

# PARTNERS

No. 4

A Resource from Diaconal Ministries Canada

September 2004

## Serving with joy!

One of the central themes in the book of Philippians is joy. In Paul's letter to the bishops, deacons and the members of the church in Philippi, he writes that he experiences joy when he remembers them and prays for them. Paul is filled with joy because they have "partnered" with him in the gospel.

Our prayer at Diaconal Ministries Canada is that each of you as deacons will experience much joy as you "partner in the gospel." You may be asking 'How do I, a deacon, and our diaconate "partner" in the gospel?'

### DEACONS:

#### *Partnering in the gospel...*

- show mercy;
- relieve victims of injustice;
- criticize waste and selfishness;
- assess needs;
- be compassionate;
- promote stewardship;
- collect and disburse funds;
- develop programs of assistance;
- demonstrate God's care.

promote stewardship of our wealth, time and ability... collect and disburse resources for benevolence... develop programs of assistance... demonstrate in word as well as in deed the care of the Lord himself."

The task looks daunting and difficult. However, we are not alone. Our Lord desires to equip us to carry out this ministry with delight. In your "partnership" in the gospel, joy prom-

ises to be your ongoing experience in diaconal ministry when you:

• **Expose God's reign** and plan for His people. Through your witness and service, reveal kingdom values in your church and in your community.

When you keep the priorities and values of God's reign in front of His people, you are and may be a sign of the beauty of the reign of God. Take hold of this missional opportunity and serve with joy!

• **Embody the presence of Jesus** in the lives of others. As you respond with your presence and resources to the needs of people within the church and/or the world, you represent Jesus.

When you have the calling to care, the gift of joy for you will come from giving.

• **Experience the empowerment of the Spirit** in spite of your weakness. Your openness for growth and your capacity for understanding what others endure will be evident through blessings in ministry.

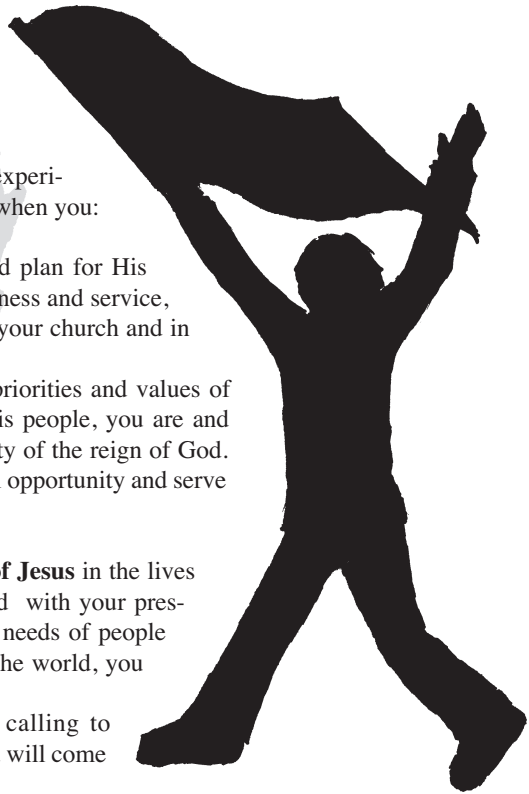
In turn, your discernment will strengthen your ability to empower others. Allow God to mold you into a person of joy as He shapes you through these experiences.

A deacon also provides a link between worship and justice. The God we love and worship loves justice. Challenge those structures and conditions that keep others from being persons of joy. As a deacon, you are both a servant and an ambassador. There is joy in participating in what God is transforming now and joy in announcing that God is also bringing in a new and future reality.

Go and serve with joy!



*Hans Kater is Executive Director of Diaconal Ministries Canada.*



**DIACONAL  
MINISTRIES  
CANADA**

• 3475 Mainway • PO Box 5070  
• Burlington, ON • L7R 3Y8  
• 905-336-2920 • 1-800-730-3490

dmc@crcna.ca

\* A MINI-WORKSHOP accompanies this issue of *Partners*. The workshop provides probing questions to explore this topic and apply its theme in on-going ministry. This workshop—and other ones related to themes from previous issues of *Partners*—is available from your Secretary of Deacons or on-line: [www.diaconalministries.com](http://www.diaconalministries.com).

