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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY TO WIDOWS

IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

A Thesis Project Submitted to  
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

Richard Watson Sadler

Lynchburg, Virginia

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL

A-

GRADE

*David L. Smith*

MENTOR

*James A. Freese*

READER

## ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY TO WIDOWS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Richard W. Sadler

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997

Mentor: Dr. David L. Barnett

In examining current literature, very little research has been done in the area of caring for widows in the local church. The biblical mandate, present social conditions, and the results from questionnaires sent to pastors and widows of Southern Baptist Churches of West Virginia validate the need to assist the church in developing and implementing a strategy in ministering to widows. Deacons, the servant-leaders, are the responsible agents for ministry to widows and the catalyst in getting others involved. This project is an instrument to awaken and equip God's people for the tremendous ministry privilege in serving widows.

Abstract length: 99 words.

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## INTRODUCTION

Americans are getting older! According to the Barna Research Group, one in eight adults is a senior citizen. The population is rapidly shifting from the young to the old. "With the dearth of children born between 1965-1978, there are now more senior citizens in this country than there are teenagers--a first in our history."<sup>1</sup> Paradoxically, it is an amazing thing that in the present day church there is a rise in the construction of "family life centers" (usually a gymnasium) which focus ministry on young families. Also, one of the first additions to the ministerial staff of a growing church is a youth minister. Barna states, "Ministries must refocus on the changing needs of the adult population to address the needs of older adults."<sup>2</sup> There must be a concerted effort in the church to minister to the aged.

Regarding the elderly population, one of the greatest ministry opportunities for the church is caring for widows. "Women now represent 77% of the older people living alone;

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<sup>1</sup>George Barna, The Frog in the Kettle (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1990), 199.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 197.



by 2020 this will increase to 85%."<sup>3</sup> Without a doubt, this could be the churches' finest hour if the people of God will rise to the occasion. The primary objective of this project is to help the church recapture its God given call to care for the widow. Both in the Old and New Testament God made special provisions to care for the widow (Deut. 14:28,29; Deut. 24:19-21; 1 Tim. 5:1-14; Jas. 1:27; etc.). In obedience to the Scriptures, the church must take up the mantle of service and ministry to meet the needs of the widow. Women who have lost a spouse are in danger of mistreatment or being taken advantage of by unscrupulous people. Judgment awaits the assemblies that refuse to take care of the widowed saints. The Bible states, "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deut. 27:19)<sup>4</sup>. It is clear from this text and others like it that God has a special place in His heart for the widow. The New Testament carries the same kind of concern for the bereaved spouse.

Jesus was a prime example of a person showing mercy and care for widows as was demonstrated in the city of Nain. In His mercy and grace, He brought a widow's only son back

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<sup>3</sup>Janet C. Kilbride, Sharon Nagy, and Robert L. Rubinstein, Elders Living Alone (New York: Aldine De Gruyter Publishers, 1992), 21.

<sup>4</sup>King James Version is used throughout this paper unless otherwise stated.

to life (Luke 7:11-17). As disciples of the Lord, Christians should have a sensitive heart for the hurting widow. Numerous Christian elderly women have been faithful and dedicated workers in the church. They have given their lives for the cause of Christ in the area of leadership, prayer, financial support, regular attendance of services, and the list could go on and on. Many of the widows remain the strength and the support of the church. The time is ripe for the people of God to demonstrate in return a liberal and gracious love for widows.

Most Christian assemblies do not have an organized effort to minister to the multitudinous needs of their older saints. The widow's needs range from house maintenance to feelings of loneliness. Unfortunately, the church is standing by idly while para-church organizations, institutions, and government subsidized programs come to the aid of hurting humanity.

Beware that as the world approaches the twenty-first century, evidences of a weakening support structure prevails. Baby Boomers are very skeptical about the future. These middle aged adults question whether Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid have a chance of surviving. The editor of U.S. News and World Report writes:

Most Americans pay more in Social Security and Medicare taxes than they do in income tax, but contrary to popular belief these funds are not set aside in a nest egg for the future. Instead, they are scooped up to pay for current retirees, and the surplus is borrowed by the

Treasury to pay other federal government expenses. As a result, the Treasury is building a mountain of unpaid IOUs--unfunded liabilities of \$17 Trillion that will fall due on our children and grandchildren. . . . A survey found that they (young people) think they are more likely to see a UFO than a check from Social Security--and they may be right."<sup>5</sup>

Another commentator reports, "Clinton had proposed cutting Medicare \$127 billion over 10 years and Medicaid by \$54 billion."<sup>6</sup> The government is constantly looking to cut the budget. It is a balanced budget at any cost and the cost will lay heavy upon the elderly people of America and future generations. Many news clips could be documented if space permitted. However, the point is clear; some kind of corrective must take place soon or America is going to cross the line of no return. One major objective of this project is an attempt to help the church focus on ministering to the widow in a troubled economy and to be prepared for the lean times ahead.

Where will the elderly widows turn when monies evaporate? Who will they call upon when advice or assistance is needed? Now is a perfect opportunity to put love in action. May the readers capture the essence of this project and be motivated to extend a loving hand to the widow. Hopefully, the church will be courageous enough to

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<sup>5</sup>David Gergen, "When Baby Boomers Retire," U.S. News and World Report, 28 October 1996, 100.

<sup>6</sup>Victoria Benning and Raja Mishra, Medicare: Cuts and Consequences (Detroit: Detroit Free Press, July 2, 1995), 1Ft, SIRS, 1995 Aging, Electronic Only, Article 112.

move forward in concrete ways to minister to the widow. "To God be the glory" for providing an effective means (as described in this project) to care for those dear saints who have lost their spouse. It is a great and honorable challenge!

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry project is to assist the Body of Christ in developing a strategy for ministry to widows in the local church. According to the Bible, the church is given a clear mandate to minister to the needs of women who have lost their spouses. This project is an instrument to awaken and challenge God's people to the tremendous ministry opportunities available to them concerning widows.

The following work is fashioned with several objectives in mind. First, it is critical that the church substantiates the needs of the widow while simultaneously realizing the God given call to meet those needs. Pertinent information concerning the widow was obtained through two instruments: 1) a Pastor Questionnaire; and, 2) a Widow Questionnaire. Secondly, it is critical that the deacons (the servant-leaders) understand the recipient of ministry, the widow, that they might become effective ministers. Finally, there must be a concise plan to assist the local church in establishing a ministry to widows--a strategy that

will be useful to the Body of Christ in developing a solid ministry.

The deacon body of Immanuel Baptist Church, Princeton, West Virginia, is the test group for this study. They are the responsible agents to carry out the plans for ministry to the widows. Deacons also serve as a catalyst for membership and family involvement.

Ministry success is realized when the servant-leaders (deacons) along with the membership discover the joy of serving widows in their distress. The Bible declares this ministry to be "pure and undefiled religion" (Jas. 1:27).

#### Review of the Literature

In examining current literature, very little research has been done in the area of caring for widows in the church. One notable exception is a dissertation written by Wesley M. Teterud entitled Church Work with the Bereaved Widows.<sup>7</sup> Teterud performed personal interviews, surveys and statistical analyses to determine the exact needs of the widow. He took the results of his findings and suggested ways that the church might help the widows. The practical result was not a ministry as such, but the production of a manual for churches and relatives to use in ministering to widows.

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<sup>7</sup>Wesley M. Teterud, "Church Work with the Bereaved Widows" (D.Min. diss., Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1992).

Timothy Walker wrote a dissertation of great length to address the immediate needs of recently widowed senior adults. The focus of his work was in training a select group of church members in ministering to the bereaved. Participants were required to make visits to recent widows and report on their experiences.<sup>8</sup>

There are many examples of books and articles dealing in the area of grief. Though helpful, many of these writings do not address practical needs, such as fixing a leaking faucet, transportation to church, giving some advice on a legal matter, etc. The grieving spouse also has practical needs that must be met. God has chosen the church to be the vehicle by which assistance is rendered to the widow.

The American Theological Library Association publishes an annual publication entitled Research in Ministry (RIM). This is a listing of titles and abstracts of Doctor of Ministry projects. There are a variety of topics covered regarding the elderly under the section entitled "church work with the aged." For example, one dissertation addressed a visitation program to the elderly. Another focused on pastoral care among the very elderly, and so forth. Amazingly, very little information was found concerning the widow.

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<sup>8</sup>Timothy E. Walker, "Leading Church Members to Develop a Strategy for Local Church Ministry to Recently Widowed Senior Adults" (M.Div. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991).

The uniqueness of this project is in its deacon based strategy. The deacon body is the care giver serving the elderly widows of the church. These servant-models not only minister, but they also enlist their family and church members in serving when possible. A powerful witness to Christ's love is evident through dedicated servant-leaders ministering to the needs of others.

#### Statement of Methodology

The challenge for any pastor is to awaken, motivate, and guide believers in becoming committed servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose of this project is to be a vehicle to awaken believers to the needs of the widow and to introduce a solid plan in meeting those needs. The method by which this plan is realized is outlined below chapter-by-chapter. It begins with comprehending the call of every Christian; the believer is called to serve and to lay down his or her life for those in need (1 John 3:15-16).

The secret and foundation for ministry to widows is in developing a church of dedicated servant-leaders who teach and model servanthood. The first chapter, Rational for Ministry to Widows, addresses this key foundational principle. It is unmistakably clear in the Scriptures that every Christian is called to be a servant. Without question, the perfect servant-model is the Son of God. The Lord demonstrated a servant lifestyle during His walk upon

the earth. He states, "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:44-45). A servant lifestyle is the call of every born again believer. True love for God and others manifests itself through acts of charity. The Body of Christ desperately needs solid examples of the servant-model. The leadership, both pastor and deacons, are to radiate the living Lord through modeling a servant's heart that Jesus might be exalted.

Servant-leaders of any healthy assembly are the deacons. The word deacon comes from the Greek verb diakoneo meaning "to serve, wait upon, minister."<sup>9</sup> The deacon's primary function is to serve the body--the church. They are to be examples in ministry for the rest of the congregation to follow. The example of Jesus as servant and the deacons modeling a servant lifestyle should motivate every member to be involved in ministering to those who have lost their spouse.

Chapter one also discusses two other principal reasons for specializing in the area of ministry to widows. The second rationale for a ministry to widows is derived from the Bible. There are biblical texts and examples that

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<sup>9</sup>W.E. Vine, The Expanded Vines Expository Dictionary, ed. John R. Kohlenberger III (Minneapolis, Bethany House Publishers, 1984), 744.



make it unmistakably clear regarding the believer's responsibility in caring for widows. The Old and New Testament is filled with passages that demonstrate God's care for the widow. It does not take a scholar to discover the special care the Lord has for the bereaved. Believers are instructed to take care of those who have lost a spouse.

The present day culture is the third reason for reaching out to the elderly widow. With the threat of government cutbacks and the attitudinal change of children toward parents, widows will be left to fend for themselves. Both the Scriptures and the culture send a distinct signal to all believers that they must minister to the aged. For the church, it is not an option but a biblical mandate to care for the widow. Nevertheless, ministry can be difficult if one does not understand the complexities of the widow's situation and plight which is covered in the next chapter.

To be able to minister effectively, the servant-leader (deacons) must understand the recipient of ministry and her needs. Chapter two gives some helpful suggestions on how the servant-leader can minister to women who have lost their spouse. Areas such as grief, loneliness, home maintenance, security and safety are some areas covered in this chapter that the servant-leader should be cognizant of to be an effective servant.

It is not enough for Christians to realize their calling as servants and to understand the needs of the

widow. There also must be a specific plan of ministry that can be incorporated into the church. Chapter three develops an organizational strategy that assures a strong and productive ministry to widows. Below is a list of areas covered in this very important chapter:

- Adopting ministry to widows: The first step in having a successful ministry is ownership. The deacon body and church members must agree to adopt the ministry to widows.
- Pastor as overseer of ministry to widows: In this particular model, the pastor is the overseer of ministry to the widows. He is a vital element in the total structure; he is the one who assures that the various facets of the ministry are operational.
- Special assignments: Ministry assignments are normally given out during regular monthly deacons' meetings or through the mail. For example, the pastor may have each deacon write their widows an encouraging letter. Or, he may request that the deacons make a special phone call during bad weather.
- Record keeping: Keeping accurate records on each widow and the various ministry activities are crucial elements in having a well oiled ministry. Records concerning ministry activities, prayer concerns and general notes enables the servant-leader to serve more effectively.

- Working with volunteers: There are many areas of ministry regarding the widow where the deacon is not afforded the time or has the expertise to handle a need or an assignment. Fortunately, there are opportunities to call upon members in the congregation to assist them. This provides many in the church the privilege and blessing of caring for and serving a widow in need.
- Ministry handbook: To facilitate consistent and comprehensive care, a ministry handbook is given to each deacon. This manual covers detailed instructions concerning ministering to the needs of the widow. Special forms are provided for each assigned widow for gathering personal information. It is vital that the servant-leader know such things as next-of-kin, spiritual data, special concerns or needs, etc. In the back of the manual there are additional forms provided to be completed by the servant-leader each month and submitted to the pastor at the monthly deacons' meeting. This provides accountability and helps the pastor to keep track of ministry progress.
- Training the servant-leader: The servant-leader must be equipped if there is going to be an effective ministry to the widows. Special seminars and monthly lessons are two ways to accomplish this task.

- Implementing the ministry to widows: This section takes the ministry from ideas and concepts to practical implementation.

An organized and well oiled ministry brings glory to the Lord Jesus Christ and great stability to this very important work. In addition to this, there are certain things that the servant-leader can do to enhance the ministry to the widows which is explained in the next chapter.

Chapter four presents ideas to bring sparkle and excitement to the total ministry. Creativity keeps the ministry fresh and appealing to both the servant and to the one being served. Having social events, remembering special days, and inviting a widow home for a meal are just a few of the exciting ways that a servant-leader can minister to his widows.

When the ministry is properly structured and operational then there must be ways to check its effectiveness and progress to assure quality. Chapter five shows several viable methods of testing the ministry to determine its health.

The final chapter explores the problems and concerns of ministering to widows. This section covers everything from the deacon's performance to the widow's over dependence. Understanding this chapter may mean the difference between a mediocre ministry and a ministry of excellence.

The appendices are furnished to show the various instruments employed in gathering data and the results that were gleaned. Also of significance is the ministry handbook. This important tool is used to instruct servant-leaders and to help them maintain consistent ministry records. Information concerning the widow and her family is kept in this manual. Some of the data found in the body of this project is condensed or in a different format and placed in the handbook. This gives the servant-leader a ministry guide that will enable him to have a more positive ministry experience in serving widows.

#### Statement of Scope and limitations

The scope of this project is limited to those widows in the church who are fifty-five years and older. In fact, the average age of widows in the America is 56 years old.<sup>10</sup> This project is not intended to be a comprehensive work on every aspect of widowhood. However, most of the principles and practices purported in this project is applicable to both widows and widowers of any age and can extend beyond the context of the church .

One pivotal objective of this project is the examination of biblical texts. However, this is not an exhaustive work by which every question concerning the widow

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<sup>10</sup> (No Author) Hope Health Letter, Vol. 12, Issue 10, (October 1992):4.

is addressed. The endeavor of this work is to discover the heart of God for widows through exegesis of several major passages.

