

## Work and Worship

Deacons usually work as part of a team, and may regularly be involved in leading worship. This means they have to be people who know how to co-operate with others in a common task. They are always looking for the potential in others and seeking ways to help them fulfill it.

Many people today choose not to worship on a Sunday morning. Deacons will be called on to work in partnership to devise new patterns for the worshipping life of the Church. They will strive to enable those with whom they come into contact to see the gospel as something relevant to their life and work.

As bridge builders between Church and community, Deacons seek ways to enable the community at large to celebrate the presence of God, both in the ordinary and in the crucial transitional points of life.

## Where do I go from here?

Should you wish further information or wish to apply to be considered for training as a Deacon please contact:

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## Diaconal Ministry



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It's your call

 The Church of Scotland  
Ministries Council

## Introduction

**Since its inception in 1887, the Diaconate has held a special place not only within the Church but also in the communities of Scotland at large. Originally an office for women within the Church, the Diaconate is now open to all. Like Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Elders, Deacons are ordained to their life-long office and are part of the Courts of the Church. As with other forms of ministry the Diaconate is undergoing a time of radical rethinking. The Church is beginning to see new and exciting patterns of ministry emerge.**

All Christians are called to be ministers to those around them. Within this context, the Church recognises distinctive kinds of calling to particular roles and functions. Deacons offer a ministry that is complementary to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Their work is primarily focused on care and compassion for the poor and oppressed, and seeking social justice for all. It is characterised by loving service and usually takes place in the context of a larger team. Deacons are enablers, who strive to bring out in others the gifts they have to offer to the Church and the community at large.

## Diaconal Ministry in the Community

Deacons are rooted both in the congregation and the community. As such, they are able to challenge the worshipping congregation on issues concerning the community - issues such as poverty, housing, education and social exclusion. Deacons are free to do this because they are released from some of the obligations placed on the Parish Minister.

Many Deacons are employed as Parish and Presbytery Workers - offering pastoral care in the community, and working with specific groups such as young people (often in schools) or with families. In many places they are called upon to conduct funerals and offer bereavement support. Deacons are able to conduct weddings.

Deacons can also serve the community through work in various types of Chaplaincy and other recognised diaconal appointments.

## Caring, Teaching and Encouraging

Deacons meet people in all of life's circumstances and in all kinds of places. Their role as carers is rooted in the wider pastoral ministry of the whole people of God, and often has a specific focus in the crisis points of people's lives.

Deacons are involved in many aspects of teaching programmes in Church and the community and through their involvement in issues of social justice, Deacons often take on the role of encouragers, standing alongside those who feel the isolation and loneliness of struggling against oppressive systems and people. Increasingly Deacons are being sought to work in Priority Areas Parishes - Scotland's poorest communities.

Deacons may also engage in a prophetic role towards the Church arising out of their experience in such demanding community situations.

Through their work with young people and children some Deacons may work alongside people with special needs, offering assurance that they have an equal place in society and much to contribute to it.

## Ecumenical links

Over the years Deacons have represented the Church of Scotland in larger Ecumenical gatherings both within the United Kingdom and beyond. There are strong links with the Diaconal Association of the Church of England, the Methodist Diaconal Order and the Deaconesses within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The Diaconate of the Church of Scotland is a member of **World Diakonia**. This is an organisation for Deacons, set up after the Second World War to build bridges and to bring about reconciliation and healing. In the beginning it was European but is now world-wide, linking diaconal groups across the globe and across the cultures. Deacons of the Church of Scotland were involved in the beginning and are still there. Over the years a number of Deacons have held office within the organization and many have represented us at Conferences across the world.

Another link in through a group called **KAIRE** which has a meeting every two years bringing together Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Reformed and Orthodox women for spiritual experience and retreat.