



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





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



Diaconal Summit II

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

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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.






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What are Short-Term Needs?

Short-term needs

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



Short-term needs often come with only minimal background information

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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.

Content Notes






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.

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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?)






Mercy and Proper Stewardship

Your response will likely vary depending on your relationship to the person making the request.

- While we do fact-finding with both members and non-members, we have a relationship with members of the church that allows us to do verification on a different level.
- Regardless of member or non-member, each case is unique (background and response) – importance of listening, discernment



In either case, you will want to be looking for signs of potential slothfulness, deception, or a longer-term problem under the surface.

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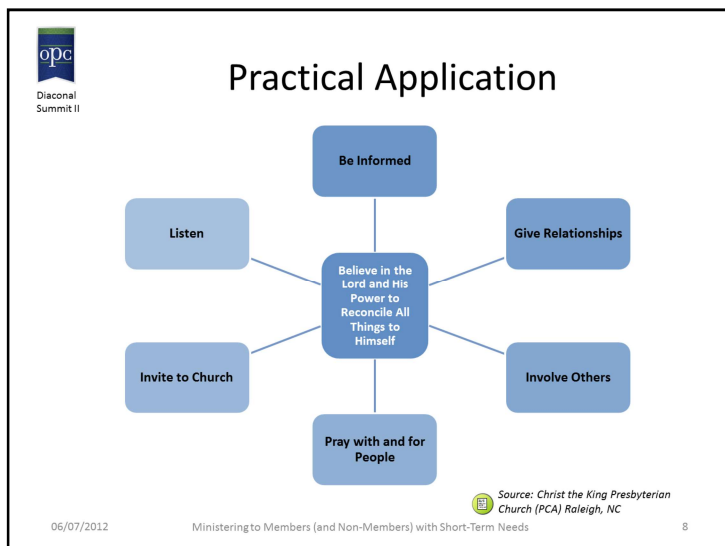
Process Notes

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

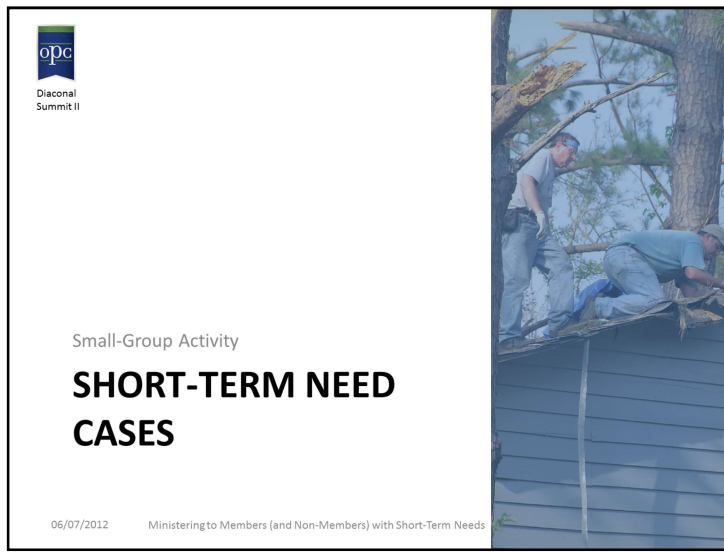
REVIEW the model, briefly summarizing each block.

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.

Content Notes



The logo for the Ontario Presbyterian Church (opc) is located in the top left corner of the slide. It features the letters 'opc' in a stylized font, with 'Ontario Presbyterian Church' written in smaller text above it.

Short-Term Case Overview

- Breakout into groups of 5 to 7 people
- Imagine you are a group of Deacons at a local church
- Address the worksheet questions for the case your group is assigned
 - *Feel free to make assumptions – just document them!*

A red circle icon with a white exclamation mark inside, located to the left of the text.

Use the form in your Participant Guide.
Refer to the presentation for key principles.

Cases

- ☐ **Case 1:** Stan
- ☐ **Case 2:** Stella
- ☐ **Case 3:** Sterling
- ☐ **Case 4:** Tom
- ☐ **Case 5:** Paula
- ☐ **Case 6:** Donnie and Dawn

Your group will work on two of the six cases.

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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.

Content Notes



Short-Term Cases

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Schedule

Each group will work one (or two) separate cases. All six cases are in your manual – your facilitator will assign one for your group to complete.

Output

1. Discuss the situation and identify additional information you would attempt to obtain (whether by asking or other research, e.g., calling a landlord, etc.).
2. Obtain the “answer hand-out” from the facilitator.
3. Using the information available, **decide** on assistance, the rationale, and how you will **explain** it to the case.