A study of ministries and agencies outside the church is not addressed. Nevertheless, it would be beneficial if the servant-leader is familiar with resources outside the church. Again, the primary focus of this work is to equip the Body of Christ for ministry to the elderly widows using the available resources in the local church.

This project is not a textbook on gerontology--"the scientific study of the physiological and pathological phenomena associated with aging."<sup>11</sup> (The Dictionary of Gerontology defines gerontology as "the scientific study of the biological, psychological, and social aspects of aging."<sup>12</sup>) The deep complexities of the aging process and the multiple social issues are not addressed at any length or completeness. This aspect of aging is left to the professionals that are trained to do extensive research in this field of discipline.

There is far more research and materials in the area of grief immediately following the death of a spouse than there is post care for widows. In fact, a whole project

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<sup>11</sup>American Heritage Dictionary, 1976 ed., s.v. "gerontology."

<sup>12</sup>Harris, Diana, Dictionary of Gerontology (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 80.

could be dedicated to the subject of grief. Though grief is briefly discussed, the focus of this project is more on ministering holistically to the widow in the months and years that follow the death of a spouse.

Only five percent of the elderly population are in institutional care.<sup>13</sup> This project targets widows who are attempting to exist by themselves in their home or rented dwelling. Also, a segment of research covers two local high-rise apartment facilities for the elderly to ascertain the needs of widows, and to see in what ways churches are ministering to them. Nursing homes and the care that the elderly widow receives there are not areas of research.

The major scope of this project is to give reason to establish a ministry to widows followed by a practical plan to implement in the local church. The heartbeat of this work is to give the reader something practical and useful to use in ministry in caring for those who have lost a spouse.

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<sup>13</sup>Carole Haber and Brian Gratton, Old Age and the Search for Security (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 116.

## CHAPTER 1

### RATIONALE FOR MINISTRY TO WIDOWS

There are three significant reasons why the church should have an organized effort to minister to widows: 1) Every true believer has been given a servant's heart; 2) the biblical mandate to care for widows; and, 3) the cultural dilemma. The first rational and foundational principle is that God has given believers His heart--a servant's heart.

#### Foundational Rational: A Servant's Heart

To serve women who have lost their spouse must be viewed as a privilege rather than a duty. Any opportunity that God gives the believer to serve his fellowman is a blessing. It is a tangible way to love the Lord. Jesus said it best in Matthew 25:40, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'" In other words, servanthood is a way of life for the believer.

In a world that is looking to be ministered unto, the topic of being a servant finds very little appeal with modern man. This present age is seeing an unprecedented growth of the "mega church." Everything from soft pews to



bowling alleys beckons people to come and enjoy. Today's believer shops for a church that will meet his or her needs. The idea of finding a church where one can serve is foreign to most people and has very little appeal.

There are several important biblical words that express the idea of servanthood:

Diakonos is a servant viewed in relation to his work, so stressing his activity. Doulos is a servant in relation to his master; underlying his accountability. Huperetes is a servant in relation to his superior, thus emphasizing the authority he is under. Leitourgos is a servant in relation to the organization that employs him, so highlighting the administration he is part of.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the pages of the New Testament, models of servanthood are seen. The Apostle Paul is an excellent example of one with a servant's heart. In fact, he introduces many of his epistles by calling himself a bond-servant of Christ Jesus. Paul was a prime archetype of a self-giving life. If space permitted, other examples could be cited in both the Old and New Testaments. Nonetheless, the greatest example of servanthood known to man is manifested in the precious life of Jesus. He is the perfect servant model.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ entered history to redeem lost mankind by dying on the cross. His life's mission and earthly focus was Calvary. However, beyond

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<sup>14</sup>Philip Greenslade, Leadership, Greatness & Servanthood (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), 3.

salvation He displayed how to live the surrendered life. The perfect servant-model is Jesus. The Lord displayed a servant lifestyle during His walk upon the earth that has set the standard for all future generations.

Jesus states, "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:44-45; cf. Phil. 2:5-8). He taught His followers that life is not about getting, but giving. Before Jesus was crucified, He left the disciples one last example of true Christian living. This passage is so pointed and significant that it bears examining. John 13:4-17 states:

He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater

than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Imagine, God girds himself with a towel and kneels down to wash the feet of the disciples. The one who created heaven and earth took soiled feet and bathed them in a basin of water. What a tremendous and awesome example of servanthood! He who wishes to be a servant of the widow must approach ministry with the same kind of humility as did the Lord. Some believers have missed the point of the lesson. Jesus is not suggesting that the disciples literally wash feet; they are to serve one another in great humility.<sup>15</sup> The life that is truly dead to self has become a bond servant of all. It is a life that is willing to put the interests of others before his or her own interests. The Scriptures herald a call of servanthood to the followers of Christ. The challenge and invitation to a life of service are given to every believer who is willing to die to self and follow the Master! This is what it means to be a true disciple of the living Lord.

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<sup>15</sup>William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel of John (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), 235. "Is Jesus instituting a new ordinance here, that of feet-washing? No, he is not commanding the disciples to do what he has done; but he has given them an example in order that they, of their own accord, may do as he has done. Hence, significantly he adds: 'For I have given you an example in order that just as I did to you so also you should constantly do.' Jesus has shown his humility under their very eyes."

All around there are broken and bruised people. The world is filled with lost and miserable humanity fighting to survive. However, there are many in the church who are hurting, and few seem to hear their cry. Many elderly widows who live alone are forgotten after the funeral procession. They have given much to the church in years past, yet little is given back. Now that grief and loneliness have settled in, many widows find little motivation to continue to live. In a sense the widow waits patiently for death. One may ask, "Does anyone in the church see the tremendous ministry opportunity?" "Are there believers who care enough to take action?" The present and the past have one thing in common: being a servant has little appeal.

The mandate to become a servant found little favor or appeal in the eyes of the Greeks. "For the Greeks, service is undignified; we are born to rule, not to serve"<sup>16</sup> In Judaism, service was seen in a much more favorable light. The point is this--throughout the history of mankind, there have been various and sundry attitudes regarding servanthood. Nevertheless, one thing is absolutely clear, Jesus's life and message was that of laying down one's life for another.

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<sup>16</sup>Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), s.v. "diakoneo," by H.W. Beyer, II, 152.

Christians--followers of Christ--are called to serve. The Lord presents a clear picture of the life of a disciple by saying, "But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10:43-44). The pattern for the believer's life is that of Christ. Unfortunately, the church is too engrossed in the numbers racket. There is a smorgasbord of activities and events to entice the seekers. The norm today is a "good vibrations" kind of ministry in which people insist on good programming, music and preaching. Churches are building family centers, gymnasiums, bowling alleys, outdoor basketball courts and workout rooms. The biblical concept of serving has been replaced with being served. The Christian should beware! It is impossible for the believer to experience the fullness of Christ outside of having a dedicated life of service.

The church desperately needs leaders who demonstrate a servant's heart as a way of life. Too many people come into the church expecting to be served rather than to serve. Deacons should be the supreme models in the Body of Christ, displaying a life of service and ministry. If there is ever a time when the church needs servant-leaders, it is now. Deacons have a wonderful challenge to fulfill his God-given task of being models of servanthood. They are called to be the servant-leaders in the local congregation.

The word diakonos (servant) is found in the New Testament thirty times and is translated three times as deacon. The very nature of the word speaks of the role of the deacon as servant. "The Greek words dia (through) and konos (dust) form the basis of diakonos. Perhaps the original meaning of diakonos was a table waiter who walked barefoot through dust to serve dining guests."<sup>17</sup> However, the derivation of this word is dubious and must be defined for the contemporary Christian. The primary meaning is "one who serves at tables."<sup>18</sup> According to Moulton, it means "one who renders service to another . . . or office."<sup>19</sup> Three times in the New Testament diakonos is used in an official sense referring to the office of a deacon. "The term deacon . . . denotes an office involving the basic duty of rendering service to others. A deacon then is one who is placed in an official position for a ministry of service to benefit others."<sup>20</sup> Hence, every deacon should have a clear understanding of the position before accepting the position.

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<sup>17</sup>Charles W. Deweese, The Emerging Role of Deacons (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), 11.

<sup>18</sup>Colin Brown, ed., Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), Vol. 3, diakonos, by K. Hess, 546.

<sup>19</sup>Harold K. Moulton, The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), 91-92.

<sup>20</sup>D. Edmond Hiebert, "Behind the Word 'Deacon': A New Testament Study," Bibliotheca Sacra, (April-June 1983): 151.

The word diakonos is used throughout the New Testament to describe those who serve. For example, at the wedding feast in Cana, the mother of Jesus states unto the servants (diakonois), "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5). Referring to believers, John 12:26 states, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Romans 13:4 calls a secular ruler a servant or minister of God. In Romans 15:8 the word used to describe Jesus is diakonon--a minister/servant. Colossians 1:7 speaks of Epaphras as being a "faithful servant of Christ...." In the same chapter, Paul calls himself a diakonos, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God that is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;" (Col. 1:25). By the very nature of the word deacon, it is unmistakably clear that they are called to a ministry of service. Generally, the word diakonos is associated with those who serve. Comparing doulos with diakonos gives even greater understanding of the role of deacon--service to the church.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Colin Brown, Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol 3, 548. "The difference between it (diakonos) and doulos is important for our understanding of diakonos. Doulos stresses almost exclusively the Christian's complete subjection to the Lord; diakonos is concerned with his service for the church, his brothers and fellow-men, for the fellowship, whether this is done by serving at table, with the word, or in some other way. The diakonos is always one who serves on Christ's behalf and continues Christ's service for the outer and inner man; he is concerned with the

The deacon is to freely serve others without being forced or coerced to do so. They exemplify a lifestyle of service from a heart of love and gratitude--that is, a life filled with love and grace. A deacon chooses freely to minister to others. Again, it is an outflow of the love that one has for his Master and King.

In Act 6:1-6 men are selected by the congregation to serve widows who were being neglected in the daily provision of food. On the surface it seems that anyone could take care of this project. However, verses 3 and 4 state, "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry (diakonia) of the word" (Acts 6:3-4). Men full of the Spirit, honest and wise were chosen to minister to the widows so that the Apostles could concentrate their energies on studying the Word and prayer.

Many scholars purport that the first deacon body was conceived during this crisis in the early church as mentioned in Acts chapter six (Acts 6:1-6). Though the word

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salvation of men. Hence, Paul can see himself as a servant of the gospel (Eph. 3:7); Col. 1:23), a servant through whom the Christians in Corinth had come to faith (1 Cor. 3:5), a servant of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3:6), a servant of Christ (2 Cor. 11:23), a servant of God (2 Cor. 6:4), a servant of the church (Col. 1:25). This concern with God's salvation includes body and spirit.... Proclamation and help through actions complement one another."



diakonos is not found in this chapter, there are several terms in this passage derived from it. In verses 1 and 4, the Greek word diakonia, translated *servicing* in the New American Standard Bible, literally means to "supervise the meal" (that is its whole provision, preparation, and organization).<sup>22</sup> This word is found thirty-four times in the New Testament with assorted renderings such as: Ministry; ministering; service; serving; etc. In verse 1, the word refers to physical service, and in verse 4 it is speaking of spiritual service--"the ministry of the word." The other related term is found in verse 2. diakonein, from the word diakoneo. It is found thirty-seven times in the Scriptures and is rendered in many cases "to serve or to minister unto."<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, in 1 Timothy 3:10,13 diakoneitosan and diakoneesantes (both from diakoneo) are translated into the English as "let *them* serve as deacons" and "who have served well as deacons" quoted respectively from the New American Standard Version.<sup>24</sup>

One must not forget that those chosen to wait on tables as described in Acts chapter six were spiritual giants. The spiritual men in today's Baptist church are the

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<sup>22</sup>Kittel, "diakoneo," 153.

<sup>23</sup>George V. Wigram and Ralph D. Winter, The Word Study Concordance (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1972), 144-145.

<sup>24</sup>NASB (New American Standard Bible) The Lockman Foundation.

deacons. Their mission, like those of old, is to serve. Regardless of whether a person holds to the belief that Acts chapter six is the first deacon body, the deacons' mission of serving Christ and His church is illustrated here. In fact, they should be the servant-leaders that others may witness what it really means to surrender one's life in acts of ministry. This servant mentality is demonstrated every time there is an observance of the Lord's Supper. The act of serving the congregation with bread and juice proves clearly their servant's heart and ministry. Plain and simple--deacons exist to serve and to be the example of humble servanthood. No matter which position one holds, Acts chapter six emphatically states that spiritual and godly men were chosen to serve. The present-day Southern Baptist deacon body should be comprised of spiritual and godly men called to serve members in the local assembly. How very appropriate it is for the spiritual leaders of the church--the deacons--to be the prime examples to members in hope that they too may follow in the path of being dedicated servants. Therefore, the deacons are called in this project the "servant-leaders" whose function is to lead out by example, ministering to the needs of others. In regards to Immanuel Baptist Church, Princeton, West Virginia, the servant-leaders are the prime examples of servanthood and the catalyst in getting others involved in ministry to widows.

There are many reasons to reach out to those who have lost their spouse. Having a servant's heart is the foundational principle and rationale. However, there are two other key reasons discussed next that, if studied, will motivate and encourage every true believer to care for the widow.

### Biblical Rationale

The Word of God is given to the believer for guidance for both faith and practice. Obedience to the Word is likened to building a house on a solid foundation (Matt. 7:24-27). The Bible is adamant about how the believer should respond to those in need. There are many passages that direct the Christian to care for the widow. The Word of God is the impetus and rationale for ministry to women who have lost their spouse. To ignore this as a church is disobedience to His Word which results in a foundation of sand. The Lord has commissioned the body of Christ to rescue and minister to the widows.

God loves the widow! He has a very special place in His heart for women who are abandoned because of the death of a mate. In the Old Testament, the Mighty God is a fortress and a champion of the widow. His eyes and favor are upon them.

It is interesting to note that a concern for the widow, . . . is permanently woven into the fabric of those crucial sections dealing with the covenant made between God, the sovereign, and His people, Israel, both in the

covenant code of Sinai and its renewal before entering the land of Canaan.<sup>25</sup>

His care for the widow is clearly demonstrated in the Old Testament book of Exodus before the children of Israel entered the promise land. Exodus 22:22-24 states:

Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

One requisite for possessing the promises (fullness) of God was in taking care of the widow. God's curse was upon those who deliberately oppressed bereaved women. Deuteronomy 27:19 states, "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen."

There are sundry verses in the Bible that prove God's love and care for the widow. The following Old Testament passages are but a few examples but are adequate to give the servant-leader an idea of God's heart for widows:

- The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down (Psa. 146:9).
- The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow (Prov. 15:25).
- Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the

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<sup>25</sup>Richard D. Patterson, "The Widow, the Orphan, and the Poor," Bibliotheca Sacra, (July 1973): 228.

oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow (Isa. 1:17).

- Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart (Zech. 7:9-10).
- And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts (Mal. 3:5).

Without a doubt the Bible teaches that God has a special place in His heart for the widow. Consequently, the believer should be careful to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of these women. They should be ready to come to the aid of the widow in their local assembly. If God is concerned and shows compassion for them, then the Christian likewise should display the same concern. The Bible not only calls for the followers of God to minister to the widow, but the children of the widow should take the lead in serving their mothers. This is a biblical mandate given in Scripture as explained below.

