Ministering to Members (and Non-Members) with Short-Term Needs

Workshop

Process Notes

PROJECT this slide as participants are entering the workshop and waiting for it to begin.

Content Notes
Ministering to Members (and Non-Members) with Short-Term Needs

Diaconal Summit II

**Agenda**

- Introduction
- Short-Term Needs and Why They are an Important Part of Diaconal Ministry
- Cases
- Case Debrief
- Summary

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**Process Notes**

INTRODUCE the agenda

EMPHASIZE the focus on Short-Term needs and the use of the cases for applying the principles in the workshop.

**Content Notes**
Workshop Overview

Help deacons provide comfort and assistance to members (or others) with Short-Term needs.

Objectives
- By the end of this workshop you will be able to:
  - Evaluate a short-term request for needs
  - Determine the Biblical principles behind the decision on how to respond to short-term needs
  - Determine how your board should approach and communicate regarding these situations

Process Notes
- DESCRIBE the overall intent of the workshop.
- CLICK to reveal the specific learning objectives.
- BRIEFLY introduce each objective.

Content Notes
- This workshop focuses on short-term (or “one-time”) needs/requests for which deacons may or may not very much background information.
What are Short-Term Needs?

Short-term needs
- Typically financial
- Smaller dollar amounts
- Address an immediate problem
- Response is typically needed right away

Process Notes
INTRODUCE the topic of Short-Term needs.
BRIEFLY list/explain some of the various characteristics.
OPTION: ASK the group for examples of Short-Term needs they see frequently in their ministry.

TRANSITION to how these requests can be much different depending on whether they are coming from a member or a “walk-in.”

Content Notes
An exception could be responding to a disaster, which may require mobilizing a number of individuals for a short time to help with clean-up/recovery.
**Biblical Basis**

How should we address the needs around us?

**Gal 6:10**

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

**Luke 10:30 - 36**

“...which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?”

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**Process Notes**

DIRECT participants to the verses. READ the first, comment briefly as to its application to mercy ministry.

REPEAT for the second verse.

CLICK to reveal the question – ASK the question and solicit comments from the group relevant to the two scripture verses.
Biblical Basis, continued

What should we expect from recipients of assistance?

Ephesians 4: 28
Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

1 Timothy 5: 5-6
She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.

Process Notes
READ the first verse.
READ the second verse.
CLICK to reveal the question and briefly discuss.

Content Notes

This verse shows that the Bible does encourage people to work. It is a good measuring stick to use when someone is arguing we should help someone who is not willing to work. Note: it is also speaking of believers (see v. 17 – "no longer Gentiles" and v. 25 "members one of another...")

The 1 Timothy verse implies that it is legitimate to inquire about other resources (e.g., family) that are available. And, that piety is also a consideration. (Note: This verse is applicable to members – but is the principle somewhat transferable to non-members? Can we evaluate their resources and attitude?)
Ministering to Members (and Non-Members) with Short-Term Needs

Process Notes

REVIEW the differences between member and non-member requests.

Content Notes

Some deacons believe that their assistance should be focused entirely on members only. If this seems to be a potentially contentious issue, be prepared to address it (e.g., assign certain people to the case where the request comes from a member, get agreement that we can disagree on this point).

For reference, see the “Report of the Committee to Study the Principles of Diaconal Ministry,” in particular, section B. The Proper Objects of Diaconal Ministry. It can be found at http://www.opc.org/GA/diaconal.html
**Process Notes**

REVIEW the model, briefly summarizing each block.

DISCUSS the importance of some of the key elements when meeting with and praying for various need cases.

**Content Notes**

This slide is based on a summary of some behavioral or application-based tips for how deacons should approach people with needs. The source is Christ the King OPC (TBD).

The complete document is included in the Participant Guide.
Process Notes
INTRODUCE the case-study activity.
POINT OUT that the intent of these cases is to discuss and apply the Biblical principles described earlier to some real-life cases.
EMPHASIZE that the important part of this activity is not the answer but the reasoning behind it.
**Process Notes**

Provide an OVERVIEW of the cases they will be working on.

