

What is a Deacon?

What does the word deacon mean?

The word deacon derives from the Greek *diakonos* meaning servant or minister.

How long has the Church had deacons?

Since New Testament days (see 1 Timothy 3). Famous deacons include Stephen, Vincent, Laurence, Alcuin, Francis of Assisi, Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding, and Lewis Carroll.

Don't some other churches also have deacons?

Within the Anglican Communion (as in Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches) a deacon is ordained by a bishop. Many Protestant churches do have deacons. But a deacon's responsibilities in the Baptist tradition for example parallel those of a vestry person in the Episcopal Church.

How are deacons addressed?

While some Deacons are called "the Reverend Mr. Or Ms." increasingly Deacons are usually addressed simply as "Deacon".

Who becomes a deacon and how?

A man or woman with a vocation to this ministry may be proposed and recommended to the bishop by the rector and vestry of a parish. If, after specific examinations, the person's vocation is affirmed, a course of study is undertaken. Examinations are given prior to ordination.

Can a deacon become a priest?

Yes. Some deacons continue in the diaconate permanently; others, known as *transitional deacons*, subsequently are ordained priests or bishops.

Is it true that lay people can do almost anything that a deacon can do?

In a sense, yes. The same can also be said of bishops, senators, aviators, dentists and chairmen of Rotary Clubs. Most people spend most of their time doing things that other people do, too. A deacon is unique in that she or he is sacramentally dedicated to a Christian ministry of service with the entire authority of the Church.

What provisions for deacons are there in the Book of Common Prayer?

The Prayer Book provides many roles for deacons in specific services. The essential work of a deacon is in serving others, especially the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely; and in leading and training lay people in such service. Ideally every congregation should have one or more deacons sharing in this ministry of servant leadership.

Jesus said, *I am among you as one who serves*. The deacons of the church are to lead us all in remembering that to follow Jesus Christ is to service as he did.

Collect for Deacons

Oh God of all power and wisdom, you made the temple of your ancient people glorious with the service of the descendants of Levi, and how you have instituted a new temple of living stones on the foundation of Jesus Christ, who came among us as one who serves. Grant, we pray, the guidance of your Holy Spirit to those whom you have called to serve as deacons that they may ever show forth the power and love of Christ both in your household and in the world he has redeemed. We ask in his Name to whom be all glory with you and the same Holy Spirit, now and forever to the ages of ages. Amen.

New Orleans Vision Statement

A deacon is a baptised person called and empowered by God and the Christian community to be an icon illuminating Christ as a model of servanthood for all people.

The role of the deacon in liturgy mirrors the role of deacon in church and world.

The personal gifts the church looks for in a deacon include spiritual maturity, compassion and flexibility. Under the authority of the bishop and church the deacon serves as evangelist and catalyst with others.

The deacon fulfills this calling through action and example as servant leader, witness, intercessor, facilitator, visionary, nurturer, and interpreter among diverse people. The deacon is messenger and proclaimer of Christ's presence among us.

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What is NAAD?

The North American Association for the Diaconate exists to promote the diaconate, serve the church and support deacons and dioceses. It encourages every diocese to develop a diaconate program to recruit and select, form, deploy, supervise and support deacons.

Information about membership and a list of publications and materials is available upon request, write to:

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