There are two reasons why a person should honor his parents: 1) The Bible says that parents are worthy of honor and respect; and 2) "Honor gives parents hope and encouragement when they need it most."<sup>26</sup> Adult children are admonished to honor their parents. The fifth commandment states, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exod. 20:12). The word honor encompasses respect and care for one's mother and father. "Fellow men or neighbours are to be loved (Lev. 19:18): parents, on the other hand, are to be honoured and feared; reverence is to be shown them with heart, mouth, and hand--thought, word, and deed."<sup>27</sup> Children who take care of their widowed mothers are obedient to the fifth commandment and are blessed of the Lord.

The Old Testament declares God's provision and love for the widow and man's responsibility to care for her. The Lord's children are called to look after those who can be easily victimized by unscrupulous people. The depth of love that one has for God is reflected in how he or she responds to the broken and the bereaved of this world. God's people must take heed. The Lord will protect the widow; His

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<sup>26</sup>Dennis Rainey, The Tribute (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994), 75.

<sup>27</sup>C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 1, The Second Book of Moses Harold K. Moulton, The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 122.

judgment comes upon those who treat them with anything but love, honor, respect and dignity (See: Deut. 10:18; Prov. 15:25; Mal. 3:5).

According to the Old Testament law, special provisions and concessions were made to women who had lost their husband. Described in the Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Volume 3, are laws of mercy given to God's people in ministering to the needs of the widow:<sup>28</sup>

- The clothes of the widow should not be taken in pledge (Deut. 24:17). ("The widow seems to have been easily identified as she wore special garments (Gen. 38:14). The wicked tried to use these as a security for a loan, so the law had to step in and make such a practice illegal."<sup>29</sup>)
- The widow had the right to participate in the "third year tithe" (Deut. 14:29).
- The widows should have rights to the gleanings (i.e. grapes, grain, and olives) of the fields (Deut. 24:19-21).
- An invitation should be extended to the widows to come and partake of the feasts and sacrificial meals (Deut. 16:11,14).

The Old Testament sets a precedence for ministry to the widow. Vividly recorded in the text, these special women have captured the heart and mercy of God. However, this is not just an Old Testament emphasis. In the New Testament the theme of ministry to elderly widows continues.

Scattered throughout the New Testament are special stories regarding widows. One of the most popular

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<sup>28</sup>Colin Brown, chera, by S. Solle, 3:1074.

<sup>29</sup>Merrill C. Tenney, ed. Zodervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), s.v. "Widows," by H. Jamieson.

narratives is that of the widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4). This poor woman placed into the temple treasury all she had, while the rich gave large gifts from their surplus. Jesus recognized the depth of her giving by stating, "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had" (Luke 21:3-4). This is a beautiful story of sacrificial giving. A woman who had lost her "significant other" demonstrates total confidence in her Lord.

Another touching story is that of Anna. This godly woman invested her years of widowhood to pray and fast in the temple (Luke 2:36-38). This is a wonderful example of absolute dedication.

One of the most moving stories is found in Luke 7:11-15. The Lord approaches the city gates of Nain and a dead man is being carried out. The widow's only son had died which meant she probably would be destitute. The text states that Jesus felt compassion for the woman and brought her son back to life. It is this kind of compassion that must govern the Christian's heart and soul. Though the believer cannot resurrect the dead, the Christian is called to minister to the needs of these special women. If the compassion of God is ruling in believers' hearts, they will minister to the widows.



In Mark chapter seven, the Lord is confronted by Pharisees and scribes because some of the disciples had not washed their hands before eating. Their grievance was that the disciples were breaking the traditions of the elders. Jesus admonishes them for holding to traditions and ignoring the commandments of God. He was referring to the passage that states, "honor thy father and thy mother" (Exod. 20:12).

And he (Christ) said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye (Mark 7:9-13).

Some religious people of that day would declare their property as "Corban" which is a Hebrew word meaning "a gift devoted to God."<sup>30</sup> By devoting their property to God, they themselves could use it, but they were not allowed to give anything to their parents. Because their hearts were so spiritually cold, they could refuse their parent(s) the necessities of life without damaging their conscience. Therefore, one vital aspect of demonstrating honor to one's parents (especially a widowed parent) is to assist them financially. First Timothy 5:4 suggests that some return be

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<sup>30</sup>Ralph Earle, Word Meanings in the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974) 40.

made monetarily to parents; "for this is acceptable in the sight of God."

Perhaps the greatest demonstration of care for a widow can be seen on Mount Calvary. Nailed to a cruel Roman cross, Jesus is in tremendous agony and torment groping for every breath of air. Just before His death, Jesus says to the Apostle John concerning His widowed mother, "Behold thy mother!" (John 19:27a). This passage continues by showing John's response: "that disciple took her unto his own home" (John 19:27b). In all His suffering and with death right at the door, the Lord was concerned for His mother--Mary. The lesson should not be overlooked; Christ was concerned unto death about the welfare of His mother. Should this not be the practice of every man, especially the believer?

It is a fascinating fact that Jesus did not commit His mother to His brothers or sisters. Most likely, they were not believers. He entrusted her to the great Apostle of Love, John. Hence, during His darkest hour, the Lord showed compassion and concern for His widowed mother. Believers are called to show the same kind of love not only toward their mothers, but also toward widows.

Without question the Scriptures bestow honor and dignity on the widow. The Word of God bears the indisputable evidence that the Master had a special concern and love for the woman who had lost her mate. Therefore, the believer should care for the widow.

The love and concern that Jesus displayed for widows continued in the New Testament church. In Acts chapter six, the church is faced with a major crisis concerning the care of widows. The text denotes that the Hellenistic widows were not being given the same consideration as the native Hebrew widows in regard to the daily provision of food. To solve this problem, spiritual men were selected to care for the widows. Theologians have wrestled with this text, trying to determine whether deacons were spoken of here. Some go as far as saying that this was the first deacon body. Regardless of who these men were, one thing can be certain--they were definitely spiritual giants in the early church. The Scriptures describe them as "men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3). In Baptist circles, men that have qualifications as described above would be deacon candidates. Therefore, for the purpose of this project, deacons (servant-leaders) have been selected to take care of widows in the Immanuel Baptist Church. They are the spiritual leaders of the church who are recognized as being full of the Spirit, of good reputation, and possessing heavenly wisdom.

A woman who is living alone and not accustomed to doing the things her late husband did can easily be taken advantage of. Men of good reputation mentioned in Acts chapter six are perfect candidates to minister to bereaved women. Also, a man filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit

will be supernaturally guided and empowered to handle the physical, emotional, and spiritual concerns of these women. A major point of this passage should not be overlooked by the twentieth century church: the body of Christ ministered to the needs of women who had lost their husbands by selecting reputable and godly men.

Dorcas was a cherished servant to other widows. Through God's providence, she was raised from the dead as a result of Peter's prayer (Acts 9:36-42). This is another example of God's love and kindness toward a widowed woman as found in the New Testament.

James 1:27 places the charge squarely on the Christian's shoulders by saying, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." A major element of having pure (undefiled) religion is visiting widows in their affliction (distress). It is common knowledge that a widow never totally gets over the loss of her husband. They learn to manage and cope with the pain, but it never leaves. It is the servant-leader's responsibility as well as that of every member of the church to minister to the needs of these lonely women.

One of the most difficult areas of ministry for the servant-leader is in visiting the widow. Visitation is one of the most wearisome responsibilities that deacons have to

do in ministry. However, it is very difficult to know the hurts of a person if a visit is not made. The watchful eyes of the deacon can witness ministry opportunities during a visit that cannot be detected any other way.

This project incorporates the use of an instrument to ascertain the needs of widows in Southern Baptist churches.<sup>31</sup> The women are asked to share their needs and concerns by completing a questionnaire. The surveys reveal various kinds of emotional, physical, financial, and spiritual needs and concerns. It is clear that the need is great, but the laborers are few.

The major text in the New Testament concerning the care of widows is I Timothy 5:3-16. This passage specifically deals with the financial care of widows. A close examination of this significant passage is in order.

Beginning with verse three, it states, "Honour widows that are widows indeed (NASB)." In the Old Testament, the word for widow, 'almanah (translated in the LXX as chera) "connotes not only the death of the husband but also the ideas of loneliness, abandonment and helplessness. The meaning of the word thus shows clearly that widows are regarded in a special way as in need of protection."<sup>32</sup> The very definition of the word "widow" specifically defines the

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<sup>31</sup>See Appendix 2

<sup>32</sup>Colin Brown, chera, by S. Solle, 3:1073.

needs of the woman who has lost a spouse. The well known Greek scholar Dr. Spiros Zodhiates defines chera as "a woman who has been bereaved of her husband."<sup>33</sup>

The word honor begins verse 3. This is significant because it sets the tone for the passages that follow. A widow should be honored, revered, and valued especially if she has been a blessing to the church. She should not have to add to her grief the anxiety over finances. However, to be helped financially by the body of Christ, widows had to meet certain criteria as outlined in this passage. They must be "widows indeed" to receive certain concessions from the church. The word "indeed" speaks of reality or in point of fact.<sup>34</sup> In context, verse 4 suggests that this passage deals specifically with financial assistance--"...but if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family, and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God." Here lies another stipulation: the family must first "make some return to their parents." Concerning the ministry to widows at Immanuel Baptist Church, deacons are encouraged to keep family members apprized of needs of the widow. If a widow does not have sufficient resources

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<sup>33</sup>Spiros Zodhiates, ed. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1992), 1475.

<sup>34</sup>John MacArthur, Caring for Widows: I Timothy 5:3-16 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 13.

and family support, it is the church's duty and privilege to help her. The body of Christ must be ready to financially assist women who have lost their mates. One thing should be made clear at this point. The widows being referred to in this passage must be of good reputation if they are to be put on the list for care and support. One must understand that the widow spoken of here was being considered for full support by the church. They did not have Social Security to supplement the elderly like Americans have in today's society. Not only would they be supported financially, but the widows would be part of a widow corps involved in specific ministries of the church. It is uncertain exactly what kind of ministries these women were involved in. Possibly some were prayer warriors like Anna who prayed and fasted night and day in the temple (Luke 2:36-38). Or, they could have been involved with teaching and caring for the younger women of the church.

It is the responsibility of the deacons to assess the needs and to make sure that some type of action is taken. Never should a body of believers say they cannot afford to help. It is a terrible indictment against God's people to refuse to minister to the needs of their own, yet send mission dollars across the ocean. Though global minded, the church must be diligent in taking care of "Jerusalem."

The next verse states, "Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in

supplications and prayers night and day" (Verse 5). The woman is described as "desolate." The word "desolate" literally means that she has no one to care for her. "The perfect tense indicates a continual condition or state of being. Those women have no one to turn to for help."<sup>35</sup> The text also states that she is a believer ("trusteth in God") who lives a godly life ("continueth in supplications and prayers day and night"). In the purest sense, Anna, in Luke chapter two, exemplifies these kinds of characteristics. She was one who lived a lifestyle of fasting and praying in the temple. In a contemporary setting this would be a woman who has a habitual devotional life; this is one, as Hebrews 12:2 states, who is "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." A widow who fits this category and is desolate (no family support) is eligible for regular and consistent assistance from the church. In other words, it appears from Scripture that there are two classes of assistance given to widows. The first is to minister to the general needs of the widow. This is seen in Acts chapter six where the church supplied food to widows. There does not seem to be any qualifications attached to this kind of assistance. This would fit the category of many widows in today's churches of America. The second class of widows is described in this chapter (First Timothy chapter five).

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 21-22.



Here widows are called to serve in the church. "It seems evident from this passage that the local church, or at least the church at Ephesus, kept rolls of needy widows who were eligible for pensions, for whose daily provision the churches made themselves responsible. In return these widows were expected to give what service they could to the congregation."<sup>36</sup> This group of women constituted a widows' corps in the church. They were godly women who had as their goal to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important to remember that the focus of this project is concerned more with widows who have general needs.

Finally, there appears to be specific criteria for those who are placed on the list for monetary support and services. The reader must remember, apart from this special group of widows, the church is commissioned to assist all widows in the area of emotional, spiritual, and physical support.

Verses 6 and 7 give the penalty of a wayward life and the challenge to live blamelessly. "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless." This is a profound and strong abomination. Widows supported financially by the church (put on the list) are to live holy lives.

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<sup>36</sup>Cornelius R. Stam, The Pastoral Epistles of Paul the Apostle (Chicago: Berean Bible Society, 1983), 112.

Verse 8 reads, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." The way believers (or the church) treat those under their care is a reflection of their belief in and love for God. The Gospel of John puts it this way, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:33-34).

Deacons should encourage families and relatives to take care of their own. One major problem, which will be discussed later, is the present-day lack of gratitude and love for parents. There are children who are unregenerate and do not take an interest in their parents. Also, there are born again believers whose love has grown cold. Consequently, they do not minister to their mothers or fathers. They see the care of parents more as a burden than a privilege. Many signs seem to indicate that the season of cold love (end times) is here. The church must be ready to help. The first place to start assisting would be in admonishing the widow's children.

Verses 9 and 10 have given rise to many interpretations (or opinions) by renowned theologians. The text reads:

"Let not a widow be taken into the number (put on the list--NASB) under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man (not remarried), well reported of for

good works; (good works being . . . )if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work."

In modern day vernacular, this is a description of a woman who was a faithful wife and mother; one who has demonstrated hospitality; a woman who has worked and served other believers in humility (wash the saints' feet); and, one who has reached out to the distressed and afflicted. The widow who fits the above characteristics would be eligible to be placed on the list ("taken into the number").

The Greek verb katalego ("taken into the number") is found in Greek literature to mean the enrolment of soldiers.<sup>37</sup> According to Paul's statement, women should not be put on the list or be enrolled if certain requirements are not met. One commentator writes:

...the list in question was composed of persons designated to a place of honour and responsibility-- either that of deaconesses, or of trusted female ministrants, who were charged with much the same kind of oversight in respect to children and the members of their own sex, that was exercised by the elders over other portions of the community.<sup>38</sup>

John MacArthur suggests:

Apparently a group of godly widows were also given official status as servants in the church. They were older women primarily responsible for serving the

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<sup>37</sup>Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), 102.

<sup>38</sup>Patrick Fairbairn, Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), 198.

younger women of the church. As there are qualifications for elders and deacons, so also there are some for the church widows. That there are qualifications for them supports the idea that they were serving in some kind of an official capacity. The early church kept lists of such women.<sup>39</sup>

The church would greatly be blessed if there were a corps of dedicated elderly women to minister to the younger women and to other widows. To the many faithful and godly widows of the New Testament church, it appears that an official ministry was established rather than for them to retire and waste away. The body of Christ should find areas of ministry for the widows to be involved in rather than just social activities. However, the intent of this project is not to establish a body of ministering widows. Hence, there will be no further discussion concerning the qualifications of widows in this project.

Concerning the age 60, this "was a point of reference to indicate maturity."<sup>40</sup> For the purpose of this project, ministry to widows at the Immanuel Baptist Church will focus on women 55 years or older. This is a preference and is practical rather than Scriptural. As mentioned before, the average age of widows in the United States is 56.<sup>41</sup> Each church must decide at what age to place widows on the deacons' list.

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<sup>39</sup>MacArthur, Caring for Widows, 33.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>41</sup>(No Author) Hope Health Letter, 4.