Feel free to make assumptions – just document them!

Use the flipchart to summarize your results for discussion.

Short-Term Needs Case #1 Worksheet:

Stan

“Walk-in”

Stan appears at the door of the church at the end of the morning service. You have never seen him before, but he says if he could speak to the pastor or the deacons. You ask how you can help him and he says, “I need some money right away. I have a prescription from the doctor and it needs to be filled.” Stan looks more agitated as you try to get more information.

Stan does have what appears to be a valid prescription, though it looks a little worn. The doctors office is near and the date is recent. Stan said that he thought of coming to the church because he knows the bus past it almost every day.

Think About...

Stan does have what appears to be a valid prescription, though it looks a little worn. The doctors office is near and the date is recent. Stan said that he thought of coming to the church because he knows the bus past it almost every day.

Stan did provide no name and address but does not have a phone. He also did not have an ID which might be useful in a treatment center near months ago.

You tried asking the doctors office to verify the prescription but there was no answer. Stan offered to go to the pharmacy together with you to fill the prescription if the church could pay for it.

Short-Term Needs Case 1 Hand-Out
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Process Notes

REVIEW the plan for the case exercises.

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

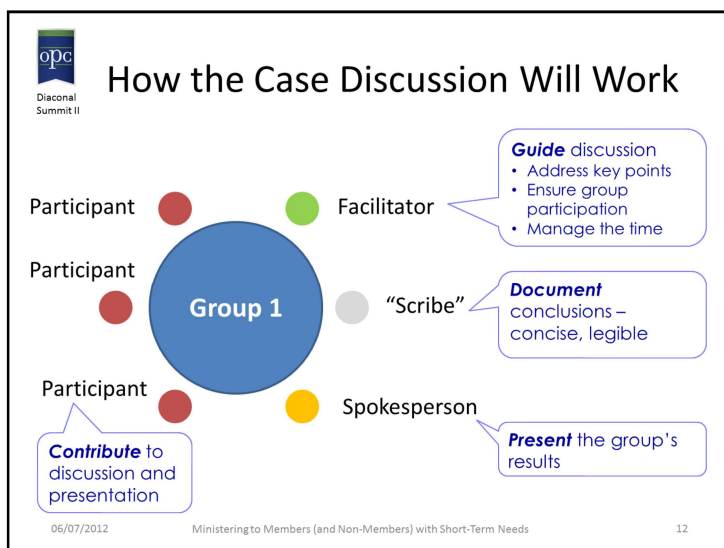
DESCRIBE what they are to produce from their discussion.

- 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.)

Content Notes




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.

Content Notes





Case Discussion Schedule

Activity	Duration
Review the case assigned to your group	3 min
Discuss and list questions for the case	5 min
Obtain “answers” the case provided	2 in
Decide and explain assistance	10
Repeat for the next case (as time permits)	15
Convene to discuss all cases with the full group	

The answers will be incomplete – that is intentional.

Focus on the Biblical basis for your decision and how you will communicate it to the case.

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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.

Content Notes



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.


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”






Case Debrief
Stella (Case #2)







Summarize Stella's situation, her request, and your response.



What are some of the risks/benefits of providing a loan vs. a gift?



Would your decision have been different if the amount requested had been greater?



What does Stella's reluctance to discuss financial details say about her relationship with the deacons?

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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

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.

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.






Case Debrief


Sterling (Case #3)




Summarize Sterling's situation, his request, and your response.



What are the risks of "directed giving"?



How does the current level of needs/resources affect this decision?



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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.



Case Debrief

Tom (Case #4)

- Summarize Tom's situation, his request, and your response.
- How would your response be different if Tom were local?
- How would you approach the situation differently if there were a second deacon available?

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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 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?







Case Debrief
Paula (Case #5)




Summarize Paula's situation, his request, and your response.



Would your response be different if Paula was not receiving SSI and food stamps?



Did you discuss involving other members of her family/group? Why/why not?



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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.




*Case Debrief*
Donnie and Dawn (Case #6)



Summarize Donnie and Dawn's situation, his request, and your response.



How would your response have been different if they had not offered to work?



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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.


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






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Short-Term Case Summary

 What are some of the tips, ideas, and “watch-for’s” you gained from this discussion?



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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.)

Content Notes





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
- ❑ Keep a **database**
- ❑ **Verify**, ask questions, be patient
- ❑ Remember the **spiritual** dimension

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Process Notes

SUMMARIZE the main points of the workshop.

INCLUDE ideas raised during the work group debrief.

Content Notes



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*)

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Process Notes

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

Content Notes