:1-3, 7-11. Gal. 6:10. See Coppes, WHO WILL LEAD US? pps. 138-149.
1. To Believers: Diaconal ministry is a demonstration of God's promised mercy to the people of God, e.g. Jesus feeding the multitudes.
 2. To Unbelievers: God's goodness shown to them through the diaconate is designed to lead them to repentance, cf. Rom. 2:4. See Coppes, *ibid.* p. 141.
- F. (WCF VI) There must be a constant recognition that every "temporality" given to the diaconate is a trust from God.
Cf. Deut. 8:10, 18, e.g. Finances, building, church possessions, other acquired properties, savings, etc.
- G. (WCF VIII) Deacons must have an increasing appreciation of the person, work, and offices of Christ as the one mediator between man and God, cf. Matt. 16:13-18 (See J. Owen, Vol. 1, "The Divine Glory of Christ", I Tim. 3:15f., cf. vs. 9).
1. Person: Truly God. Truly man. (VIII:2)
 2. Work: Humiliation. Exaltation (VIII:3)
 3. Offices: Prophet. Priest. King.
- Select Bibliography:
William Blaikie: THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF CHRIST. THE INNER LIFE OF CHRIST.
John Flavel, Vol. 1. THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.
Henry Martyn: THE SHADOW OF CALVARY.
John Murray: REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED AND APPLIED
Octavius Winslow: THE GLORY OF THE REDEEMER.
- Note: Ultimately & really, deacons represent and serve Jesus Christ. This is the nature of church office.
Cf. John Sietsma, THE IDEA OF OFFICE, p. 57.
- H. (WCF X – XV) Deacons must cultivate a growing understanding of the way of salvation, and a growing facility in presenting it to others.
E.g. Acts 7 (Stephen); 8:26-35 (Phillip); I Timothy 3:13
1. "Ordo Salutis" (X – XIII), cf. J. Murray, REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED AND APPLIED.
NOTE: Special care in understanding justification. Sensitivity to adoption, cf. WCF XII.
 2. Gospel Call: Saving faith (XIV) & Repentance (XV)
NOTE: Deacons will have opportunity to bring the Gospel to others in course of their work.
- I. (WCF XVI) Deacons must be particularly aware of their responsibility to stir up others to good works.

Cf. Eph. 2:8-10, Heb. 10:24, “paroxusmon”.

1. Nature of Office: Heightened responsibility to do what applies to every believer.
2. Particular role of diaconal office: Love & good works.
3. Practical suggestions: a. Delegation. 2. Motivation (vs. mere sympathy). 3. Information.
Cf. Berghoef & DeKoster, DEACONS HANDBOOK, pps. 83-88, 143-146. 4. Communication.

J. (WCF XVIII) Deacons must give attention to the often deep and complex questions related to the issue of assurance of salvation.

1. Why?
 - a. Reality of Christian experience, esp. in churches that emphasize the necessity of vital/experimental religion, e.g. I Peter 1:5-15.
 - b. Reality of diaconal ministry. Often (usually?!) on unexpected occasions.
2. How?
 - a. Give due personal attention to the issue of assurance of faith and salvation.
 - b. Give special attention to the benefits of assurance, cf. XVIII:3
 - c. Minister to others those texts and insights that have been most helpful to you, cf. II Cor. 1:3-7.

Select Bibliography:

William Guthrie, THE CHRISTIAN’S GREAT INTEREST.

Thomas Brooks, HEAVEN ON EARTH

Thomas Hooker, THE POOR, DOUBTING CHRISTIAN DRAWN TO CHRIST

K. (WCF XIX:2,5,6) Deacons have an official responsibility to give special attention to the details of the Old Testament law and to regularly make legitimate application of these to their diaconal labors.

Cf. Relation to proposition A above.

1. Examples: Tithe (Deut. 14:22-29, etc.); Indebtedness (Deut. 15:1-6); Generosity to the poor (Deut. 15:7-11, etc.). Inheritance questions (Deut. 21:15-17); Usury (Deut. 23:19f.)
Cf. James 1:27, Deut. 14:29. I Cor. 9:9-11.
2. The “Theonomy” Question, cf. G. Bahnsen, R. Rushdoony, etc.
NOTE: Importance of considering these questions jointly with the Elders.

L. (WCF XXI:8) Deacons should be especially sensitive to ways in which works of mercy can be done on the Sabbath.

1. Diaconal Works & the Sabbath, e.g. Mk. 2:23-28, 3:1-5, etc. Official leadership here, as with Christ.
2. Practical Suggestions: Visits and tapes to shut-ins, nursing home ministries, food & hospitality to visitors, needy, etc. This should be led by the deacons.
NOTE: This is one of the most neglected aspects of Sabbath keeping in the Reformed community.

M. (WCF XXV:3) No view of the diaconate and its work may ever be permitted to blur the ministry of the Word as the distinct and primary work of the church, cf. Acts 6:2-4.