The deacons of Immanuel Baptist Church divided the elderly widows among themselves. Each deacon is responsible for his widow's spiritual, emotional and physical needs. Concerning younger widows, it would be very difficult for a deacon to visit young women alone in their home or to call her often. This is where the "widows' corps" or the involvement of a deacon's wife would be very beneficial. The Bible encourages younger women to marry again and raise a family. However, this is not to suggest that the church cannot assist them in meeting many of their needs. Again, each church must decide the breadth of ministry.

Verses 11-15 are instructions to the younger widows. This area of widowhood is not included as a part of this project. Churches who plan to cover a broader age bracket will want to study this passage. The passage reads as follows:

"But the younger widows refuse (to put on the list): for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith (their vow to serve as part of the widows' corp). And with all they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan."

Ideally, men and women who are believers are to care for their widowed parents and relatives. This will afford the church the ability to concentrate on those faithful widows who do not have anyone to care for them.

In verse 16 it states, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Paul returns to emphasize the need for adult children to take care of their own. Interestingly, H.A. Ironside views this passage in a more general sense:

It is just another way of saying, there will be plenty of people needing the help of their brethren and sisters in Christ, and therefore let those who should care for any who are in such needy circumstances take charge of these distressed ones and not put a needless burden on the Church of God.<sup>42</sup>

According to present day signs, the end of this age is at hand. The Bible declares that in the final days "iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12). The Gospel of Mark states, "Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death" (Mark 13:12). The Apostle Paul writes, "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, . . ." (2 Tim. 3:2-3). These passages describe the present generation. What will the widow do if friends and family become apathetic to their

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<sup>42</sup>H.A. Ironside, Timothy, Titus and Philemon (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1978), 121.

plight? In the closing moments of time, the church must awaken to the God given call to minister to the widow. The Bible, the standard for faith and practice, beckons believers to take hold of their God given responsibilities. Though the Bible is the key source of inspiration in calling the church to minister to widows, it is not the only rationale. Culture is also sounding an alarm for people to wake up to the plight of the elderly who have lost a spouse.

### Cultural Rationale

Throughout history, there has been community assistance for the elderly. Organizations of all descriptions have been created to meet their needs. The following is a very brief history of what has been done to assist the elderly for the past 1700 years:

In the third and fourth centuries, for example, the Christian church in the Middle East established institutions for the needy aged called "gerontochia." Gradually these institutions spread throughout western Europe. In medieval times, the sick and elderly were cared for by their feudal lord or in the monasteries. In Britain, almshouses were established as early as A.D. 1136 and provided modest relief for several centuries.

Religious disputes in the sixteenth century throttled the growth in monastic care of the elderly; in its place, local parishes opened "poorhouses" in the seventeenth century, which were supported by local ratepayers (taxpayers). Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries the aged in Britain were looked after by either their families or their employers, supported by private charity, or--under the Poor Law--received parish relief or entered the poorhouse.

Large-scale government action on behalf of aged persons came to western Europe decades before it arrived on American shores. France began to provide some old-age support as early as 1850. The first major

comprehensive program for all aged persons appeared with the enactment of the German health, accident, and old-age/invalidism programs of the 1880's. In the next twenty-five years, pension schemes were set up in Denmark (1891), Belgium (1894), Austria (1906), Britain (1908), and Sweden (1913). America joined the ranks in 1935, nearly half a century after Bismarck's path-breaking legislation.

Passage of Social Security opened the doors to a fast-expanding agenda of federal government activities in aging, which were nurtured by growing numbers of elderly voters.<sup>43</sup>

Since the establishment of the Social Security System, federal programs of all descriptions, councils, and agencies have been created to help the elderly. However, because of present cultural conditions, the elderly (specifically widows in regards to this project) will be given consistently less support in the coming years. Is the church prepared and willing to respond?

In many ways the Church has forsaken its God given call to bear one another's burdens, especially those of the elderly widow. Consequently, para-church organizations and government agencies have taken up the mantel of ministry to the elderly. The present dilemma is frightening to contemplate. Where the government has been diligent in assisting the aged, the present trend is that of cutting back on support due to a weakening and frail economy. There is constant talk about acquiring a balanced budget. But the question is, "At whose expense?"

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<sup>43</sup>Alvin Rabushka and Bruce Jacobs, Old Folks at Home (New York: The Free Press, 1980), 27-28.



The two major income supplements provided by the government for the elderly--Social Security and Medicare--very existence are threatened. One economist sounds the alarm in an article written in USA Today:

Social Security reforms in the past were designed to produce reserves that would help ease the burden of paying for the large number of retiring baby boomers in the 21st century. However, these have not been treated as a form of national savings and investments to enhance economic growth--and thus to increase the resources needed in the coming retirement bulge. Instead, the Social Security surplus is being used to offset deficits elsewhere in the Federal budget. Meanwhile, Medicare, the national health insurance for the elderly, faces a mounting financial crisis. Current projections indicate that Medicare's Hospital Insurance trust fund will not be able to pay for current services shortly after the turn of the century. The day of reckoning could come even sooner if the experts' rather rosy assumptions about economic growth in the 1990's and the cost of catastrophic illness legislation are not borne out. As our population ages in the years ahead, the situation is going to get worse.<sup>44</sup>

There is a constant reminder to the citizens of America through the news media that future cutbacks in governmental assistance are inevitable. The growth of Medicare and other entitlements is expanding at an unprecedented rate. People are living longer in their retirement years. Consequently it takes more resources to meet their needs. "From \$12 billion in 1975, the program (Medicare) ballooned to \$178 billion in 1995 and is rising

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<sup>44</sup>Jack Meyer, "Can We Afford Old Age," USA Today, Vol. 4, January 1992, 22-23.

at 10 percent a year."<sup>45</sup> Who will take up the slack when the government prunes its programs? Will the church be ready to meet the challenge? The statistics are very alarming; please examine the following:

By 2030, a staggering 45% of the U.S. budget will go to the old . . . the growing ranks of the elderly are putting pressure on government to assume more and more of their costs. But in an era where budget deficits are the overriding problem, where will the money come from? For the Social Security system to continue as it is, the payroll tax rate might have to rise from 15% to 25% by 2020 or so, and to an almost unbearable 40% by the middle of the next century."<sup>46</sup>

Alternatives to the dilemma abound from limited assistance to euthanasia. Again, this is the churches' finest hour to respond to the tremendous needs. The people of God must begin to devise ways to assist the elderly widows in their congregations and communities.

There is a great danger in not having enough resources to meet the needs of the elderly widows. To add to this, the number of elderly widows who live below the poverty line is increasing . "It is a conservative estimate that a third of the 23,500,000 Americans over sixty-five live below the poverty line, . . . "<sup>47</sup> Another key factor

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<sup>45</sup>Knight-Ridder, "Overhauling Medicare," For the People, 6 November 1995, Vol. 4, Number 22, 7.

<sup>46</sup>Lee Smith, "What Do We Owe to the Elderly?" Fortune, 27 March 1989, 69.

<sup>47</sup>Victoria E. Bumagin and Kathlyn F. Hirn, Aging is a Family Affair (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers, 1979), 35.

is the increase in the elderly population and a decrease in births.

Birth control has been an increasingly effective answer to excessive population growth. Unfortunately it has also greatly reduced the number of younger workers who have traditionally supported our nation's retirement system. So much so that today only six active workers support each retired citizen, down from something like an eight-to-one ration as recently as 1970, and about a twenty-to-one ration when pension plans were developed for widespread use immediately after the Second World War. By the year 2000 it is now estimated that the graying of America will have reached such proportions that, in combination with the falling birthrate, it will have pushed the burden for each retired person squarely on the pocketbooks of only three active workers.<sup>48</sup>

It is a fact that Americans are living longer and healthier lives.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the elderly represent the fastest growing segment of America's population. This group is growing both in number and as a proportion of the total population. In 1980, over 25.7 million people, or 11.9 percent of the total population, were 65 or older. By the year 2000, just ten short years from now, this group will comprise 13 percent of the population. And by 2050, it is projected that almost 23 percent of the population will be over 65.<sup>49</sup>

Longevity is due to medical advances, especially in the area of heart disease.<sup>50</sup> "The average life expectancy in 1900 was 47; today it is 75, and within a decade it may reach

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<sup>48</sup>James Jorgensen, The Graying of America (New York: The Dial Press, 1980), 7 & 123.

<sup>49</sup>Corina Eckl, "Aging America: No 1 Problem of the 21st Century?" State Legislatures, July 1990, 36-41.

<sup>50</sup>Rabushka and Jacobs, Old Folks at Home, 21.

80."<sup>51</sup> One of the fastest growing segments in America is 85 and older (2.4 million).<sup>52</sup> West Virginia has one of the highest percentages of residents who are 65 years old and over (12.2%).<sup>53</sup> For the first time in the history of America, there are more elderly people than teenagers.<sup>54</sup> As the number of elderly people significantly grows so do the opportunities for ministry. A large segment of the elderly population is comprised of widowed women who live alone in their homes. In general 70% of those 65 years and older live in their own homes. Only 5 percent live in institutions.<sup>55</sup> The church has a great opportunity to rise to the occasion and take hold of their God-given responsibilities.

In the present society, there are several factors that make it difficult for the extended family to minister to the needs of their parents. Because America is living longer, it becomes increasingly more difficult for children to assist parents with their needs because of their age. Siblings can be in their sixties while the parents are in

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<sup>51</sup>Fern Schumer Chapman, "The Senior Bloom: How It Will Change America," Fortune, 27 March 1989, 62.

<sup>52</sup>Charlotte Hale, The Super Years (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), 19.

<sup>53</sup>William W. Lammers, Public Policy and the Aging (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 1983), 16.

<sup>54</sup>Barna, The Frog in the Kettle, 199.

<sup>55</sup>Sandra Cutler Lewis, Providing for the Older Adult (Thorofare, New Jersey: Slack Inc., 1983), 8.

their eighties. It is very possible that both could have a difficult time in caring for themselves.<sup>56</sup> Also, because of the mobility of society, people are moving more due to a job transfer or retirement. Thus, there are a number of children who live at a distance from their parents; making it difficult to help them. In addition to the above, there is much stress on adult children who care for their parents. The following list of items depicts the personal strains adult children face as described in gerontological literature:<sup>57</sup>

- 1) I feel physically worn out.
- 2) No matter what I do, my parent isn't satisfied.
- 3) It's causing strain in my marriage.
- 4) It keeps me from helping my own children as I'd like.
- 5) I feel emotionally exhausted.
- 6) I have to give up social and recreation activities, vacations, and so on.
- 7) My job is being affected.
- 8) I feel tied down in my daily schedules.
- 9) It's causing a problem in my relationship with my children.
- 10) It's a real financial hardship for me.

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<sup>56</sup>Victor G. Cicirelli, Helping Elderly Parents (Boston: Auburn House Publishing Company, 1981), 9.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 49.

By reviewing the above list of stresses, it is evident that churches can be very creative in how they assist adult children in their care of their elderly parents. A study performed on adult children with elderly parents asked for their perception of their parents' needs. The three most significant needs mentioned were: 1) Transportation; 2) maintenance; and, 3) bureaucratic mediation.<sup>58</sup> The church should be ready and available to assist regarding the above concerns, especially numbers one and two.

Sometimes the reason elderly widows are not cared for is simply due to a lack of commitment by the children. Many siblings have a limited commitment when it comes to caring for their elderly parents. "Most of the adult children felt committed only to the provision of intermediate levels of service to their parents; only a small minority was willing to assume the entire burden of services to parents in any area."<sup>59</sup>

Traditionally, adult children have been the primary support system for their elderly parents, and they continue to provide such help today. However, demographic, economic, and social trends in the modern world suggest that adult children may have to reduce the amount and kinds of help they can provide. If such is the case, the family support system must be evaluated for its limitations in meeting the needs of the elderly.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 72.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 161.

One of the major emphases of this project is to awaken churches to their God given responsibility of caring for widows. It is time for churches to cease from shirking their duty and begin to roll up their sleeves and get to work. Both the Bible and culture speak volumes concerning this issue.

Immanuel Baptist Church has undertaken a ministry to widows born from a biblical and a cultural rationale. In addition to this, there is another impetus for ministry to widows: Immanuel Baptist Church has thirty-eight widows who are members or who actively attend. The following is a general description of the widows' situations and needs.

This is only a partial list:

- 1) Several have no children to assist them.
  - 2) Many need emotional and spiritual support.
  - 3) There are a few who struggle with finances and the church has assisted them in their need.
  - 4) Many have maintenance concerns.
  - 5) There are some whose children live at a distance and cannot give adequate support.
  - 6) All are lonely and need regular contact.
  - 7) It appears that most adult children have genuine concern for their mothers' financial well being.
- However, there have been occasions where the leadership of the church deemed it necessary to assist a widow in need.

It is apparent in today's society that the family's strength and loyalty are collapsing, giving rise to a greater commitment by the church to assist widows. A few decades ago the extended family took care of the aged until death. It was not unusual for three generations to live under one roof. There was greater respect and honor given to those who were late in years.

The current trend is very depressing in regards to adult children taking care of their parents. A study performed in 1981 suggests, ". . . that adult children are providing relatively low amounts of services to their parents now and feel a commitment to provide only limited amounts of service to their parents in the future."<sup>61</sup> Siblings and friends come up with a variety of reasons why they cannot minister to the aged. "Studies have revealed that 75 percent of us live within minutes of a parent. Some 23 percent are within hours (though making it difficult to respond to needs). Only 2 percent of us need to drive for days to see a parent. So why do so many of us see them so seldom? We are selfish."<sup>62</sup>

This project is focused on presenting the need coupled with a strategy to minister to that need. The call to be servants forms the foundation. The Bible and culture

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>62</sup>Rainey, The Tribute, 103.



Speak clearly of the responsibility that the church has in ministering unto the broken and bereaved. However, before a strategy is brought forth, a discussion of the various kinds of needs is in order.

## CHAPTER 2

### UNDERSTANDING THE WIDOW AND HER NEEDS

There is much to comprehend concerning the widow and her needs. It is important to grasp that one does not have to be an expert to begin to assist them. However, the better one understands the widow's plight the more effective he will be as a servant. It should be the goal of every deacon to desire to be equipped for this vital ministry.

One area of ministry each servant leader will deal with on an ongoing basis is that of grieving. The deacon can be more effective in ministry if he can grasp the mechanics of the grieving process.

#### Dealing With Grief

The intent of this section is to acquaint the reader with some basic precepts concerning the grieving process and some useful suggestions to help the widow in the loss of her spouse. Being armed with this kind of knowledge will greatly enhance the ministry efforts of the servant-leader.

"Grief is an (normal) emotion. It involves the feeling life of a person. It is a tearing kind of emotion, because it shuts off the person from fulfillment of hope,

dreams, and aspirations."<sup>63</sup> The term grief refers to the process of experiencing the psychological (through one's feelings, thoughts, and attitudes), social (through one's behavior with others), and physical (through one's health and bodily symptoms) reactions to one's perception of loss.<sup>64</sup> The loss of a loved one affects every aspect of a person's existence. The servant-leader should be acquainted with grief and secondary losses. In other words, not only has the widow lost a husband, but in many cases she has lost income, security, and peace of mind (secondary losses).