\* AN ORIENTATION PACKAGE for new deacons will be available soon from the Diaconal Ministry Developer in your classis. For a listing of DMDs, check our web site.

[www.diaconalministries.com](http://www.diaconalministries.com)

**TOWEL TALES:**

# An army of foot-washers

“...and he wrapped a towel around his waist, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.” —*John 13:4-5*

**D**uring a recent Sunday Morning sermon based on this text, our pastor encouraged our congregation to become “an army of foot washers for the Lord.” This made me think of deacons and their role in ministry, both in the church, and in the community around them. An army of foot washers, doing the Lord’s work—what a great thought!

Recently I had the privilege of participating in such an army. The deacons of our church had been asked by a local community group to organize a full course dinner for the needy in our community.

The deacons rose to the challenge and began planning for the event. It soon became evident that they could not do this alone; the congregation was encouraged to participate as well. When you envision an army, you realize that it is made up of both leaders and doers; the Lord provided both.

It amazes me how far a little encouragement can stretch some people. All people need is to be asked and be appreciated for the tasks they perform. The deacons soon became excited as the number of volunteers and the quantity of food donations began to swell.

The evening was a great success, with many members of the congregation becoming more aware of the plight of the needy in our community.

It was great to see members of our congregation serving a meal and mingling with those who find themselves in need. The deacons agreed that this event should not be a one-time thing. They hoped it would become a growing experience for all those involved, leading to more opportunities for service in our community. Since this event, the deacons have sought out some of the various community organizations around our city and have helped to offer that ‘cup of cool water’ to those who find themselves homeless and in need.

The deacons have helped the congregation become part of that army of foot washers, serving the needy in Christ’s community.

If you find yourself looking for opportu-



nities to serve, and have a desire to become part of Christ’s army of foot washers, talk to your deacons. There are numerous projects that you can get involved with, anything from starting a soup kitchen, to assisting with running a Day Care centre, to Language classes (ESL), or perhaps offering a tutoring service, starting a Refugee program, getting involved with a Prison ministry; the list is only limited by your imagination.

Become involved with your deacons and learn what it means to share in Christ’s service.

Go as far as you dare, for you cannot go beyond the reach of God.

Give as extravagantly as you like, for you cannot spend all the riches of God.

Care as lavishly as you are able, for you cannot exhaust the love of God.

Keep journeying as a servant, for God will always be with you.



*Gary Veeneman is a Diaconal Ministry Developer in British Columbia.*

## The ABC's of Diaconal Ministry

Access diaconal experience and resources through

- the Diaconal Ministry Developer in your classis
- your website at [www.diaconalministries.com](http://www.diaconalministries.com)
- the office of Diaconal Ministries Canada at 905-336-2920

Become equipped through

- Days of Encouragement
- workshops by Diaconal Ministry Developers
- training at classis diaconal conferences

Connect with others to meet needs through

- community agencies
- classis diaconal conferences
- Operation Manna projects

### EQUIPPING DEACONS & OTHER CHURCH LEADERS AND MEMBERS

Be sure to attend one of the following Days of Encouragement coming to your area this fall:

- Midwest - Emo, ON  
Saturday, Oct. 2, 2004
- Ontario - Ancaster, ON  
Saturday, Oct. 16, 2004
- Paliser Triangle - Calgary, AB  
Saturday, Oct. 16, 2004
- Northern Alberta - Edmonton, AB  
Fri./Sat., Nov. 5-6, 2004
- Maritimes - Truro, NS  
Saturday, Nov. 6, 2004
- Pacific Northwest - Lynden, WA  
Saturday, Nov. 6, 2004

For more details on any of these training events, including registration forms, click on Equipping Deacons at [www.diaconalministries.com](http://www.diaconalministries.com).