1. Warning: Errors of “equal primacy of preaching & deaconing”; deacons as social workers representing the Church, etc.
NOTE: Be careful to preserve the distinction between what deacons do as a diaconate and what Church members do individually and in concert with others, e.g. Crisis pregnancy centers, Christian schools, Christian labor unions, etc.
2. Encouragement: Effective diaconal work encouraging the primacy of ministry of the Word *will* result in increased biblical diaconal work to an expanded church, cf. Acts 6:7

N. (WCF XXV:2) Deacons must be aware of the true population of the church they are called out to serve, and their correct responsibility to each particular member or family.

1. Diaconal responsibility focuses on the Church, cf. Acts 6:1, Gal. 6:10.
2. Categories of “Church” to which deacons are responsible: Poor, widows, orphans, elders. Also, church needs beyond the local level, e.g. presbytery, denominationally, internationally through church connections, etc.
NOTE: Always keep proper spheres of responsibility in mind, e.g. extended families, local churches, etc.

- O. (WCF XXVI, esp. sections 1,2) The application of our confessional doctrine of “The Communion of the Saints” should be a specific study and burden of the diaconate.
1. Language of Obligation, cf. I Thess. 5:14, I Jn. 3:16-18, II Cor. 8,9, etc.
 2. Extent of concern, cf. XXVI:2b, II Cor. 8,9.
 3. Elements necessary for this: a. Conviction of responsibility. b.. Determination to work at it. c. Prayerful wisdom and creativity. d. Patience!
- P. (WCF XXXII, XXXIII) Deacons ought to have clear, experimentally cultivated views of man’s eternal state and of the judgment to come.
1. Why? Ministry to comfort saints and to warn sinners is inevitable for deacons. *Evangelistic work of deacons.
 2. How? Meditation, cf. II Cor. 5:11. Make use of items like S. Rutherford’s Letters, R. Baxter’s THE SAINT’S EVERLASTING REST, sermons by J. Edwards, etc.

III. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR A DEACON:

- A. Macroscopic View, Acts 6:3
1. “Good reputation” (“martus”): Legal import, i.e. “credible witness.” Trustworthy.
 2. “Full of the Holy Spirit”: Godly; Representing the One filled with the Holy Spirit beyond measure, cf. Jn. 3:34. One clothed with the character of Christ.
 3. “(Full of) wisdom”: Ability to APPLY truth and godly insight in day to day life.
- B. Microscopic View, I Tim. 3:8-13
- “Likewise”, i.e. “Likewise deacons MUST, cf. vs. 2: Non-optional qualifications. *If this is disregarded by the congregation it is no less a denial of Christ’s authority than a denial of the necessity of the new birth, cf. Jn. 3:7.
1. “Reverent” (“semmous”): Umbrella characteristic. Honorable, dignified, courteous. Commanding respect and trust.
 2. “Not double-tongued: (“di-logous”) e.g. “Forked tongue.” Making commitments he is unwilling or unable to keep. One who is trustworthy and dependable. “His yes is yes!”
 3. “Not given to much wine”, e.g. Mediterranean customs of hospitality included giving wine to guests. Must be manifestly self-controlled. Ill discipline in one area is indicator of ill discipline in other areas.
 4. “Not greedy for money.” Not obsessed with material gain. Weakness in this area could create distrust in those who know the deacon handles funds. It can also bring an analogous attitude toward regarding temporalities in the church, ie Empire building or stinginess vs. liberality.
NOTE: Constant need to balance sobriety with a benevolent spirit.
 5. “Holding the mystery of the faith, cf. I *& II above, with a pure conscience”, cf. 4:2, I Peter 3:13-17. I.e. One who does what is right regardless of the cost. One who does not give in to wrongdoing, knowing the cost. (Emphasize the importance of a pure conscience!)
 6. “Tested”: Passed the test, cf. Rom. 12:1,2. cf. Directive #3, C (below)
NOTE: The “provenness” comes first, not afterward!
 7. “Women/wives”: Not “deaconesses”. Probably: Wife of deacons, cf. vss. 2, 12. Or: Women who assist deacons, i.e. unordained deaconesses.
 - a. “Reverent”: Commanding respect, cf. #1 above.
 - b. “Not slanderers”, i.e. Not “devils” (!), ie Malicious gossips, cf. Titus 2:3.
 - c. “Temperate”: Sober. Moderate. Careful. Both feet firmly planted on the ground!
 - d. “Faithful in all things”: Truly godly person. Woman who represents the faithfulness of Christ, the Faithful One.
 8. Domestic Qualifications:
 - a. “One wife husband”: Not a playboy. No doubt about his faithfulness to his wife (if he is married) Remember that deacons have a special responsibility to minister to widows, including young widows. Great danger of temptation here.
 - b. “Ruling children will” (“proistemi”): 1) To put one’s self before; lead. 2) Care for: Caring leadership of children. The deacon manages his house with this concern in view.
 - c. “Manages his own household well.”: Including his wife! All is in order, e.g. Bills are paid, biblical priorities, godly home management.
NOTE: This is what deacons must provide for the church, “the household of God.”