The deacon should be attentive to the various phases of grief:

All of the responses to grief fall into three broad categories, which actually constitute the three major phases of response: avoidance, in which there is shock, denial, and disbelief; confrontation, a highly charged and emotional state in which you repeatedly learn that your loved one is dead and in which your grief is most intense, with reactions to your loss being felt most acutely; and reestablishment, in which there is a gradual decline of acute grief and the beginning of an emotional and social reentry into the everyday world.<sup>65</sup>

Warren Wiersbe describes the steps of grief in the following ways: 1) Shock--emotional numbness; 2) strong emotions--weeping and tears; 3) depression--with feelings of

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<sup>63</sup>Charles C. Bachmann, Ministering to the Grief Sufferer (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 13.

<sup>64</sup>Therses A. Rando, Grieving: How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1988), 10.

<sup>65</sup>Therses A. Rando, Grieving, 19.

loneliness; 4) fear--of life and future; 5) guilt--possibly blaming herself for death of spouse; 6) anger--blaming others (which may include the deceased) for spouse's death; 7) apathy--life not worth living/no one understands; and, 8) adjustment--learning to accept her loss and reentry of her life.<sup>66</sup> Another author describes the process as: 1) Numbness; 2) yearning to regain the lost person; 3) disorganization and despair; and, 4) reorganization and reentry into life.<sup>67</sup> The servant-leader needs to understand that grief must move through stages which could take weeks or even years. Patience, love and a listening ear will assist her in recovery more than anything else.

Again, the process can take weeks or years. Regardless of the reentry into the everyday world, there will always be episodes of grief as the widow reflects on her loss. It is appropriate and healthy for the living spouse to keep alive precious memories through reminiscing.<sup>68</sup> Sharing stories of the past is helpful in keeping the memory of the spouse alive and to cope with her loss. The deacon would do well to listen patiently and tenderly. This will facilitate healing of her wounded heart.

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<sup>66</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe and David W. Wiersbe, Comforting the Bereaved (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1985), 22-23.

<sup>67</sup>David L. Decker, Social Gerontology (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), 258.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 235-238.

For the servant-leader to be helpful, he must realize that it is perfectly natural for one to grieve for the loss of a loved one. This writer's professor in seminary stated it best:

Our natural inclination is to avoid the pain of grief, but to do so flies in the face of a deeper wisdom which teaches us that recovery from grief lies by going through it, rather than around it. We find it hard to believe the word of Jesus, 'Happy are those who mourn' (Matt. 5:4, GNB). Yet, the fact is that mourning heals the wounds of grief and can produce personal growth.<sup>69</sup>

Weeping may continue for many weeks, months or even years. However, do not discourage crying; this is a part of grieving. There are those who will discourage tears and suggest that one should be strong and of good courage. Eugenia Price puts things in perspective by asking some very probing questions: "Why should we feel too spiritual to weep? Why should we feel guilty when depression swamps us?"<sup>70</sup> Price goes on to say, "We're not refusing God's help. It just takes time even for God to get through our sorrow."<sup>71</sup> It is not nearly as important to have the right words as it is just to be present. The deacon's presence demonstrates love and concern.<sup>72</sup> What the grieving widow

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<sup>69</sup>Albert Meiburg, "Caring for Persons Who Grieve," Church Administration, March 1989, 28.

<sup>70</sup>Eugenia Price, Getting Through the Night (New York: The Dial Press, 1982), 28.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>Lawrence O. Richards, The Believer's Guidebook (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 289.

will remember is the deacon's warm embrace, caring heart and being nearby in the hour of need. The servant-leader can play a significant role in her recovery.

The natural progression from this point is that of hope. Caution! Beware of those who have slipped from mourning to bitterness or self pity. The wise deacon will counsel with the pastor for advice and assistance.

There are several things to remember in dealing with the grieving spouse. Be ready to listen without responding. Take the initiative to stay in touch by checking on the widow regularly. During visitation, be aware of the power of Scripture. One of the greatest sources of comfort and hope is found in the written Word. A widow in Uganda shared with this writer a passage of Scripture that was a tremendous comfort to her during the initial stages of her grief:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thes. 4:13-18).

The servant-leader should ask God for much wisdom in knowing when and what passages to share. A timely verse can

brighten a widow's day and may be an important step in her reentry to life. The appropriate Scripture will encourage the grieving heart and give hope for the future. There is nothing more powerful and nurturing than His Holy Word.

Warren Wiersbe in his book entitled Comforting the Bereaved gives some helpful and meaningful verses to share with those experiencing grief:<sup>73</sup>

- Psalm 16:11--God's guidance and presence
- Psalm 18:30--He makes no mistakes
- Psalm 20:1-2--God sends us help
- Psalm 22:24--God is sensitive to our needs
- Psalm 27:5--God's gracious protection
- Psalm 30:5--Joy in the morning
- Psalm 34:17-19--God hears and delivers
- Psalm 46--Our refuge and strength
- Psalm 55:22--Give God your burden
- Psalm 73:23-25--God is all we need
- Psalm 84:11-12--Grace and glory!
- Psalm 91:1-2--The shadow of the Almighty
- Isaiah 40:28-31--Power to the faint
- Isaiah 41:10--God is with you
- Isaiah 43:1-2--Through fire and water
- Jeremiah 29:11--God's thoughts of peace
- Lamentations 3:22-26--God's faithfulness
- Matthew 11:28-30--The promise of rest
- John 10:27-29--His sheep are safe
- John 11:25-26--The resurrection and the life
- John 14:27--The gift of peace
- John 16:22--Joy in the midst of sorrow
- John 17:24--Jesus prays that we will be in heaven
- Romans 8:28, 35-39--God's all conquering love
- 1 Corinthians 15:55, 57-58--Victory over death
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4--The God of all comfort
- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18--Weighing our sorrows
- 2 Corinthians 5:1-8--Present with the Lord
- 2 Corinthians 12:9--God's sufficient grace
- Philippians 4:6-7, 13--God is adequate
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18--Promise of reunion
- Hebrews 2:9--Jesus tasted death for us
- Hebrews 4:15-16--The throne of grace
- Hebrews 11:13--Strangers and pilgrims

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<sup>73</sup>Wiersbe & Wiersbe, Comforting the Bereaved, 30-31.

- 1 Peter 1:3-5--Kept for glory
- 1 Peter 5:10--Grace, suffering, and glory
- 1 John 3:12--We are God's children
- Revelation 21:1-5--All things new!

The great advantage of ministering with a believer who has lost a spouse versus one who is not saved is the hope of eternal life promised to those who die in Christ. For this Ugandan widow, she is convinced that one day she will be reunited with her husband because of the promise of Jesus.<sup>74</sup>

#### Understanding Loneliness

One of the most peculiar twentieth century phenomena found in America is the loneliness of people. This great nation is bustling with cities filled with humans and activities, yet many are lonely and live in isolation. Regarding the elderly, "aging is generally accompanied by decreasing social connections with the rest of society, and in some cases, by actual isolation."<sup>75</sup> Two questions asked in the *Widow Instrument*<sup>76</sup> were: 1) "Do you experience times of loneliness?"; and, 2) "Do you ever wish you had someone to talk to?" It is amazing that the majority of widows responded yes to both questions. In fact, 78% of those

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<sup>74</sup>John 14:1-6; John 3:16

<sup>75</sup>Jack Levin and William C. Levin, Ageism: Prejudice and Discrimination Against the Elderly (Belmont, (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1980), 21.

<sup>76</sup>See Appendix 2



surveyed experience times of loneliness, and 71% wished they had someone to talk to. The most amazing find was that 75% picked a friendly visit as their greatest need. If this is true, then how can the servant-leader minister to the lonely widow? There is a partial cure for this kind of loneliness--frequent contacts by God's people through visitation and telephone calls. Lawrence Richards calls this "community."

Here God's provision for us is found in the church, not as an institution or building, but as fellow believers. Becoming a Christian means entering a relationship with other persons as well as with God: a relationship that offers us the possibility of a rich community experience.<sup>77</sup>

Usually after the funeral, the widow is left alone with very little contact. The "significant other" has died leaving a large gap in the widow's soul. The deep relationship and intimate communication is lost. She calls out to her spouse with no reply. She hopes that all this is nothing more than a bad dream. Alone, anxious and sometimes confused the widow longs for a touch from her mate. Many times throughout the night her heart aches; at night she turns to touch her husband but his side of the bed is empty. There is no relief for her pain and loneliness. Often there is a longing to go home to her heavenly abode to be with her beloved. Henri Nouwen calls aged loneliness "desolation."

Although there might be many explanations for the fact that husband, wife, or friend died before we did, our heart often responds with feelings of rejection and

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 360-361.

sometimes even anger, because we have been left behind and alone in a harsh and pitiless society. These feelings are often so deeply hidden that they are seldom expressed to others or to oneself, but they are, by that fact, no less real and painful.<sup>78</sup>

The servant-leaders must be constantly aware of the widow's loneliness and enlist others to make frequent and meaningful contacts. The deacon's faithfulness in regular contact with his widows and the enlistment of members of the church will reap a harvest of joy in the hearts of widows assigned to his care.

#### House Maintenance Concerns

Maintenance is an area of great concern for the widow who lives alone in her own home. According to a census that was taken in 1987:

30% of the 25.2 white elderly, 23% of the 900,000 Hispanic elderly, and 33% of the 2.3 million black elderly lived alone . . . . The number of elderly people living alone will increase from 8.5 million in 1987 to 13.3 million in 2020 . . . . Women now represent 77% of the older people living alone; by 2020 this will increase to 85%.<sup>79</sup>

Without question, widows living alone will need assistance in maintaining their dwelling. Her husband is no longer there to fix the sink or repair a broken lamp. Nearly half of the elderly homeowners have lived in the same house for

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<sup>78</sup>Henri J.M. Nouwen and Walter J. Gaffney, Aging (Garden City: Image Books, 1976), 38-39.

<sup>79</sup>Kilbride, Nagy, and Rubinstein, Elders Living Alone, 21.

thirty years and over.<sup>80</sup> This statistic means that the house most likely will need regular maintenance. Housing devours over one-third of the budget of the typical elderly couple.<sup>81</sup> For a widow who lacks her spouse's income, housing can consume much of her resources. Though the home is a place of precious memories, it is also a great burden in the following areas: inside and outside maintenance; financial strain in the upkeep; a variety of safety problems; negotiating stairs; crime and changing neighborhoods.<sup>82</sup>

There is such a great potential of ministry concerning the issue of house maintenance. Many widows are not apt to call upon the resources of the church to assist them. Christians must stand ready to assist.

In surveying Southern Baptist widows in West Virginia, the following facts were disclosed:<sup>83</sup>

- 81% reside in their own home
- 97% live by themselves
- 28 years is the average length living in their home
- 69% indicated a desire for assistance in maintaining their home

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<sup>80</sup>Rabushka and Jacobs, Old Folks at Home, 7.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 69.

<sup>82</sup>Kilbride, Elders Living Alone, 83.

<sup>83</sup>See Appendix 2

- Only 46% feel comfortable to call on the church for assistance.

The alert deacon will spot areas of concern as he visits in the home. He can forewarn family members or take care of the problem himself. This also affords the servant-leader the opportunity and privilege to involve the membership in ministry by enlisting the use of their talents and skills.<sup>84</sup>

Because many widows feel uncomfortable in asking for assistance<sup>85</sup>, the servant-leader must use several of his "senses" to discover needs. He must be very observant to locate areas of concern.

When talking with a widow, the servant-leader should **listen** for areas of concern. Often in a conversation the widow will reveal a particular project that she is attempting to do or hire out. Even in the widow's prayer request, if the deacon is discerning, he can discover potential needs that he can address.

It is amazing what can be seen if the deacon is observant. The servant-leader should keep his eyes open for needs or hazards in and around the home. Other examples of needs that a deacon might detect are: a door that does not latch; overloaded extension cords; the need for weather

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<sup>84</sup>See Appendix 5.

<sup>85</sup>See Appendix 2...42% of Southern Baptist widows surveyed in West Virginia are uncomfortable in asking for assistance.

strip around windows; flammable chemicals close to a gas hot water heater or furnace; paint peeling off walls; dripping faucets; and a rotted board on the porch steps. The deacon must **look** for opportunities for ministry and not wait for them to call. Also, be sure to involve the widow's family when possible.

Be on guard for unusual odors. If the servant-leader detects a sewage smell, this could mean a leak around the seal of a toilet or a broken sewer line. The most crucial thing to look out for is a gas leak. Pay particular attention around gas furnaces, stoves, and water heaters. By using one's sense of **smell**, the deacon could save his widow's life.

Because the widow is alone, she attempts to do many things herself. What a relief it would be if widows felt comfortable to contact their deacons for help. What a God-given privilege it is to minister to widows in need!

#### Financial Pressures

Numerous widows are on fixed incomes, drawing their small checks from the government each month. The other major benefit is medical insurance which usually needs to be supplemented with some type of conventional insurance. Most likely, the widow's supply (income) cannot meet the demands in this costly society. "Persons over sixty-five are the most deprived group in the nation, with exception of

racial minority groups. A very tragic aspect of this situation is that most of the elderly poor are poor for the first time in their lives."<sup>86</sup> A person over sixty-five has just as many needs as the young but of a different nature. For example, "Those over sixty-five spend on the average three times as much for prescribed medicine alone as those under sixty-five."<sup>87</sup> The widow attempts to survive on one income which at times is almost impossible. The pressure of making ends meet is added stress.

As mentioned in a previous chapter covering First Timothy chapter five, the family should attend to the monetary needs of parents. David L. Decker, a gerontologist, states:

Whereas adult children very often provide various kinds of services for their aging parents, it is relatively uncommon for children to give their parents financial aid. Most estimates of the frequency of cash contributions to parents by adult children are that it occurs in less than one case out of ten (Schorr, 1960). But it must be remembered that older parents are attitudinally opposed to receiving cash aid."<sup>88</sup>

There are many reasons why widows may experience financial pressures. For example, they are now without their spouses' income. This is usually a 50 percent or greater reduction of finances. What adds to the hardship is

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<sup>86</sup>Barbara Silverstone and Helen Kandel Hyman, You and Your Aging Parent (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 79.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>88</sup>David L. Decker, Social Gerontology, 214.

that many widows do not want to be a burden to their children, so they are reluctant to share their needs. In addition to this, emergencies arise where supplemental income is needed. The percentage of poor or near poor elderly women living alone in 1992 was approximately 45%.<sup>89</sup> As discussed in previous chapters, the church should be ready to assist financially those whose families have forsaken their widowed mothers.

The deacon must be sensitive to the financial situation of the church's widows. There are many who have never balanced a checkbook, are unfamiliar with insurance policies, etc.<sup>90</sup> Medical bills and taxes are two items that are mind boggling to the novice. The servant-leader must discreetly ask the right questions to gain understanding of the widow's plight. If needs are detected, sharing with family members should be the first recourse. Secondly, if the family is unable or unwilling to help, then the church is obligated to assist.

From the beginning of widowhood until death, there will be unscrupulous men attempting to take advantage of widowed women. The funeral director can press for a more elaborate and expensive casket (greater profit) rather than

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<sup>89</sup>Kilbride, Elders Living Alone, 22.

<sup>90</sup>LaVonne Neff, "Three Women Out of Four: How the Church can meet the Needs of its Widows," Christianity Today, 16 (1985), 32.

one more practical and reasonable. The plumber can charge an exorbitant rate for replacing a washer in a faucet. Servant-leaders should be close enough to widows in their relationship to help protect them from thieves.

In a survey taken by Southern Baptist widows in the state of West Virginia, 82% have incomes ranging from \$2,000-\$18,000 annually.<sup>91</sup> It does not take much skill in mathematics to realize that at times widows struggle financially. Below are several suggestions in helping the widow in the area of her finances.