EMPHASIZE that each group will be working on only one of the cases. (They will be able to discuss all of them during the debrief.)

EXPLAIN that they will be given a handout with the case information. It may not include everything they want to know – in some cases they will need to either proceed without the information or make a reasonable assumption.
Process Notes

REVIEW the plan for the case exercises.

MENTION that they will receive a hand-out as shown.

DESCRIBE what they are to produce from their discussion.

- Decision (and rationale, including options they may have considered and abandoned)
- Concerns
- Any follow-up

CLICK to reveal the step by step instructions.

EXPLAIN that when the time is up, the group will reconvene – even if they haven’t completed their work. (The intent is to force a quick decision, which is similar to many short-term request situations.)
Process Notes

REVIEW the roles for the break-out work.
RECOMMEND that they select individuals to perform all the roles. (They should consider them “hats”...one person can wear more than one if desired.) POINT OUT that the intent of the roles is just convenience – to keep the process moving. All participants should contribute to the discussion.
Process Notes

REVIEW the roles for the break-out work.
RECOMMEND that they select individuals to perform all the roles. (They should consider them “hats”…one person can wear more than one if desired.) POINT OUT that the intent of the roles is just convenience – to keep the process moving. All participants should contribute to the discussion.
**Case Debrief**

**Stan (Case #1)**

- Summarize Stan’s situation, his request, and your response.
- What Biblical principle(s) did you seek to follow in your response?
- Would Stan’s demeanor affect your decision? In what ways?

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**Process Notes**

CLICK to reveal the first question and ASK the spokesperson for the group that worked on Case #1 to review the situation and their recommendations.

DISCUSS some of the alternatives they considered and their rationale for their eventual decision.

INVITE input (i.e., questions or comments) from the rest of the workshop participants.

SUMMARIZE some of the key principles.

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**Content Notes**

NOTE: There are rarely “right answers” to these cases – allow for differences of opinion on the results. Emphasize the importance of considering the individual situation, gaining consensus across the board of deacons, and basing decisions on Biblical principles.

Some of the key ideas to look for from this discussion include:

- Importance of setting up a database (paper or electronic) to capture names and other information on “walk-in’s”
- Even though a prescription makes it appear legitimate, an individual could always sell the prescription to someone else for cash
- Going with the individual to the pharmacy may be a way to “call their bluff” and also witness how they explain their situation to another person (the pharmacist)
- It can be helpful to have a standard or policy on the type and amount of assistance provided to “walk-ins”
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Process Notes

CLICK to reveal the first question and ASK the spokesperson for the group that worked on Case #2 to review the situation and their recommendations.

DISCUSS some of the alternatives they considered and their rationale for their eventual decision.

INVITE input (i.e., questions or comments) from the rest of the workshop participants.

SUMMARIZE some of the key principals.

CLICK to reveal the second question and DISCUSS.

CLICK to reveal the third question and DISCUSS.

Content Notes

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Providing a loan has several risks. There is potential for damage to the relationship if the individual is unable to or needs extra time to repay.

Also, the sense of providing mercy is changed because the payback makes it more of a business transaction.
Ministering to Members (and Non-Members) with Short-Term Needs

Diaconal Summit II Workshop

Process Notes
CLICK to reveal the first question and ASK the spokesperson for the group that worked on Case #3 to review the situation and their recommendations.
DISCUSS some of the alternatives they considered and their rationale for their eventual decision.
INVITE input (i.e., questions or comments) from the rest of the workshop participants.
SUMMARIZE some of the key principles.
CLICK to reveal the second question and DISCUSS.
CLICK to reveal the third question and DISCUSS.