- C. Basic Directives for Cultivating These Qualifications:
1. Diligence and regularity in exercises which develop personal piety.
 2. Serious attention to the breadth of duties connected with home management.
NOTE: Home is nursery of the church. Officers are outstanding nurserymen.
 3. Natural demonstration of these qualifications in the context of corporate church life.
NOTE: You do not make yourself a deacon. Neither does the Church. The Church must recognize the Deacon that Christ is making you.

IV. THE DEACON AS AN OFFICER: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- A. The Biblical Backdrop: Acts 6:1-7 (I am presupposing that this is the origin of the diaconal office.)
i.e. This is “stage setting” for the “furniture (tables!) of present diaconal service.
1. The diaconate grew up out of the soil of practical necessity in the life of the early Christian church.
cf. vs. 1a. The Church was growing! cf. Situation in which OT eldership/judges began, Ex. 18.
 2. The terrain was affected, frankly, by some of the most banal, aggravating effects of the curse, vs. 1b.
i.e. This is the real world of church life & diaconal work!
 3. The diaconate originated for the purpose of relieving the other group of officers of certain “delegatable” official responsibilities so that what is primary in the church might be maintained, vss. 2,4. cf. “It is not pleasing/desirable”. Not: “It is wrong.”
NOTE: Never forget the primacy of the ministered Word of God in the Church, cf. Jn. 17:17, Rom. 3:2, I Tim. 5:17, I Tim. 3:15, 4:6, 11, 13-16, II Tim. 1:13f., 2:15, 3:14-17, 4:1-5, etc.
 4. The diaconate was established as an understood, accepted, and well-received outgrowth of orderly congregational life, vss. 3-5.
 5. Deacons possessed/possess official authority for service in the Kingdom of God, vss. 3b, 6b
i.e. “appoint over this business” (“kathistemi”: seat, authority over; to put in charge)
cf. Matt. 24:45,47; 25:21,23, Heb. 2:7, 8:3.
 - a. Not to be understood as OVER those primarily vested with authority, i.e. Elders/Bishops.
i.e. This is acknowledged by responsibility of deacons to Session.
 - b. Neither to be understood as WITHUOT AUTHORITY to act officially within a given sphere or spheres of responsibility. vs. 3b.
 6. Normally the office carries with it divine blessing appropriate to the effects of conscientiously performed diaconal labor, vs. 7. i.e. Growth of word of God & multiplication of disciples. This came because the primacy of the ministry of the word of God was secured. *The office of the deacon is a standing testimony to this
 - Summary:
 1. This does not detract from the general responsibility of every believer to serve. This type of general Christian service is effectively accomplished by making disciples by the Word of God.
 2. We are dealing with an *office*, i.e. One vested with the authority of Christ specifically to exhibit His servanthood in the Church.
 3. The diaconate is neither a “sub-pastoral function” nor a service that merely provides care for the needy. It is an *office* given charge of any temporality which would otherwise be managed by the Elders.
cf. J. H. Thornwell, COLLECTED WRITINGS, vol. IV, p. 201: “*It must be perfectly obvious to every candid mind that the entire secular business of the Church was entrusted to the Deacons; that one specific duty is mentioned, in accordance with the general method of Scripture, as a specimen of a class, and that the reason of the appointment determines the extent of the duty involved*”
Leon Morris, BAKER’S DICTIONARY OF THEOLOGY, “*The function of (the deacons) may well have been administrative and financial.*”
 4. The purpose of the diaconate: To preserve the primacy of the Word of God ministered in the Church, and (now) the Elder’s work of prayer and the ministry of the Word.
- B. The “Tables” of Actual Contemporary Diaconal Work
1. The Table of the Genuinely Needy Among God’s People, cf. Coppes, pps. 139-154, 105-138.
 - a. Esp. widows & orphans, (cf. Js. 1:27. OT references, e.g. Ex. 22:22, Deut. 10:18), those providentially impoverished (Gal. 2:9f., II Cor. 8,9, etc.), handicapped.

- b. Not to subsidize luxuries, options, etc.

NOTE: This serves to exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven among Christ's people, i.e. showing a Father who provides our needs (*not* our wants!)

2. The Table of the Church as an Organization.

i.e. "Church": Visible instrument through which the Word of God is spread. Something that, in its entirety, is to be "holy unto the Lord", cf. Zech. 14:20f, I Tim. 3:15.

- a. Its physical facilities, cf. I Cor. 10:31, etc.
- b. Its relation to State & Society, cf. Matt. 22:21, II Cor. 8:21.
- c. Its budget, cf. Biblical principles of liberal frugality and faithful reasonableness.
- d. Its public presentation, cf. "Man *does* look on the outward appearance" (I Sam. 16:7)
- e. Its functioning during public meetings for the purpose of stated ministry. e.g. Greeting at door, ushering, preserving order, heating & cooling of building, emergencies, etc.

NOTE: All must work for maximum furthering of Word of God.