1) After establishing a trusting relationship with the widow, tactfully inquire concerning her monetary needs. Make sure that she has sufficient funds to meet her financial obligations. Remember, the winter season can be especially difficult due to high utility usage. **Asking the right questions** can reveal hidden needs. The servant-leader must be careful not to embarrass or offend them.

2) Unfortunately, there are unprincipled people that prey on elderly women, taking advantage of them.<sup>92</sup> **Be available** (if they should ask) to scrutinize major transactions taken by the widow. Automobile and home repairs, miracle medicine, merchandise sold door-to-door, or

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<sup>91</sup>See Appendix 2

<sup>92</sup>James A. Peterson and Michael L. Briley, Widows & Widowhood: A Creative Approach to Being Alone (New York: Association Press, 1977), 205-206.



anything dealing with substantial amounts of money are openings for flimflam activity.

3) When a widow has a financial need, the family should be notified. *Informing relatives* affords them an opportunity to minister to the their own.' The Bible states:

But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:4,8).

4) In the event that relatives are not able or available to assist, Immanuel Baptist Church has set aside monies for such occasions. The *Benevolent Fund* is a resource that is available to any widow who has a need.

5) Remember, if a widow is planning to hire an individual or a local company to help her in a project, consider *volunteers* from Immanuel Baptist Church. There is a list of members in the back of the manual having a variety of skills who have indicated their desire to contribute time and talents to a widow in need.<sup>93</sup> It would be wise for the deacon to take advantage of this invaluable resource. Not only will the widow save money, but the deacon provides another opportunity for a member of the church to be blessed by serving another.

6) *Be aware* and on the lookout for special discounts and/or benefits available to senior citizens. Many times

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<sup>93</sup>See Appendix 5

stores run specials on products and services just for the elderly. Communicate bargains and benefits to the widows.

### Special Issues Concerning Widows

There are a number of important issues concerning the widow. The servant-leader must be sensitive to the fears and concerns of each of his widows. Though there are many issues concerning these women, below are just several to contemplate:

1) **Security** is a special concern to most widows. A survey taken of three-hundred elderly people (40% being widowed) stated that protection was their most important concern.<sup>94</sup> Due to the widow's living alone, there grows a sense of insecurity and fear. Extra precautions should be taken in securing doors and windows in the home that the widow might have a peace of mind. It is a good idea to do a spot check of locks and latches throughout the house. Do not forget to check the basement and the attic windows. Advise the widow not to open the door at night unless the person's voice and face can be clearly recognized. Make sure that the fire department, police, and rescue squad's numbers are near the phone and written in large bold numbers. Also, the servant-leader may want to place his name on the list so the widow can contact him in case of an emergency.

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<sup>94</sup>Cicirelli, Helping Elderly Parents, 152.

2) **Safety** is another area of concern for widows. Make sure smoke detectors are installed and working. If a wood stove is used, a fire extinguisher should be nearby. Look for potential safety problems such as overloaded or frayed extension cords, protruding objects that could cut or trip, gas leaks, leaky flues, etc.

3) **Sickness** comes often to the widow. There are occasions when a widow is sick, yet she fails to get the proper medical treatment. The servant-leader should encourage her to acquire medical attention and even offer to take her. If efforts fail, the deacon may want to alert the family and/or doctor, but proceed with great wisdom.

Contact the members who are on the "prayer chain," the widow's Sunday School class, and pastor when a widow is in the hospital or is home sick. Meals, calls and cards can be sent to demonstrate love and concern.

4) **Sensitivity** to certain areas of a widow's life is consequential. Remember, widows are anxious concerning many things. Though it may seem trivial, the deacon must be patient and understanding.

#### Decision making

One study found that most elderly people prefer to remain independent, taking care of their own needs as long as they have strength to do so.<sup>95</sup> Simply stated, it is very

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 161.

important that widows continue to make decisions and be allowed to think for themselves. The servant-leader must be very wise in assisting his widows, respecting their independence and right to make choices. "In American culture, choice represents the natural environment, the fertile ground, as it were, of independence . . . . People lose their sense of being and integrity as individuals when they are no longer able to choose for themselves."<sup>96</sup>

#### Ministering to the Spirit of Widows

History points to the danger of meeting just the physical needs of people while neglecting the inner spirit. This section helps bring balance to the ministry by focusing on specific things that deal with the heart and soul. The question that every deacon must first address is, "Does this person know Christ?"

The survey given to widows of Southern Baptist Churches across the state of West Virginia asked questions concerning salvation. One question stated, "When you die, are you positive that your future home will be in Heaven?" The vast majority answered yes.<sup>97</sup> However, the questionnaire given to widows living in two elderly housing centers of Princeton, West Virginia, had an additional question

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<sup>96</sup>Kilbride, Elders Living Alone, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup>See Appendix 2

added.<sup>98</sup> The question is as follows: When you die, what gives you the right to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?:

- 1) Trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life (Eph. 2:8-10)
- 2) Doing good works
- 3) Living a good moral life
- 4) Being baptized and going to church
- 5) All the above
- 6) None of the above

The vast majority (71%) selected number five "all the above" as the reason that they should enter heaven.<sup>99</sup> The interesting thing is that 71% of the widows in this same survey also stated that they were positive that they were going to heaven. In other words, when probing the issue of salvation, though they were confident in their future home, it appeared that they were basing it on Jesus *plus* what they have accomplished in life.

Several significant things can be gleaned from the instrument. The servant-leader must be ready to inquire concerning salvation through the use of probing questions. Secondly, there should be informal teachings during visitation explaining doctrinal areas such as grace, faith,

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<sup>98</sup>See Appendix 3

<sup>99</sup>Note: 6 out of 8 Baptists in this survey are trusting in Jesus plus works for salvation. Only one trusts in Jesus alone and one did not respond.

justification, etc. The goal of such teachings is that the widow is trusting in Jesus alone for her salvation.

As with any Christian, if a believer is not progressing in their spiritual development, they are most likely digressing. To help foster spiritual health and growth, the deacon should incorporate the Bible and prayers during his visits.

Visits should include Scripture reading and prayer. The servant-leader must have a grasp of the special needs of the widow to be able to apply the right passage from the Bible. Billy Graham's book entitled, The Billy Graham Christian Workers's Handbook, is an excellent resource to use when faced with a difficult situation.<sup>100</sup> Throughout the Bible there are numerous verses that will help strengthen the heart. A wonderful place to select passages is from the book of Psalms.

Every visit should close with a prayer. The servant-leader should ask the widow if there are any special prayer concerns. The response can be very revealing. Many times hidden concerns and anxieties are disclosed that otherwise would not have been known.

In addition to sharing passages from the Bible and praying during one's visit there are other significant things the deacon can do in ministering to the widow's

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<sup>100</sup>Billy Graham, The Billy Graham Christian Worker's Handbook (Minneapolis: World Wide Publishers, 1981).

spirit. Discussed below is only a sample of the many creative things one could do in this area.

The deacon should reserve time during visitation to discuss spiritual matters with the widow. At some point, it would be good to share a personal testimony. This should be followed by asking the widow to share her testimony. According to the survey taken at the Princeton Tower in Princeton, West Virginia, 71% of widows responding to the questionnaire believe that they have to do certain things to merit salvation.<sup>101</sup> In other words, they believe that being born again means to trust in Jesus **plus** their performance in life. Spend time sharing the doctrine of grace. The deacon should help the widow understand that only by grace<sup>102</sup> can a person be saved. The servant-leader should never forget that being concerned for a person's spiritual destiny is the most important service that can be rendered. Beyond the solid foundation of Christ, assisting the widow in her spiritual development is of utmost importance.

One of the continuing contradictions about relationship of religiosity and aging is that religious participation declines with age, but that people become more religious as they age . . . Church attendance may be a reliable measure of the religiosity of younger age groups, but for the elderly, it can be deceptive.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>See Appendix 3. Note: The largest denominational group in the high-rise taking the survey was Baptist.

<sup>102</sup>Grace--unmerited favor; a free gift & not earned.

<sup>103</sup>William M. Clements, Ministry with the Aging (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 157-158.

There are numerous reasons why widows have a difficult time attending services. The church should make a conscious effort to come to them! The servant-leaders have the ministry task of edifying and encouraging their widows.

There are several ways to edify and encourage the widow spiritually. The following are a few suggestions:

- When visiting, be sure to bring a Bible. At some point, the servant-leader should take time to share several Scripture verses. Passages from the Psalms are very inspirational and soothing.
- Before leaving, the deacon should ask the widow to share her prayer concerns. Then, take a moment to pray for all her requests. Remember to pray for her prayer needs during the week, and inquire about them by phone or during the next visit. Caution should be taken about submitting prayer requests to the *Immanuel Prayer Chain*. The deacon must acquire the widow's permission before doing so. Otherwise, one must keep all prayer requests strictly confidential.
- Because Immanuel Baptist Church has communion during the evening services of each quarter, some widows find it too difficult and dangerous to come out at night. Consider taking communion to widows who are unable to attend the Sunday evening service or who are home bound. This will be one of the highlights



and special blessings that these women will experience. It is advisable for the deacon to check with the pastor before performing a communion service in the home or hospital room of a widow.

- For those who miss a service or are home bound, the deacon should ask them if they would like a sermon tape. Do not forget to include a bulletin. Also, make sure there is a working tape player available and that she knows how to operate it. The deacon may want the church to consider investing in a few tape players to loan to those who do not have one. This works well with widows who are in the hospital for a prolonged time. What a blessing it is to take a player and tapes to a widow recovering in the hospital. This will be good food for the soul.
- There are a number of resources and spiritual aids that will help in strengthening the spirit of the widow. For example, provide some Christian literature such as "Open Widows" or "Daily Bread" to aid them in their devotions. The servant-leader may want to share an inspirational thought from his personal devotional time.
- Check to see if they need a large print Bible. In addition to this, if widows have cable TV, the deacon may want to suggest several good worship programs on an inspirational network where they can be fed the

Word of God. Bringing them a list of books/videos from the church's library can also be very beneficial. Be available to retrieve these items for the widow if they should request them.

- Ask their advice on particular spiritual matters that are personal or concerning the church. Older members have much to contribute and often have accumulated great wisdom. This will give them a sense of contributing to the servant-leader and/or the church.

## CHAPTER 3

### ORGANIZING THE MINISTRY TO WIDOWS

Without organization, the ministry to widows would not function properly. Adding structure to the ministry maximizes the deacons' efforts in taking care of widows, and is essential for efficiency. The first step in the organizational process is approving and adopting the ministry to widows by the deacons and church membership.

#### Adopting the Ministry to Widows

The first stage in establishing the ministry to widows is the approval and adoption of it by both leadership and members. It is here that a viable ministry is realized and actualized. It begins with the servant-leader saying yes to serving the widows and ministering to their needs. Nothing can be accomplished unless there is an agreement that ministry to the elderly widows is a biblical mandate and a God-given privilege. Besides this, the deacon body must comprehend the need for such a ministry. In the case of Immanuel Baptist Church, the servant-leaders realized that there were 38 widows in the membership. As the pastor brought to light some needs, deacons began to understand the potential for ministry. The Word of God gave the basis for

the establishment of the ministry to bereaved women. Also, the love of Christ ruling in the hearts of dedicated deacons helped them to be aware of the awesome privilege of serving women who have lost their spouse.

By emphasizing Acts 6:1-6 and James 1:27, it was absolutely clear to both the leadership and the pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church of their responsibility in taking care of the widows. In the case of Acts chapter six, it was the spiritual leaders in the assembly who ministered to the needs of those who had lost their spouse. Therefore, the spiritual leaders of the Immanuel Baptist Church--the deacon body--should be the responsible agent for the ministry to widows (where each deacon is assigned four to five widows). Hence, in hearing and understanding the Scriptures, the servant-leaders had to decide whether to obey or reject the precepts of God.

There was a point in time when the deacons of Immanuel Baptist Church made a commitment to care for the widows. During a deacons' retreat, each deacon made a commitment to take care of his assigned widows. The following Sunday, they stood before the church acknowledging their commitment to the ministry to widows. This action was a covenant made between God and the leadership in the presences of the members of Immanuel Baptist Church. The servant-leaders surrendered to the call of God to minister to women who had lost their mate. The membership also

embraced this call to ministry and pledged to help the deacons through volunteerism. A ministry was born that night.

Every deacon has a list of people who are willing to use their talents and skills to help a widow in need.<sup>104</sup> It is a matter of orchestrating specific talent with the need.

At some point early on, the church must be made aware of the ministry plans. It is a good idea to present the ministry during a monthly business meeting and vote as a church to support it. In addition to this, time should be set aside on a regular basis to pray for the ministry. Also, when preparing the budget, the church may want to have a separate line item just for the ministry to widows.

Wednesday night prayer meetings and Sunday morning worship services are adequate in keeping the membership informed of ministry developments. There are many creative ways to present the ministry and its progress to the congregation during services.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>See Appendix 5

<sup>105</sup>Several creative ways of keeping the congregation abreast of the ministry to widows is: 1) Have a testimonial by a widow; 2) Pastoral prayer time can be focused on praying for widows; 3) Wednesday night is a good opportunity for individual deacons to report on ministry activities; 4) Placing ministry happenings in the bulletin and on the bulletin board for others to read; 5) Produce a short skit for a Sunday evening service that demonstrates the privilege of helping a widow in need; 6) Special messages that focus on ministry to the widows; etc.

### Pastor as Overseer of Ministry to Widows

Without a foreman for a commercial construction project, little could be done and great is the possibility for chaos. An army without a commander would result in sure defeat. The ministry to widows needs a leader, coordinator and motivator. In the case of Immanuel Baptist Church, the pilot church, the pastor is the overseer of ministry. If a deacon is called to this key leadership position and is capable and reliable, this would free up the pastor for other things. However, even if a spiritual man surfaces in the church to be the overseer of ministry, the pastor must always have general oversight of the ministry.

The pastor as overseer of the ministry to widows assures that the ministry functions efficiently. Encouraging the servant-leaders, making assignments, providing counsel, training, and general oversight of the ministry objectives are just a few of his responsibilities. The pastor must have a desire and a heart for the ministry if it is to succeed. In other words, he must be the driving force behind it.

### Special Assignments

On occasions a special assignment is given to the deacons. For example, the pastor may have the servant-leaders mail a card to their widows on a specific month. He may have them the next month call and invite them to a

special widows' social. Or, the pastor may designate April as window washing/gutter cleaning month. (The deacons would be encouraged to involve the membership in the projects.) In other words, the possibilities are limitless for special assignments.

#### Record Keeping

All deacons are given a ministry manual (also called a handbook) entitled A Manual for Ministry to Widows of the Immanuel Baptist Church.<sup>106</sup> In the handbook each widow has a designated section. Each of these sections have three types of record sheets: 1) *Information Sheet on the Widow*; 2) *Funeral Arrangements*; and, 3) *Journal*.

During the initial visit with the widow, the servant-leader should complete the *Information Sheet on the Widow*. This gives vital information such as names and addresses of relatives. The form should be filled out in person rather than by phone. It is important not to forget that all data should be held in the strictest of confidence.

