

**THE MINISTRY OF THE DEACON**  
**2012 BOOK OF DISCIPLINE - PARAGRAPHS 329-331**

**¶ 329. Ministry, Authority, and Responsibilities of Deacons in Full Connection**

1. Deacons are persons called by God, authorized by the Church, and ordained by a bishop to a lifetime ministry of Word, Service, Compassion, and Justice, to both the community and the congregation in a ministry that connects the two. Deacons exemplify Christian discipleship and create opportunities for others to enter into discipleship. The work of deacons is a work of justice, serving with compassion as they seek to serve those on the margins of society. In the congregation, the ministry of the deacon is to teach and to form disciples, and to lead worship together with other ordained and laypersons.
2. The deacon in full connection shall have the rights of voice and vote in the annual conference where membership is held; shall be eligible to serve as clergy on boards, commissions, or committees of the annual conference and hold office on the same; and shall be eligible for election as a clergy delegate to the General, central, or jurisdictional conference. The deacon in full connection shall attend all the sessions of the annual conference and share with elders in full connection responsibility for all matters or ordination, character, and conference relations of clergy (¶334.1)
3. As members of the Order of Deacons, all deacons in full connection are in covenant with all other such deacons in the annual conference and shall participate in the life of their order.

**¶331. Appointment of Deacons and Provisional Deacons to Various Ministries**

1. Deacons and provisional deacons may be appointed to serve in the following settings:
  - a) Agencies and settings beyond the local church, including ecumenical agencies, that extend the witness and service of Christ's love and justice in the world and connect the church with the most needy, neglected, and marginalized;
  - b) United Methodist Church-related agencies, schools, colleges, theological schools, and within the connectional structures of the United Methodist Church;
  - c) A local congregation, charge, or cooperative parish, leading in the congregation's mission to the world and equipping all Christians to fulfill their own calls to Christian Service.
2. Deacons and provisional deacons may be appointed to attend school.
3. Deacons and provisional deacons shall be appointed to settings that allow fulfillment of their call and where supervision is provided with goals, evaluation, and accountability acceptable to the bishop, the cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry.
4. Deacons and Provisional Deacons Appointed Beyond the Local Church

- a) Deacons and provisional deacons may be appointed to settings not connected to either The United Methodist Church or ecumenical agencies when the appointment is approved by the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry as a ministry beyond the local church that is a witness and service of Christ's love and justice in the world. Those seeking such an appointment shall submit a written statement to the bishop and the Board of Ordained Ministry, describing in detail the proposed setting for their ministry, sharing a sense of calling to that ministry and their gifts and evidence of God's grace for it, and expressing how the proposed ministry is an intentional fulfillment of their ordination vows. This statement shall also include a detailed description of the accountability structures related to the proposed ministry setting
- b) Deacons and provisional deacons are amenable to the annual conference of which they are members and insofar as possible should maintain close working relationship with and effective participation in the work of their annual conference, assuming whatever responsibilities they are qualified and requested to assume. When deacons or provisional deacons are appointed to a setting beyond the local church outside of the conference where they hold membership, the appointment shall be made by the bishop of the conference where membership is held in consultation with the bishop of the area in which the appointment is located....
5. When deacons and provisional deacons serve in an agency or setting beyond the local church, the bishop, after consultation with the deacon or provisional deacon and the pastor in charge, shall appoint the deacon or provisional deacon to a local congregation where they will take missional responsibility for leading other Christians into ministries of service. In this ministry the deacons and provisional deacons shall be accountable to the pastor in charge, the charge conference, and other bodies that coordinate the ministry of the local church. In those instances where the appointment is in another Episcopal area, the appointment to a local church shall be made in consultation with the bishop of that area.
6. The appointment of deacons and provisional deacons shall be made by the bishop.
7. At the request of the deacon or provisional deacon and with the consent of the bishop and cabinet where conference membership is held, the deacon or provisional deacon may receive a less than full-time appointment under certain conditions....
8. Deacons and provisional deacons, with the approval of their bishop and the judicatory authorities of the other denomination may receive an appointment to another denomination while retaining their home conference membership. The appointment may be made in response to exceptional missional needs.
9. Charge Conference Membership of Deacons and Provisional Deacons....
10. Support for deacons and provisional deacons appointed by a bishop....