3. The Table of the Pastor(s).

- a. Adequate compensation for Minister/Teaching Elder, and consideration of his legitimate ministerial needs. NOTE: This is best done by asking him, and encouraging openness.
- b. Other "temporalities" delegated to them as necessary, e.g. Issues regarding provisions for a minister's housing, provision for his "retirement", medical insurance, etc.)

NOTE: This mandates close interaction with Elders as fellow officers.

4. The Table of the Lord, i.e. "The Lord's Table."

i.e. This serves to epitomize the official relation of the deacons to the stated ministry of the Word. (This is also true with deacons taking up the offering).

- Summary: The work of "official service". Representing the "other side" of the Saviour's work (Matt. 20:28)

cf. J. Owen, WORKS, Vol XVI, p. 147: "*Whereas the reason of the institution of this office was, in general, to free the pastors of the churches who labour in the word and doctrine from avocations by outward things, such as wherein the church is concerned, it belongs unto the deacons not only to take care of and provide for the poor, but to manage all other affairs of the church of the same kind; such as are providing for the place of the church-assemblies, of the elements for the sacraments, of collecting, keeping, and disposing of the stock of the church for the maintenance of its officers and incidences, especially in the time of trouble or persecution. Hereon are they obliged to attend the elders on all occasions, to perform the duty of the church towards them, and receive directions from them. This was the constant practice of the church in the primitive times, until the avarice and ambition of the superior clergy enclosed all alms and donations unto themselves.*"

V. THE DEACON: DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY, YEARLY

NOTE: You are first a *man*, not first a *deacon*, cf. Acts 6:3. Beware of officiousness/lordliness.

A. Daily:

1. Give habitual attentiveness to your personal communion with God and growth in grace, e.g. Bible reading, devotional reading, prayer. You must not leave your first love, cf. Rev. 2:4.
NOTE: This is necessary to keep you pliable in the hand of your Master.
2. Cultivate a "diaconal mindedness" before God and your fellow man.
 - a. *Before God*: Especially prayer for the church and its members over whom you have specific responsibilities. This brings a reciprocal effect: It encourages your overall diaconal ministry with and to them.
 - b. *Before Man*: Sensitivity to human situations. Holy meditation concerning how to deal with them.
NOTE: Seek, under Christ, to be a master of the "How", e.g. Good Samaritan, Lk. 10:25-37.
 - Summary: Your "daily distribution", cf. Acts 6:1, must be as constantly in mind as is the ministry of the Word. Carry it about as a burden of your heart.

B. Weekly: Your involvement in regular congregational life...

1. Lord's Day meetings: The most heightened and obvious manifestation of diaconal ministry, because this time is the most heightened and obvious manifestation of the ministry of the Word.
 - a. *Before Worship*: Lighting, heating, cooling, sound system, setting up for Lord's Supper and/or baptism, general appearance of the building, ushering, urging silence before worship, etc.
 - b. *During Worship*. Offering, being prepared for emergencies, knowing how to deal with any disruptions that may come, e.g. crying babies.. Nursery. Heating & cooling, etc.

- c. *Following Worship*: Counting offering and being sure it gets to Treasurer, lighting off, general tidiness, locking doors, etc.
NOTE: Never forget role and authority of the deacon, particularly at this time.
 - 2. The Prayer Meeting:
 - a. Be sensitive to expressions of personal and congregational concerns bearing on the work of the deacons, e.g. Illnesses, financial difficulties, etc.
 - b. Be sensitive to expressions of possible diaconal matters beyond the local level, e.g. Ministers in distress, etc.
 - 3. Periodic Evening Labors, e.g. Committee meetings, visits to needy, hospital visits, work at building.
 - 4. Other Worthwhile Projects.
 - a. Be careful not to over-extend yourself. Keep priorities of service: Family, Church, Other projects.
 - b. Give continual consideration of your gifts and present needs. Seek your greatest usefulness, cf. Matt. 25:14-30. e.g. Service on Presbytery & GA level.
- C. Monthly:
- 1. Attend the Board of Deacon's meeting, and come prepared for what is to be done.
 - a. Importance of minutes properly taken and recorded.
 - b. Importance of a docket/agenda, possibly presented in advance on paper. Keep this standard, but functional, cf. Robert's Rules of Order re. Agendas for business meetings.
 - c. Importance of motions, thorough discussion, consensus/vote, carrying through on decisions made.
 - d. Wisdom of taking your time! cf. Prov. 19:2, "It is not good for a soul to be without knowledge, and he sins who hastens with his feet.")
 - 2. Never be reluctant to consult with the Session: Free, regular communications with Elders, cf. Like communication between husband and wife regarding their children!
cf. FG, OPC, XI:5. OPC Franklin Square Deacon's Manual, pps. 7,8.
 - 3. Do not permit material concerns to gradually eliminate personal concerns.
 - a. Purpose of diaconal work: Relieve elders. Focus is on *personal* provisions.
 - b. Suggestions: Ask elders: "How can we be of help?" Give them time to consider and answer. Be sensitive to needs beyond the local level, cf. II Cor. 8,9, esp. 8:14.
 - 4. Allow no tolerance for questionable, dishonest, or sloppy financial and legal practices. e.g. Financial reports, payment of bills, complying with codes, etc. cf. II Cor. 8:21.
 - 5. Remember: You have an increasingly committed congregation with which to work.
 - a. Make mental and/or written notes of needs, gifts, people. Link them up! Do assessments. Develop and use committees as necessary, e.g. Committee to work particularly with the elderly.
 - b. Never forget: "Church" is people ...not programs!
 - 6. An increasingly prominent project: Information to encourage liberality by the congregation. e.g. Report on Lord's Supper Sundays, Bulletin announcements/inserts, prayer meeting, newsletter, etc. i.e. Work to see the spirit of II Cor. 8,9 increasingly present in the congregation.
- D. Yearly:
- 1. Review Form of Government, church By Laws, Deacon's Manual, Training Class notes, other relevant materials. i.e. A stirred pool cannot grow stagnant and usually will not get polluted!
NOTE: Share what you read & learn. Practice diaconal cross-pollenization.
 - 2. Importance of self-assessment, goal-setting, and planning.
 - a. *Self-assessment*: Regarding your past performance individually as a deacon and corporately as a board.
 - b. *Goal-setting*: 1 yr. 3 yr. 5 yr. 10 yr. esp. re. temporal concerns, e.g. building improvements. e.g. Work days, capitol improvements, major renovations, manse improvements, etc. Be sure to include planning, i.e. 'How do we get there from here?' Use committees where that is necessary, appropriate, and helpful.
 - 3. Be wisely frank with congregational reports.
 - 4. Elect officers, e.g., President, Secretary, Treasurer. Be clear as to their responsibilities (These should be presented in church by laws.)

