

Praying for Emerging Deacons in a Movement

Deacons may be the most overlooked governing role in a house church network or movement, and yet they play a critical role on many levels: serving the financial needs of the poor in their networks, organizing the gathering of information for diagnostic and assessment purposes, and generally supporting both the pioneering work of apostolic leaders beyond their network and the building work of teaching elders within their network. Here are some ways we can pray for believers serving in this role:

Healthy Relationships with Elders in their Network: Just as in Acts 6, the deacons must have the support and trust of the elders in a network in order to most effectively serve.

Again, Lord, we ask You for help in building healthy relationships based on trust and love and service. Help the elders to reach out to the deacons in trust and appreciation, and help deacons to respond with glad service for the sake of the churches. Help them to be men and women of honor, who win the trust and appreciation of the networks they serve. Call them to a high standard, and empower them, by Your grace, to meet it.

Good Connections with Shepherds for the Gathering of Information: One key logistical role of deacons in movements is to gather information about groups and streams to pass up to network elders and the apostolic leader to help diagnose both problems and opportunities, and to rightly perceive the overall health and growth of a network. In order to do that effectively, the deacon must have the trust of the group leaders who will supply that information.

Lord, we know that the simple task of gathering information from multiple sources can be a trying task in many cultures, and is easily hindered or completely derailed if there is a lack of trust. So Father, we ask that You would build deep trust between house church leaders and the deacons appointed to serve the network in which these churches are connected to one another. Remind apostolic agents and elders to continually validate

the ministry of the deacons so that they can serve unhindered. Strengthen the deacons in their inner person to be people faithful to You and to the Church, eager to serve, humble and genuine, quick to repent, open to correction, faithful in service.

Discernment in the Analysis of Information about the Growth and Health of the Network: As the frontline gatherers of the information, and as the ones who will convey the information to network leaders, deacons need wisdom and discernment to help highlight potential problems and opportunities as network growth and health is discussed.

Lord, as the deacons gather information for assessment and diagnosis, help them to see clearly patterns that indicate opportunities for or dangers to the churches in these networks. Help them to grow in wisdom and understanding as they look for ways to better serve the life and health of the churches.

Strength of character to avoid and resist the temptation to misuse network finances: Just as in the book of Acts, deacons typically handle the weekly collection of funds from the network to be used in the support of teaching elders, new apostolic ventures, or to assist the poor inside or outside the church. Obviously deacons handling finances need to operate in teams of no less than 3 with a high level of transparency, but we must also pray that they would have grace to resist temptation to misuse the money with which they've been entrusted.

Lord God, help existing and emerging deacons, and leaders of all kinds, to learn from the painful lessons of the early church in Acts. Help them to see the dangers of straying from a path of absolute honesty and integrity, and if they struggle, grant them grace to ask for help. Father, strengthen their hearts to withstand temptation to misuse the funds with which they've been entrusted, and grant elders wisdom to know who to appoint to these sensitive positions within the house church network.

Compassion and Discernment to know how to Use Network Finances:

Beyond just handling money well, the deacons need wisdom to wait on the Lord and be guided by Him in how to best use the money collected from the the network - to bless the poor, but also to support the work of teaching elders and apostolic leaders planting in new areas.

Lord, in conjunction with the elders and group leaders, help the deacons know how best to use the funds that are shared to bless the poor, to support the ministry of apostolic agents, and to undergird the teaching ministry within the church. Grant them wisdom and godly perception to choose wisely how they handle these resources that belong to You.

Compassion to serve the Needs of the Persecuted in their Networks:

In movements, deacons appointed in a network often serve as some of the first people to assist those in the network who are suffering persecution, and so need prayer for grace to operate in wisdom & compassion.

Father, grant a shepherds' heart to the deacons You raise up, help them to respond in mercy and love to the needs they face. Help them to fairly represent the needs of the persecuted and poor within the church so that those in the church can care for their own well.

Father, lastly we ask that the deacons You raise up would recognize that they are not just secretaries or money-managers. The first deacons, like Stephen and Phillip, were mighty men of faith and power, bold in evangelism, trusting the leading of Your Spirit, and ready vessels for the power of Your Spirit to work signs and wonders to open doors for the gospel. We ask the same for these deacons, Lord - that they would be godly men and women, empowered by Your Spirit to accomplish Your ends for Your glory! Amen.