

READY OR NOT: GROWING INTO THE CALL
A Gathering of Elders and Deacons
Presbytery of Lake Michigan
October 23, 2010

The following were submitted by participants at the Gathering of Elders and Deacons and represent “Best Practices” from those congregations represented.

1. Guided Bible Studies
2. Meditation before meeting
3. Officer training
4. Meeting agenda
5. Have Moderator stay one more year after their term expires to train new Moderator
6. Submit committee reports to Stated Clerk or Moderator of Deacons in advance of meetings to permit Elders / Deacons time to review committee actions / recommendations prior to meeting.
7. “Deacon Delight” – Once a month provide healthy snack at coffee hour
8. Implement Shepherding Program
9. Three kinds of Deacons:
 - a. **Administrative Deacons** – Takes care of money. Determine who needs financial assistance. Organize events.
 - b. **Caring Deacons** – Minister to families in need providing spirituality, meals, comfort, etc. One Deacon “on call” per week.
 - c. **Sustaining Deacons** – Deacon assigned members of the congregation who are home bound / nursing homes, etc. Deacon writes personal note or visits at least once per month
10. Deacons are responsible for transporting members to worship, appointments, etc. Delivering flowers and communion to shut-ins. Also Communion prep and greeters.
11. “Masters Story” – Elders note where they have experienced the Spirit since the last meeting of Session.
12. Session agree on focus and finds a Scripture to capture it. Use 30 minutes of meeting for devotions

13. Send Session Committee reports to Elders electronically prior to meeting
14. Children in Worship:
 - a. Prepare bread for communion
 - b. Bring elements into sanctuary
 - c. Invited to play rhythm instruments during closing hymn
 - d. Children's bulletin with icons for "listening, singing, praying, etc."
15. Change meeting time from 7PM to 6:30PM to permit Pastor time to lead spiritual discussion prior to start of regular meeting. Ask the question "What is this saying to us as leaders?"
16. Provide Elders with reports via e-mail prior to Session meetings
17. Restructure and refine how Deacons interact with Pastor
18. Rather than "Staff Driven", Deacons lead staff in direction they feel led
19. Spend time in Bidding Prayers with congregation
20. Session agenda similar to Worship process
21. Being open to minister to the community and being available as a community center
22. Opening question at Session meeting is "What have you seen God do in your life this month?"
23. Assigned Care Group for each Deacon. 5-6 people each Deacon is responsible for. Writing cards, visiting in home or hospital
24. Adult class that is a bible study that has Old Testament, Gospel, Psalms and Prophets (Not the same as lectionary)
25. Outreach with vouchers for gas, groceries, etc.
26. "Diaper Ministry". Families in community needing diapers for youngsters
27. After school tutoring. Providing snacks
28. Community suppers shared by several churches
29. Open building to addiction groups....AA, Drugs, Sex addiction
30. Smaller Session

31. Deacons telephone prayer chain
32. Noon prayer service led by Pastor
33. Natural church development survey process to determine passion of individuals interests
34. Open and close all meetings with prayer
35. Illustrated guide for Communion Service
36. Serendipity Study
37. Part time Pastor – Elders conduct at home communion
38. Deacons serve communion
39. New Elder training. Go through Book of Order
40. Work with people with hurt feelings, conflict management needed
41. Who is God calling us to be and how?
42. Deacons serve communion, call on shut ins, encourage others to participate in Deacons work
43. Meetings via Internet
44. Unicameral Board. No Deacons. Elders assume Deacon responsibilities in smaller congregations
45. “Caring Table” / “In Our Prayers” letters. Deacons responsible for distribution
46. Cards sent to those absent from worship
47. Communication is critical. Clarification and communication needed about Elders and Deacons leadership role in the congregation. Not Pastors responsibility
48. More involvement of Elders at Presbytery / Synod