***SOME PERSONAL QUESTIONS FOR THOSE MEN CONSIDERING THE OFFICE OF
DEACON:***

(Based on material in Acts 6:3 & I Timothy 3:8-13)

1. Do I regard myself as having a good testimony as a Christian, a Christian husband, a Christian father, a Christian church member, a Christian worker, and a Christian neighbor?
2. Do I manifest the marks of godliness that are an evidence of being “full of the Holy Spirit”? Is “reverence” a primary mark of my character?
3. Do I possess the sanctified “horse sense” to apply my Christian faith to day by day matters of problem solving, stewardship, and interpersonal relations?
4. When I make a promise, do I keep it? Am I able to keep personal matters in confidence? Is my wife able to do the same?
5. Am I given to excess in any area of life? e.g. Alcohol, eating. spending, television or computer use, etc?
6. Am I a “lover of money”, or do I use my earthly possessions as a steward so that I might honor God and serve others generously?
7. Do I have a pure conscience before God?
8. When I am given a task, do I fulfill the work to the best of my ability? Do I enjoy serving others? Am I willing to take on necessary tasks that I even regard as unpleasant?
9. Does my wife have a good Christian testimony, i.e. Is my wife known for her reverence, careful speech, moderation, and faithfulness in all things?
10. Am I marked by absolute loyalty to my wife, so that I can honestly say I am a “one wife husband”? Am I a *good* husband to my wife?
11. Do I rule my children and my house well? Do I take the necessary time and make the necessary decisions and actions to do so?
12. Am I willing to take and make the necessary time to serve conscientiously as a deacon?

**WILHEMUS A BRAKEL ON THE NATURE OF THE DIACONAL OFFICE:
(From *OUR REASONABLE SERVICE*, Chapt. 28)**

The third office which God has instituted in His church is the *deaconry*. The deaconry pertains to an office in the church, distinct from the offices of elders and ministers, which has as its purpose *to support the poor in the congregation in their physical needs*. Since God gathers His church primarily from among the poor, there will always be poor persons in the church. “For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land” (Deut. 15:11). This gives opportunity to those *with means* to demonstrate their generosity, and for the *poor* to acknowledge the Lord’s providence regarding them and to be thankful. It could readily occur that several poor members, unknown to those members with means, would thus be neglected, perish due to want, or be forced to beg—which would be a matter of shame to the church. It can therefore easily be seen that it is needful that there be some whose work it is to have oversight over the poor. It has therefore also pleased the Lord to institute such an office in the church. Concerning this office we must note the calling, the required qualifications, and the task itself.

The Deaconry: A Divine Institution

First, it is evident that the Lord has instituted such an office, for we read in Acts 6:3, “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”

Secondly, the deaconry was not only intended for that era, when due to urgent circumstances all goods were brought together and the church lived from one common purse. Rather, since the poor will never be absent in the church, the deaconry must continue at all times. In the congregation at Rome there were also deacons, to whom the apostle said, “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity” (Rom. 12:8). He also wrote to the deacons in Philippi: “...with the bishops and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). In 1 Timothy 3 he instructs Timothy concerning what manner of men deacons must be, thereby confirming that the deaconry is a divine institution.