The second record that the servant-leader should at some point complete on his widows is *Funeral Arrangements*. Such things as pallbearers, special hymns, Scriptures, and participants in their funeral service are difficult decisions for the grieving family to make. For example, most people do not understand the complexity of choosing a

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<sup>106</sup>See Appendix 5

casket or selecting pallbearers. Much hardship could be avoided by filling out this detailed form. This should be completed only after good rapport has been established. It may be wise for the deacon not to use the term "funeral arrangements." This perhaps is too cold and harsh. It will take several visits to obtain all the information, but discretion and tact must be employed so as not to offend.

The third record page is called a *Journal*. Every time a contact is made directly or indirectly by the servant-leader, it should be recorded on this page. This will give a written record about frequency of visits, what was accomplished, and volunteers involved. Also, this is an excellent place to write prayer requests and special concerns. Much of this information can then be transferred to the monthly records to be submitted at deacons' meetings.

It is requested that deacons keep the handbooks current. They should bring their handbooks every time the deacon body meets in order to make an appropriate and accurate report of ministry activities. Failure to do this will hinder the effectiveness of the work.

#### Working With Volunteers

A vital aspect of the ministry to widows is in the area of involving others. Siblings are admonished in Scripture to take care of their widowed mothers. Neighbors should be encouraged to keep a watchful eye out for the



widow next door. Members of the church should be encouraged and enlisted to assist deacons in ministering to their widows through the use of their God-given talents. It is the ambition and goal of the servant-leader to involve as many people as possible in the caring for the widows.

Whenever possible, the extended family should be encouraged to be involved in caring for the widow. However, the deacon should be aware of several factors that may hinder family involvement. It is possible that the relationship of the siblings and widow is strained. One author states:

Unresolved conflicts between parents and their adolescent-age children often continue throughout the life cycle . . . . In view of these still unresolved conflicts, it is unlikely that the child would shoulder the responsibility of caring for an elderly parent with open arms and a warm heart.<sup>107</sup>

Family tension that is full scale many times is expressed in physical or verbal abuse. A form of abuse called "passive neglect" is the most common form. This amounts to "leaving the older person alone, isolated, and forgotten . . . and most often occurs when families are too preoccupied to pay attention to older members."<sup>108</sup> The deacon must understand that mistreatment does not always originate from the

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<sup>107</sup>Suzanne K. Steinmetz, "Elder Abuse," in Aging, Third Edition, ed. Harold Cox (Guilford, Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc., 1983), 222-224.

<sup>108</sup>Robert C. Atchley, Social Forces and Aging (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1985), 303.

children; the widow can abuse or manipulate her children in a variety of ways. Methods of abuse used by the elderly are: screaming or yelling; pouting or withdrawing; refusing food or medication; hitting, slapping, or throwing objects; calling the police; etc.<sup>109</sup> This can be complicated and beyond the expertise of the servant-leader. Therefore, the pastor should be consulted in matters such as described above.

God has blessed Immanuel Baptist Church with members who have many talents and skills. Most are willing to share time and talents with a widow in need. However, to profit from this abundant resource, the servant-leader must be willing to utilize members of the church. To work properly with volunteers and to engage them in meaningful ministry opportunities the deacon should carefully consider the following:

- The servant-leader should be very familiar with the list of volunteers found in the ministry handbook. By getting the membership of Immanuel Baptist Church involved, ten times more can be accomplished, and many will be able to share in the wonderful blessing of serving others.
- Care must be taken not to over use one volunteer while overlooking another. By keeping and submitting

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<sup>109</sup>Suzanne K. Steinmetz, Aging, 224.

accurate reports during monthly deacons meetings, this should not be a problem.<sup>110</sup>

- It is very important to ensure that the volunteer's skills are well matched with the assigned task. Failure to do this may result in frustration and discouragement. It would behoove the servant-leader to do a follow-up call to the volunteer after the assignment is completed to assure all is well. This is a good time to say thank you for time given. An occasional card would also be appropriate and a good motivational tool to build the confidence and desire for ministry in the volunteer. Also, it is advisable to contact the widow to see if she is pleased with the work.
- The deacon must make sure that the assigned volunteer has all the equipment and supplies needed for the job. There will be instances in which materials and equipment will have to be acquired and placed on the job site. The servant-leader should consider using volunteers to assist in this area of ministry.
- An overlooked area of ministry in regards to the volunteer is visiting. In surveying Southern Baptist Widows in West Virginia, a heart-rending discovery was made. Seventy-five percent stated that friendly

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<sup>110</sup>See Appendix 5--the section on monthly report.

visitation was their greatest need.<sup>111</sup> The volunteer should be encouraged to stay a while after completing the assigned task and visit with the widow. These lonely women would rather have the volunteer pull up a chair and chat with them than complete the assigned project.

Volumes could be written on the subject of volunteerism. What the servant-leader must remember is that people who give their time work a forty-hour week (plus) and have many other interests and responsibilities. Patience must be exercised at all times when working with the volunteer.

Praise will go a long way! Also, saying thank you to those who assist a widow is very important and must not be overlooked.

#### Ministry Handbook

The handbook, A Manual for Ministry to Widows of the Immanuel Baptist Church,<sup>112</sup> serves dual functions. First, it gives vital information concerning the ministry to widows. Secondly, it is a place to keep a variety of records such as: information about widows (personal information, funeral preparations, journaling, etc.); records of contacts made; a list of all active volunteers within the church; etc. A proper understanding and use of this document will greatly

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<sup>111</sup>See Appendix 2

<sup>112</sup>See Appendix 5

enhance the ministry to widows. The following paragraphs briefly explain the different sections of the ministry handbook

**Introduction:** This section has a special word from the pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church to the servant-leaders. Its purpose is to reaffirm the biblical mandate of caring for the widows and their commitment to the ministry. It states, "To neglect your responsibility in serving your assigned widows is to abandon your ministry as deacon. May God confirm in your heart the seriousness of this most sacred calling."

Also found in this section are special instructions that will help the deacon have an effective ministry. Suggestions about communication and elements of proper care are discussed. Though the suggestions are covered in more detail in the lessons found at the end of the handbook, this gives the servant-leader a general overview of important specifics to get him started on the right track. Carefully studying the handbook will help the deacon have a successful and rewarding ministry with their widows.

**Miscellaneous:** Under this section, the servant-leader will discover an assortment of helpful and indispensable materials. The first item is the deacons' assignments--the widows that are assigned to him. Also, a list of all the widows in the church is provided on the second page of this section.

The next page shows the results of the most recent widows' evaluation form. Each widow is asked to honestly critique the ministry to widows. This gives the deacons an idea of how the widows perceive the ministry and if there are any questions or concerns. The following page is a sample of the "Widow's Evaluation Form."

A sample letter is found next which is to be used as a guide in corresponding with the widow. The deacon is asked to write a letter of introduction during the month of October to acquaint the widow with the ministry and her deacon. It should be noted that frequent use of the mail is advised as an excellent way to communicate care and concern. Widows really look forward in receiving mail and appreciate any correspondence the deacon sends.

The final page is a sample of the "Special Talents Form." Numerous members of Immanuel Baptist Church have completed this form in order to be placed on the volunteer list for helping widows. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter under the section entitled "Skills."

**Widows:** There are five major sections--one section for each widow. Each of the five sections is divided into three segments.

The first segment is the "Information Sheet." This form covers such things as: name, address, phone number, social security number, hobbies, talents, favorite foods and flower, etc.; names and ages of children; information

concerning relatives; and several general questions dealing with spiritual matters. This form should be completed during the first initial visit.

The next page encompasses questions regarding "Funeral Arrangements." The deacon should be cautious about being blunt and to the point in completing this form. The best and most effective way of gaining information for funeral arrangements is through casual conversation. It may take several visits to fill out the form. However, this approach will not be offensive to the widow.

The "Journal Entry" is a place designed for the servant-leader to keep notes and thoughts concerning widows. It is a good idea to make an entry each time communication is made or a task is accomplished by a volunteer. This will aid in filling out the monthly report for the regular deacons' meeting. Also, this enables the servant-leader to keep a prayer log on his widows for his personal quiet time.

**Skills:** This section begins with a "key" of the major talents/skills. For example, a carpenter is number one; a person with electrical skills is number six, and so on. Every skill listed on this page is associated with a number. On the next several pages, members' skills and available times are charted. The servant-leader can quickly locate members with a particular skill needed to assist in a ministry project for a widow. The deacon can find assistance for just about any major task. This will enable the

servant-leader to effectively use the whole congregation in ministering to the widows. The list is updated once a year by having the membership complete the *Special Talents Form*.

**Reports:** Reports are in twelve segments that begin with October and go through September of the following year. Monthly reports are to be copied before the deacons' meeting and given to the pastor. Servant-leaders will also use the information on this form to assist them in sharing during the deacons' meeting concerning ministry activities and volunteers used. This ensures accountability. In addition to this, the pastor will be kept informed as to how the sheep are being cared for and what is being accomplished.

**Lessons:** It is important that the servant-leader be trained for ministry. This section covers mini lessons that will help teach the deacon concerning the various facets of ministry to the widow.<sup>113</sup>

#### Training the Servant-Leader for Ministry to Widows

Jesus was keen on training His disciples. In the Gospel of Mark the Lord states, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). Jesus taught a small dedicated group of men how to draw the net. In another area of Scripture the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray as John taught his disciples how to

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<sup>113</sup>See chapter 6 for a more detailed description of each lesson.



pray (Luke 11:1). He gave them the "Lord's Prayer." Without question, training was a vital part in establishing a successful ministry as seen in the life of the disciples. Hence, servant-leaders must be equipped to be able to effectively minister to the special needs of the elderly women who have lost their spouse.

Like any aspect of ministry, training is vital for an efficient and productive ministry. Training for ministry to widows is provided through an initial *Mini Training Seminar*. Also, monthly meetings afford opportunities for continuous education.

Conducting a "mini training seminar" was an important meeting in helping the deacons to understand and embrace the ministry to widows. The deacons and pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church spent a weekend together to discuss ministries and direction for the church. One area of discussion and training was the ministry to widows. This initial training session set forth the logic and reason behind the ministry to widows.<sup>114</sup> The biblical and cultural rationale for ministry was reviewed. Dialogue was encouraged. The seminar progressed toward a time of commitment whereby each deacon present made a pledge to serve widows in the church. One thing is certain: if deacons are truly in tune with the Spirit, they will grasp

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<sup>114</sup>A revised lesson is found in Appendix 4.

the biblical mandate and the privilege of ministering to those who have lost their spouse.

Though occasional seminars are invaluable, there also must be regular times of instruction. Continuous training is provided during each monthly deacons' meeting for the express purpose of developing effective ministers. The better equipped the servant-leader is the more efficient and effective he will be in ministering to the needs of the widow.

The following is a list and description of lessons covered over the course of the year during the deacons' monthly business meetings. They are placed in the back of the ministry handbook called A Manual for Ministry to Widows of the Immanuel Baptist Church:<sup>115</sup>

1) *How to Use this Manual* (This covers some important instructions on how to use the manual/workbook.)

2) *Ministering to the Spirit* (Practical ways to minister to the spirit are addressed in this unique lesson.)

3) *Understanding Loneliness* (One of the greatest areas of concern is the loneliness of widows. This lesson will help the servant-leader understand how he can best minister to the lonely widow.)

4) *Areas of Caution* (As in any ministry, there are certain precautions and possible trouble areas that the

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<sup>115</sup>See Appendix 5 for lessons.

servant-leader must be conscious of in serving the elderly widow.)

5) *Twelve Tips to Demonstrate Care* (These are some very practical and creative ways in doing ministry that communicate warmth and love.)

6) *Special Issues Concerning Widows* (There are special concerns that widows have which are addressed in this lesson. Concerns include: Security, safety, sickness, and sensitivity.)

7) *House Maintenance Concerns* (Many widows struggle to exist in their homes. This lesson is designed to help the servant-leader be on the lookout for maintenance concerns in and around the widow's home.)

8) *Hospital Visitations* (A lot of mistakes are made by the novice when visiting a person in the hospital. This segment instructs the deacon on how to properly do hospital visitation.)

9) *Working With Volunteers* (It is vital that deacons know how to work with members who have volunteered their talent and skills. If this section is followed, much frustration can be avoided and productivity increased.)

10) *The Finances of Widows* (A sensitive area is that of finances. Pride many times blocks an elderly widow from asking for assistance. This page gives some concrete suggestions on how to deal with the finances of widows without embarrassing them.)

### Implementing the Ministry to Widows

The call of every believer is to tell others about Christ, but it does not stop here. Keep in mind that Christians must be committed to both the "great commission" and the "great commandment." It goes far beyond proclaiming the gospel. The servant-leaders of Immanuel Baptist Church are also commissioned to love God with all their being and to love others. Frank R. Tillapaugh says it best: "We must minister to the whole person if we are to minister the whole gospel. More and more people in Bible-believing churches are becoming uncomfortable with merely saving the soul."<sup>116</sup> There must be balance--a holistic approach. The church is called to minister to the whole man. The deacon must remember this as he works with his widows. The needs are broad and varied. Servant-leaders must stand ready to embrace opportunities to minister to the widow.

The initial contact made to widows is important. The very first step the servant-leader must make is to send a letter to each of his assigned widows.<sup>117</sup> This correspondence will introduce the widow to their deacon (especially if he is a new deacon), and make her aware of this special service ministry. The letter closes with a promise of a future visit. This kind of correspondence should go out

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<sup>116</sup>Frank R. Tillapaugh, Unleashing the Church (Ventura: Regal Books, 1978), 59.

<sup>117</sup>See Appendix 5

each year to reacquaint the widow with her servant-leader and to communicate a fresh commitment for the new year. Within two weeks of the letter, a visit should follow. This visit sets the stage for future ministry.

In making the initial visit, one must use his own judgment as to whether to call ahead or just pop in unannounced. At some point an explanation of the ministry should be shared with each assigned widow. They need to know (or be refreshed) of what is available to them through the ministry, and to understand how to get in contact with their deacon. This may even be a good time to complete the information sheet on the widow.

It is a good idea for the deacon to contact family members of each of his widows in order to introduce himself and to alert them of his plans of ministry for the new year. This can be done by letter, phone, or visit. The deacon must be sure to express to the family specific needs that he may witness, giving them opportunity to respond. It is good that the deacon give the family his phone number in case they want to contact him.

The servant-leader may make a number of visits before earning the right to serve. Widows are not apt to open up their hearts and share needs until they are convinced that the servant-leader truly cares. This writer has discovered through experience that widows will share their concerns only after a number of visits. In other words, effective

ministry will occur after a relationship is established. The servant-leader must plan to invest time for this.

After a need is disclosed or discovered, there are specific steps to take in order to meet that need. The following outlines the general procedure in meeting the needs of widows.

One of the key objectives in ministering to widows is being a catalyst in getting family members involved in caring for their own. In the context of caring for widows, the Bible states:

But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God . . .  
.. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:4,8).

In the event that members of the widow's family are not Christians the deacon still should make them aware of the needs. Most siblings would be open and respectful to a sincere appeal for assistance in regards to their widowed mother. There are cases where the children are not aware of needs because their mother refuses to disclose them. Also, there will be times when assistance from the family is not feasible or available. The deacon should be prepared to call upon church members to assist him with any project.

When assistance is needed, it is the primary desire and preference of the elderly widow that adult children take

care of them.<sup>118</sup> One important mission of the servant-leader is to communicate on a regular basis to the family members regarding concerns of the widow and ministry activities. This is why it is very important that the deacon get the information on the family members during his initial visit. Also, it is essential that the adult children be regularly encouraged to be a service provider.

