

The Ministry of the Deacon

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2008

Section VII. The Ordained Deacon in Full Connection

¶ 328. “The Ministry of a Deacon – From among the baptized, deacons are called by God to a lifetime of servant leadership, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop. Deacons fulfill servant ministry in the world and lead the Church in relating the gathering life of Christians to their ministries in the world, interrelating worship in the gathering community with service to God in the world. Deacons give leadership in the Church’s life: in teaching and proclaiming the Word; in contributing to worship, and in assisting the elders in administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; in forming and nurturing disciples; in conducting marriages and burying the dead; in embodying the church’s mission to the world; and in leading congregations in interpreting the needs, concerns and hopes of the world... From the earliest days of the church, deacons were called and set apart for the ministry of love, justice and service; of connecting the church with the most needy, neglected, and marginalized among the children of God. This ministry grows out of the Wesleyan passion for social holiness and ministry among the poor.”

¶324.4 Graduate Requirements

Master’s degree from a UM seminary or one listed by the University Senate, or a master’s degree in the area of the specialized ministry in which the candidate will serve. If the certified candidate is 35 years or older they may receive a profession certification or license in the area of ministry in which they plan to serve (See GHBEM) and have 24 hours of basic graduate theological studies. Additionally, according to Texas Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry policy (1996), certified candidates shall have two (2) courses in homiletics.

Ministerial Settings

The deacon lives between the church and the community in a variety of settings and appointments. Deacons are flexible in their appointments in the congregation and the world as nurses, administrators, editors, doctors, therapists, attorneys, artists, agency staff, ministers of discipleship, educators, seminary professors, musicians, missionaries and consultants all linking directly through their primary or secondary appointments the needs of people with the congregations.

“Called out from the whole people of God and authorized by the church to a lifetime of servant leadership, the ordained deacon is a “go-between” on behalf of God and the church, leading the faithful in fulfilling their divine calling in the world. Standing at the intersection of congregation and world, the deacon, in being and doing, represents to the church the full nature and scope of the servant ministry to which God summons it. As such, deacons are representatives, vehicles, conduits, prophetic signs, patterns of the triune God’s love and saving grace and of the go between calling of God’s people in the world. . .Deacons are called to be the ears of the church in hearing the cries of the world and serving as advocates for those who are oppressed. Deacons embody what it means to be a sign of God’s love and saving grace in the world and enable the whole people of God to grow in their prophetic witness to the transforming power of God’s grace.”

Sondra Higgins Matthaei, Professor of Christian Religious Education at Saint Paul School of Theology

Deacons are called to Word and Service to use their God-given gifts to build a ministry of compassion and justice to the community and to the congregation leading the people of God in the same servant ministry.

For more information:

<http://www.gbhem.org/site/c.lsKSL3POLvF/b.3474319/k.BF2A/Deacons.htm>