Since the deaconry is a divine institution in the church and for the church, deacons must be chosen by the church. This must either be done by all the brethren or by the representatives of the church—her elders—and not by the civil government. It was done in this manner in Acts 6. The apostle insists that deacons must first be proved, and after this are to serve (1 Tim. 3:10). Such probation and subsequent service implies an election. This is emphatically stated in the form for the installation of deacons. *“And in the first place I ask you, both elders and deacons, whether you do not feel in your hearts, that ye are lawfully called of God’s church, and consequently of God Himself, to these your respective offices?”* Since deacons are intended for the church, it is not fitting that they distribute alms to those outside the church, and thus mix the gifts of the church with the common provision for the poor, for:

- (1) this is contrary to the purpose and objective of the office.
- (2) Such a practice subtly promotes the mixing of the church with those who are without, as it treats all the poor as being equal; the church, however, must obviously be separate in all things.

(3) This will impede the generosity of many, for their gifts would then not be distributed in harmony with their objective.

(4) It would be to the disadvantage of the poor in the church, who otherwise could be supported in a much more abundant measure.

(5) It confirms papists and others in their errors and ungodly life, since they receive support regardless.

(6) It robs the church of its holy radiance. Such radiance would be all the more evident if the deacons, due to an abundance of funds, would manifest voluntary generosity to some individuals outside of the church.

The Qualifications of a Deacon

The apostle describes the required qualifications for deacons. “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim. 3:8–9, 12). Add to this all the virtues they must have as Christians in order to be examples to others. They must especially manifest those virtues which flow out of the virtue of generosity.

(1) They must manifest *compassion*: “Having compassion” (1 Pet. 3:8). The burden of the poor must so weigh upon them, as if they themselves were afflicted with it. They may neither be rude nor proud, nor may they snarl at them as if they had dogs or enemies before them.

(2) They must be *merciful*, which is a kindness causing one to be inclined to help another. “Blessed are the merciful” (Matt. 5:7); “Be ye therefore merciful” (Luke 6:36); “Be pitiful” (1 Pet. 3:8). The opposite behavior would be to shut one’s heart, to harden oneself toward the poor, not giving them anything, or if, out of a sense of shame or for any other reason one must give, he then gives it in such a manner as if he were casting a piece of bread to a dog.

(3) As a father cares for his children, they must be *careful and concerned* as to how the poor can manage their affairs, have enough to live, and thus be able to thank the Lord. “I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor” (Job 29:15–16).

(4) They must be *cheerful and friendly*. “...he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:8); “Be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pet. 3:8). They must be of a friendly disposition. A kind word and a friendly countenance are most refreshing for the poor, who due to their poverty are dejected. A grim countenance and a harsh word, however, cut through their soul.

The work of deacons pertains to the collection and distribution of monies, as well as to caring for the souls of the poor.

First, they must *collect*. They must do so in cooperation with the ministers and the elders, who together must superintend both the poor as well as those who have means. For the office of the ministry includes the offices of elder and deacon, and the office of elder includes the office of deacon. I repeat, deacons must consult with them to determine where sufficient means will be obtained, but also to be diligent in providing in situations of which they are aware.

Secondly, they must *distribute*. In distributing funds they must use wisdom and caution, seeing to it that they do not give thoughtlessly. They must give most to those who have the greatest need, and less to those who are lazy and waste that which has been given to them, in order to teach them to work and to be frugal. Orphans, the aged, the sick, or mothers who have given

birth each require a different approach. Those who are to blame for their poverty and who are capable of working must again be treated differently. This is also true for those who, due to a handicap, cannot work, even though they are healthy. It is again different with those who would rather perish from hunger with their families (which is a sin), than to allow it to be known that they are receiving something from the deaconry. A different approach is also needed for those who would be reduced to poverty unless some monetary help be given to them enabling them to remain solvent. Much wisdom is needed to clearly discern time, manner, and circumstances in making these decisions.

Thirdly, the deacons must also *care for the souls* of their poor, for they are as fathers to them; and whatever one member is obligated to do to another, they must excel in doing to those over whom the Lord has placed them.

(1) They must instruct the ignorant, and bring them to the church services and to catechism instruction.

(2) They must exhort, rebuke, and comfort according to individual circumstances.

(3) They must visit the sick, either preparing their souls for the hour of death, or exhorting them to increase in godliness if they may again become healthy.

In doing so they will “purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 3:13). They will be an ornament to the church, being enabled to be of more benefit to the church than before. Their gifts and graces will be increased as well. Among all the offices there is not one office which is more burdensome and detrimental to the body than the deaconship. It therefore frequently amazes me and gives me cause for rejoicing that the Lord gives the deacons such willingness and zeal, a fact which is generally true in the Netherlands. Upon receiving rich gifts they are as happy as if they had received them themselves. It does not trouble them to be engaged in their task until late in the evening. In no meeting is there generally more order, more unity, and more faithfulness than among the deacons. The Lord also rewards them, giving them honor and respect, and frequently grants that their own circumstances improve rather than deteriorate.¹

¹la Brakel, Wilhelmus, Th.F., *The Christian's Reasonable Service, Volumes I and II*, (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group) 1999.