Content Notes
NOTE: There are rarely “right answers” to these cases – allow for differences of opinion on the results. Emphasize the importance of considering the individual situation, gaining consensus across the board of deacons, and basing decisions on Biblical principles.
The main concern with directed giving is that it short-circuits the deacons role in managing a pool of resources to address a range of needs in the church.
There are also legal/tax implications of directed giving. The recipient is getting that assistance as income but not paying any tax on it.
Possibly the deacons would want to discretely follow-up with the McNeills. This would, however, require the deacons to proactively offer assistance to someone who may not need or want it.
**Process Notes**

CLICK to reveal the first question and ASK the spokesperson for the group that worked on Case #3 to review the situation and their recommendations.

DISCUSS some of the alternatives they considered and their rationale for their eventual decision.

INVITE input (i.e., questions or comments) from the rest of the workshop participants.

SUMMARIZE some of the key principles.

CLICK to reveal the second question and DISCUSS.

CLICK to reveal the third question and DISCUSS.

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**Content Notes**

NOTE: There are rarely “right answers” to these cases – allow for differences of opinion on the results. Emphasize the importance of considering the individual situation, gaining consensus across the board of deacons, and basing decisions on Biblical principles.

You may be able to help the individual with his job search and better planning skills. Is he planning to move to the area if he gets a job? How is he going to get back and forth to work in the meantime?
Process Notes
CLICK to reveal the first question and ASK the spokesperson for the group that worked on Case #3 to review the situation and their recommendations.
DISCUSS some of the alternatives they considered and their rationale for their eventual decision.
INVITE input (i.e., questions or comments) from the rest of the workshop participants.
SUMMARIZE some of the key principles.
CLICK to reveal the second question and DISCUSS.
CLICK to reveal the third question and DISCUSS.

Content Notes
NOTE: There are rarely “right answers” to these cases – allow for differences of opinion on the results. Emphasize the importance of considering the individual situation, gaining consensus across the board of deacons, and basing decisions on Biblical principles.
You will need to be careful – if you decide to accompany her to her apartment, make sure there is another deacon present.
However, because she is a non-member, you will probably want to focus your assistance on council. You may suggest she continue attending and bringing her children.
There is also a legal issue of her working for cash while receiving SSI payments.
**Process Notes**

CLICK to reveal the first question and ASK the spokesperson for the group that worked on Case #3 to review the situation and their recommendations.

DISCUSS some of the alternatives they considered and their rationale for their eventual decision.

INVITE input (i.e., questions or comments) from the rest of the workshop participants.

SUMMARIZE some of the key principles.

CLICK to reveal the second question and DISCUSS.

CLICK to reveal the third question and DISCUSS.

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**Content Notes**

NOTE: There are rarely “right answers” to these cases – allow for differences of opinion on the results. Emphasize the importance of considering the individual situation, gaining consensus across the board of deacons, and basing decisions on Biblical principles.

Perhaps you could assist them in networking to find more permanent employment.
Process Notes

SUMMARIZED the key lessons learned from the three cases.

ASK the group to provide tips/ideas they gained from the discussion and write them on a WHITEBOARD/FLIPCHART the group can see. (You will be referring back to these during the overall summary.)
Short-Term Case Workshop Summary

- Short-term needs can present a challenge (and seeming distraction) to your diaconal ministry
- How you address these needs reflects on the church, as well as stewardship

Tips
- **Get aligned** (in advance) within your diaconal board on parameters for responding to these requests
- **Communicate** your approach to pastors or others who may be involved
- Keep a **database**
- **Verify**, ask questions, be patient
- Remember the **spiritual** dimension

### Process Notes

SUMMARIZE the main points of the workshop.

INCLUDE ideas raised during the work group debrief.
References and Resources

For More Information...

- Report of the Committee to Study the Principles of Diaconal Ministry (OPC website, from the 51st General Assembly, 1984)
- Ministries of Mercy: The Call of the Jericho Road (Timothy Keller, 1989)

Process Notes

POINT OUT sources for additional reading or sharing with their local board of deacons.