THE 21 INDISPENSABLE QUALITIES OF A LEADER

I have found John C. Maxwell's book THE 21 INDISPENSABLE QUALITIES OF A LEADER to be very useful for myself and also for my work with interns. In most cases Maxwell builds on basic Christian principles. He frequently cites Christian writers or makes reference to Christians whom he regards as models of leadership. I have listed the 21 qualities he presents in this 21 short chapter volume, together with relevant Scriptures portions and excerpts from the chapters. In some cases, I have modified Maxwell's material or added some of my own (especially the "Christianized" definitions of the leadership qualities themselves). Maxwell's companion volume is THE 21 IRREFUTABLE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP.

- 1. CHARACTER:** *In all things representing the character of God in Christ.*
Text: "Imitate me, just as also I imitate Christ" (I Cor. 11:1)
"Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose; and (it is) the character which inspires confidence" (Bernard Montgomery)
What destroys character: Arrogance. Aloneness. Adventure-seeking. Adultery.
Tips:

 - Keep a pure conscience before God and man.
 - Ask forgiveness for what you must. Don't substitute apologies.

"Real character is being bigger on the inside." (Maxwell)
- 2. CHARISMA:** *In all things representing the love of God in Christ.*
Text: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, love never fails." (I Cor. 13:4-8)
What destroys charisma: Pride. Insecurity. Moodiness. Perfectionism. Cynicism.
Tips:

 - Enjoy life! Enter into God's delight in His word and all His works.
 - Really appreciate others. Express your appreciation.
 - Give people hope. You represent the God of hope.
 - Give yourself. True love is giving yourself for the good of others.

"Make your agenda to focus on others, not yourself." (Maxwell)
- 3. COMMITMENT:** *In all things representing the commitments of God in Christ.*
Text: "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men." (Col. 3:23)
Tips:

 - Commitment starts with a heart that stays close to Christ.
 - Know what's worth dying for.
 - Be an all-out: Set biblical goals, commit to them, and pay that price to reach them. Cross bearing is paying the price, no matter what the cost.

4. **COMMUNICATION:** *In all things representing the God who communicates supremely in Christ.*

Text: “And the common people heard him gladly.” (Mark 12:37)

“The leader must be able to share knowledge and ideas to transmit a sense of urgency and enthusiasm to others. If a leader can’t get a message across clearly and motivate others to act on it, then having a message doesn’t even matter.”
(Gilbert Amelio)

Tips:

- Communication is not just what you say, but how you say it.
- Keep it simple. “Be clear! Be clear! Be clear!”
- Effective communicators focus on the people to whom they are communicating.
- Believe what you say! Live what you say!
- The goal of all communication is action.
- Love for God and those to whom you are communicating enables you to communicate as you should.

“People will not follow you if they do not know what you want or where you are going.” (Maxwell)

5. **COMPETENCE:** *In all things representing the competence of God in Christ.*

Text: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed...” (II Timothy 2:15)

Tips:

- Show up every day.
- Keep improving.
- Follow through with excellence.
- Accomplish more than expected.

6. **COURAGE:** *In all things represent the courage of God in Christ.*

Text: “Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Yours be done.” (Luke 22:42)

Tips:

- Courage begins with an inward battle. Courage is not an absence of fear. It is doing what you *must* do even when you are afraid to do it.
- Courage is making things right, not smoothing things over.
- Courage in a leader inspires confidence in his followers.
- Your life (and ministry) will expand in proportion to your courage.

“You must do the things you think you cannot do.” (Maxwell)

7. **DISCERNMENT:** *In all things demonstrating the mind of God in Christ.*

- Text: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1,2)

Tips:

- Discover root issues.
- Work at being a problem-solver.
- Really evaluate the different options.
- Multiply your opportunities.
- As you grow, don't be afraid to "trust your gut."

8. **FOCUS:** *In all things representing the focus of God in Christ.*

Text: "...I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed." (Isaiah 50:7)

Tips:

- Establish priorities. Concentrate on them. Remind yourself of them regularly.
- Know your strengths.
- Develop your strengths. Work on your weaknesses.

Exercise: Develop a plan for a simpler and more focused church "program" in the church you are called to pastor.

9. **GENEROSITY:** *In all things representing the generosity of God in Christ.*

Text: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8:35)

Tips:

- Don't allow desires for possessions to control you.
- Develop the *habit* of giving.

"Just the very act of letting go of money, or some other treasure, does something in us. It destroys the demon (of) greed." (Richard Foster)

"Nothing speaks more loudly or serves them better than generosity from a leader." (Maxwell)

10. **INITIATIVE:** *In all things representing the initiative of God in Christ.*

Text: "For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost." (Acts 20:16)

Tips:

- Know what God wants. Make it your want.
- Push yourself to act!
- Don't be afraid to take risks.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes (but: learn from them).

"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly." (Robert Kennedy)

11. **LISTENING:** *In all things representing the way God in Christ listens to those who call upon Him.*

Text: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak..." (James 1:19)

Tips: Listen to:

- God.

- Your wife.
- Your fellow officers.
- Your congregation members.
- Others whom God is using (even when you have differences with them).
- Competent mentors. *Find at least one!

“To connect with their hearts, use your ears.” (Maxwell)

12. PASSION: *In all things representing the passion of God in Christ.*

Text: “...zeal for your house has eaten me up...” (Psalm 69:29, cf. John 2:17)

Tips:

- Really love your calling and your work.
- Keep your heart close to the passion of God revealed in His word.
- Associate with people of passion.

Suggestion: Read John Piper’s DESIRING GOD, and related works by the same author.

“When a leader reaches out in passion, he is usually met with an answering passion.” (Maxwell)

NOTE: This takes time in a cynical society. Genuine passion is hard for people to believe!

13. POSITIVE ATTITUDE, i.e. FAITH: *In all things live out of confidence in the promises of God in Christ.*

Texts: “According to your faith be it unto you.” (Matthew 9:29)

“Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” (Matthew 13:58)

Tips:

- Your attitude is a choice. Don’t succumb to pessimism or cynicism.
- Your attitude determines your actions.
- The people you minister to will mirror your attitude.
- Maintaining a good attitude is easier than regaining one. Stay close to God, whose attitude is always right!

14. PROBLEM SOLVING: *In all things representing the great problem solver: God in Jesus Christ.*

Text: “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places smooth.” (Isaiah 40:4)

Tips:

- Anticipate problems. They *will* come!
- Accept the truth.
- Step back! Look at the big picture. Ask what God is doing through and in the problem..
- Handle one thing at a time. Problems are like knots in a ball of string.
- Don’t give up when you’re down.
- Learn from others who are good problem-solvers.

- Remember: To the Christian, every problem is really an opportunity!

15. RELATIONSHIPS: *In all things representing the reconciling God in Jesus Christ.*

Text: “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” (Romans 12:18)

Tips:

- Treat all people as individuals made in God’s image. If they are Christians, they are also your brother or your sister (in Christ).
- Have the Great Leader’s heart: Really love people.
- Have the Great Leader’s hands and feet: Help people.
- Always be reconciled to those you have offended. (Remember Matthew 5:23f.)

“People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” (Maxwell)

16. RESPONSIBILITY: *In all things representing the persevering perfection of God in Christ.*

Text: “And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”” (Colossians 4:17)

Tips:

- Get the job done.
- Go the extra mile.
- Be driven by excellence.
- Produce: Regardless of the situation!

17. SECURITY: *In all things representing the secure position of God in Christ.*

Text: “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us...” (Colossians 4:17)

Tips:

- Be secure in your standing before God in Christ.
- Be secure in your calling as a minister.
- Be secure in letting *others* get credit.

“Nothing is a greater impediment to being on good terms with others than being ill at ease with yourself.” (Honoré de Balzac)

18. SELF-DISCIPLINE: *In all things representing the self-discipline of God in Christ.*

Text: “You, therefore, must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (II Timothy 2:3)

Tips:

- Make a disciplined lifestyle your goal. (Remember I Timothy 4:7b. Models: Soldier, athlete, farmer, II Timothy 2:4-7)
- Challenge your excuses.
- Develop and keep your priorities, even as you keep a holy flexibility.

“A man without decision of character can never be said to belong to himself (or to God, WS)...He belongs to whatever can make capture of him..” (John Foster)

- 19. SERVANTHOOD:** *In all things representing the servanthood of God in Christ.*
Text: “And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”” (Mark 9:35)
Tips (quoting Maxwell):
- Stop lording over people, and start listening to them.
 - Stop role-playing for advancement, and start risking for others’ benefit.
 - Stop seeking your own way, and start serving others.
- “If you want to lead on the highest level, be willing to serve on the lowest.”*
(Maxwell)
- 20. TEACHABILITY:** *In all things representing one who is teachable before God in Christ.*
Text: *“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”* (I Peter 5:5)
Tips:
- Learn to listen to and learn from those around you, especially your fellow elders.
 - Observe how you react to mistakes. Keep a humble frame at all times and in all situations.
 - Keep learning. Keep growing. “Let your progress be evident to all.” (I Timothy 4:15)
- “As long as you’re green, you’re growing. As soon as you’re ripe, you start to rot.”* (Ray Kroc)
- 21. VISION:** *In all things representing the boundless vision of God in Christ.*
Text: *“I could wish that you were cold or hot.”* (Revelation 3:15)
Tips:
- Stay close to the God of boundless vision.
 - Take time to write down your vision for your life and for the ministry given to you.
 - Beware of getting into the rut of the status quo in any area of your life or ministry. Remember: *Semper reformanda!*
- “Believe great things of God. Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God.”* (William Carey)