If the family has been contacted and will not or cannot respond (may be living at a distance), then action by the church should be considered. If it is monetary or a crisis, the pastor and deacon body should be notified to seek for an appropriate solution. Remember, according to 1 Timothy 5:4 the children are first to be given opportunity to help their widowed mother financially. If it is something other than financial, the deacon can either enlist the help of the family, take care of the need himself, or secure the help of a church member(s). In the event that a member is used, there should be follow-up to assure the work has been accomplished. The deacon should alert the widow of the name of the volunteer (and time if known) who will be assisting her with the project. She should be instructed to call her deacon when the work is done. Be sure to ask questions to see if she is satisfied with the completed work and to discern if there are additional problems. It is

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<sup>118</sup>Cicirelli, Helping Elderly Parents, 161.

important to document the kind of work performed, time spent, and the name(s) of the volunteer(s) doing the work.

One critical point must be stated: whenever the servant-leader agrees to do something for his widow, he must see it through to completion (this will be discussed further in another chapter). Too many times deacons are discredited by saying they will do something for their widow and it is never realized.



## CHAPTER 4

### ENHANCING THE MINISTRY TO WIDOWS

The ministry to widows does not have to stop with just assistance around the home or occasional visits. There are many creative things that can be done to bring joy and happiness into their lives. The following are suggestions to add a little spice and life to the ministry to widows.

#### Social Events

The servant-leaders of the church would do well to occasionally plan an event for the entire ministry to widows. Most widows love to socialize and be the center of attention. There are many creative ways to bring widows together for a time of fun and fellowship. For example, the deacons could invite the widows to the church for a time of fun, food, and relaxation. Many exciting things can take place during this special time of fellowship:

- Several Widows can share testimonies of what their deacons mean to them
- Special guest speaker addressing a need or issue concerning widows
- An inspirational message by the pastor
- The children's choir to share in song

- Interesting games
- Corsage given to each widow
- Food prepared using widows' recipes
- Learning to create a craft
- Special card from the widow's deacon at each place setting
- Dinner play

Deacons inviting widows to their homes to share a meal is another way of building relationships and ministering to them. Care should be taken concerning the menu serving low sodium and digestible foods. Also, involving deacons' wives and children in this event will be a blessing to the family. Sharing family photographs and children getting to know the widows can be the beginning of a grandmother kind of relationship. The blessings that come from this intimate time of fellowship cannot be measured.

#### Twelve Tips to Demonstrate Care

There are numerous ways that servant-leaders can demonstrate care or express love to their widows. Below are twelve expressions of love and care; however, the sky is the limit, so one should be creative.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>A wealth of ideas on things one can do to show care and love is found in a book called If There's Anything I Can Do. Everything from letter writing to hospital tips can be found in the pages of this wonderful little book. Susan McClelland, If There's Anything I Can Do (Gainesville, Florida: Triad Publishing Company, 1990).

- 1) Send a **card** on her birthday or while on vacation.
- 2) Take her out to **lunch** or bring lunch to her house.
- 3) Call her for the express purpose of **prayer**.
- 4) **Remember** by card or phone the anniversary of spouse's death; or plant a memorial tree in the widow's yard in memory of deceased spouse; etc.
- 5) Take a Saturday morning to do several **projects** like cleaning out gutters or raking leaves.
- 6) Have your children bake **cookies** and then deliver them.
- 7) Bring her some vegetables out of the garden.
- 8) Give a **gift** handcrafted by the deacon's family.
- 9) **Shovel** walks and stay in close communication during snow storms.
- 10) Make a special point to **greet** widows in the parking lot of the church or in her Sunday School class Sunday morning.
- 11) **Invite** a widow home after church for homemade ice-cream.
- 12) Make her feel special with a corsage or **flowers** on Mothers' Day. (Remember balance!)

The above suggestions are tangible ways of expressing love and care to the widow. With a little mental effort, one can come up with hundreds of creative ways to demonstrate love.

The servant-leader must be reminded of the special honor that he has to care for and love his widows. It is a

great privilege to serve these women who have lost their spouses. This is a vital ministry that is pleasing to God.

#### The Three T's for an Effective Ministry

The servant-leader must recognize the priority of service. The widow is faced with an assortment of needs that range from physical to spiritual. Inherent in every healthy adult is the desire to achieve and make some kind of lasting contribution in society. There are also needs of affection, inclusion, safety, stability, mobility, health care, food, housing, and clothing. It is apparent that the ministry to the widow must take on a holistic approach. The one ministering to the widow must understand that there is a hierarchy of needs. Food, housing, clothing, health care, and mobility are at the bottom of the list. A sense of fulfillment, esteem, affection, and inclusion is at the top.<sup>120</sup>

The three T's are areas of ministry that must not be overlooked. It is vital that the servant-leader take his ministry beyond just doing projects and making an occasional visit or call. Ministry must reach the hearts of these dear ladies.

The first "T" represents touching. Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange

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<sup>120</sup>Donald F. Clingan, Aging Persons in the Community of Faith (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1976), 9.

County, California, writes, "Our world is filled with lonely people who are starving for the affirmation of a loving touch."<sup>121</sup> Widows need a hug or a warm embrace. One author has said, "If our studies are accurate, the greatest need for most widows is for human contact."<sup>122</sup> Though wisdom must be used, touching, hugging and embracing are healthy and needful ways to communicate love. The servant-leader must not be afraid to hold a widow's hand or to give a kiss on the cheek. When greeting widows on Sunday morning at the church, they thrive on a warm embrace. A touch will go a long way in ministering to the heart of a widow.

The Second "T" stands for telling. The widow needs to hear sincere encouragement and praise coming from the lips of her deacon. To speak well of a craft project that the widow completed or to mention her styled hair breathes life into a widow. However, beyond this, they need to be told continually by the deacon that they are loved, and backed up with actions. There is something magical about telling people that you love them! The widow is no exception. If genuinely expressed, this second "T" will capture the heart of a widow.

The final "T" represents time. Like any relationship, time is a key factor in conveying concern, care and

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<sup>121</sup>Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 214.

<sup>122</sup>Peterson and Briley, Widows & Widowhood, 44.

love. The deacon can know his widow at a deeper level only by their spending some hours together. Also, it is virtually impossible for a servant-leader to understand the needs and concerns of the widow without some form of visitation. An occasional phone call or several visits in the course of a year will not accomplish much. To be able to invest quality and quantity time, each deacon is given only four or five widows.

#### Family Involvement

One of the most beneficial things that a servant-leader can do for the widow is to involve his wife and children in ministry. The elderly love to be around a caring family. They cherish the hugs and kisses that the little ones give so freely. This is a perfect opportunity for a deep relationship to develop, with the possibility of a deacon's child adopting her as a grandmother.

Get the children and wife involved through crafts or baked goods. A tremendous treat for widows is for the deacon's wife and children to present around Christmas time a gift of baked goods or crafts that are homemade. To make the ministry to widows a family affair adds spice to a marriage and family.

#### Hospital Visitation

There will be times when widows will be admitted to a hospital. Though they come for rest and recovery, a widow

can literally become exhausted from the visits of sincere family members and friends. Listed below are a few helpful hints to assist the servant-leader in avoiding the errors and mistakes of most who visit in the hospitals. These practical suggestions (many gleaned from this writer's experience and some from pastoral classes in seminary) will enhance the deacon's time that he spends with the recovering widow.

1) When doing hospital visitation, always carry a Bible. If the widow has been in the hospital for an extended stay, bring a weekly church bulletin so she can stay informed. Be sure to have a Gospel tract that can be shared with a lost family member or with other patients in the room.

2) Keep hospital visits *short*. Five to seven minutes is ample time to convey concern and best wishes.

3) The *timing* of a visit is very important. For example, the deacon should not visit during meal times. In the event that a meal is delivered during the visit, it is a good idea to end the visit shortly thereafter. Before leaving, consider sharing a prayer for her meal. Remember that proper nutrition and rest are vital for the widow's recovery. "Food and sleep are important factors in the recovery of a sick person, and the pastor's (deacon's) visits should not interfere with either."<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>Richard K. Young, The Pastor's Hospital Ministry (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 60.

4) Demonstrate *courtesy* by lightly knocking on the door before entering the room. If the door is closed, the servant-leader may want to check with a nurse. Never sit on the patient's bed. "Always let the patient take the lead in shaking hands."<sup>124</sup>

5) Use *positive* and encouraging words. For example, if she is in for colon surgery, the deacon should not tell her how his cousin died from the operation. One should choose words wisely.

6) Many wonderful statements can be said during a visit, but nothing is as powerful and life changing as the Word of God. Take time to read *Scripture*. Several possible Scripture readings are: Psa. 73:25-28; 103:1-14; 121:1-8; 146:1-10; 147:1-11; Matt. 6:25-33; Phil. 4:6-7.

7) Share a *prayer* for encouragement and healing. If it is not a private room, pray also for the person in the next bed. Many in the hospital never have a pastor or deacon to pray with them.

8) *Gifts* are always appreciated. Flowers, stuffed animals, cards and magazines are niceties that a widow loves. If led, the deacon will want to ask if there is anything she needs or needs done. Though most widows will answer no, the kind suggestion will be greatly appreciated.

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 57.



## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATING THE MINISTRY TO WIDOWS

It is important to review and evaluate what is being accomplished through the ministry to widows. Discussed below are several ways of doing this.

#### Monthly Deacon's Report

Each month deacons are required to bring a report concerning ministry activities with their widows.<sup>125</sup> The report covers the various ministry activities and projects accomplished for the month. There is a place to write the time and date of each project and the number of visits made. Volunteers used are also listed. This will enable the pastor to tally the number of hours and projects for each volunteer. It is also a way of practicing accountability and checking on the progress of ministry. A volunteer activity sheet is given to each deacon during the monthly deacons' meeting that they might know who is being used in the church and who is not. This keeps volunteers from being called upon too much and helps spread the tasks over a wider spectrum of helpers.

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<sup>125</sup>See Appendix 5 for a sample report.

The fact that deacons must report on activities with their widows helps keep them accountable and motivated to work. The servant-leader who is lax in ministering to the widows may be struggling with personal issues. It is unacceptable for a deacon to say that he does not have time. During busy months, he can at least call or write his widows. Also, needs can be forwarded to volunteers in the church who are anxious to be involved. The pastor may want to assist in some visitation with deacons who struggle with accomplishing ministry goals.

#### Semi-Annual Questionnaire to Widows

Another way to judge the effectiveness of the ministry is to ask widows to complete an evaluation sheet.<sup>126</sup> The main objective is not so much to check-up on the deacon, but to weigh the effectiveness of the ministry. This is also an excellent way to get a reading on how the widows feels about the ministry.

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<sup>126</sup>See Appendix 5

## CHAPTER 6

### AREAS OF CAUTION IN MINISTERING TO WIDOWS

There are a number of problems that can arise when acting as a "Good Samaritan." The servant-leader must be cognizant of the many pitfalls in serving others. The following are just a few areas of caution to be aware of in dealing with the widow.

Lawsuits are so common that people are paralyzed to assist one in need in fear of being sued. Accusations of all descriptions can be hurled against one who wishes only to be a "good Samaritan." Accidents can take place when helping others. It is advisable for the leadership of the church to inquire about state laws concerning the volunteer's legal rights. It is also advisable to check with the church's insurance provider to see the nature of coverage for volunteer activity. However, despite the precautions, there are always risks taken when assisting another. Using good judgment and proper coverage coupled with faith is the best that one can do. Below are a few areas of caution that the servant-leader should always keep in mind when serving. These will help to assure a fruitful and joyful ministry.

### Promise Keeper

When the deacon promises a widow that he is going to do something, he must make sure it is done. If an emergency arises and the deacon cannot fulfill his promise, contact the widow immediately. It is essential to remember to reschedule a time suitable for the deacon and widow. Being a promise keeper will be beneficial in building a solid relationship with the widow and bring glory to the name of the Lord.

### Over Dependency

The deacon must be careful concerning over dependency of the widow. There will be occasions when a widow will lean on the servant-leader more than necessary. One symptom of this would be the widow calling her deacon every day (throughout the day) concerning every situation. One must be firm and loving if this takes place. A man can be emotionally and physically spent by a widow who becomes too dependent on him. Potentially, one widow could burn out a servant-leader in a matter of a few weeks if allowed to be overly dependent. There are times when a widow may be demanding. Children of elderly parents have experienced this as well as servant-leaders.<sup>127</sup> The wise deacon will know when to be firm by saying no. To jump at every beck and call will cause burnout and frustration. The deacon

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<sup>127</sup>Cicirelli, Helping Elderly Parents, 189.

must be honest, yet thoughtful and tactful for a healthy relationship to exist. Starting right from the very beginning will help alleviate problems in the future.

#### Balance

Some widows require more attention than others--but strive for balance. Though a widow does not appear to have a need, continual contact and acts of care are vital. Do not forget that most widows are a part of the communication grapevine. They compare "apples for apples."

#### Confidentiality

Confidentiality cannot be overly stressed when dealing with widows. They must be free to express openly their hearts. If they know the deacon is one to keep secrets, they will want to confide in him. This is a privilege, yet, at the same time, an awesome responsibility. If a deacon fails in this area, he will greatly thwart the work of ministry to widows and damage his testimony.

#### Respect and Patience

The aging process has a way of making a person inflexible and headstrong. Though it is difficult at times, have patience with those who seem unreasonable. Always treat widows with the utmost of respect and dignity. Though the deacon may not agree with their line of reasoning, give them the right to their opinion. This ministry is not

focused on changing the widow (that is God's responsibility), but on loving and caring for her. The coldest of hearts can be melted through love.

### Beliefs and Stereotypes

Beliefs are assertions about what is true that are accepted as true. To believe that retirement causes illness means to accept this idea as being true and to act as if it were true. Stereotypes are usually composites of several beliefs about a category of people such as middle-age person, widows, or the disabled. Some beliefs and stereotypes are essentially accurate descriptions of reality and others are not.<sup>128</sup>

The servant-leader must strive to understand each widow, letting go of any false stereotypes. "Many social stereotypes bear no relationship to any research evidence, or to any evidence at all, and some stereotypes may be contrary to fact, experience, or logic."<sup>129</sup> Older people are not as helpless as some would think. The elderly are capable of learning new things. Many desire to expand their intellectual horizon. Other proper beliefs are: they are productive; they are not helpless; many have a greater love for the Lord and religion than the young; etc.<sup>130</sup> One of the greatest untapped resources in the world is the elderly person. They still have much to offer society. According to a survey that was filled out by Southern Baptist widows

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<sup>128</sup>Suzanne K. Steinmetz, Aging, 258.

<sup>129</sup>David L. Decker, Social Gerontology, 106.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 260.

in West Virginia, they indicated that they still have something to contribute to the church and society.<sup>131</sup> In a real sense, widows have tremendous potential and is a sources of strength and stability.

#### Ministry Inconsistency

It is understood that those who accept the role of deacon at the Immanuel Baptist Church agree to dedicate their lives to the task of ministry to widows. Yet, few today take seriously the commitment of being a spiritual leader in the church. One of the greatest problems in the church is complacency and ministry inconsistency.

Many deacons begin with good intentions to serve the congregation. Nonetheless, when life gets a little hectic, the called and supposedly dedicated leader disappears. Each deacon of Immanuel Baptist Church has verbally and in writing agreed to minister to his widows. However, there is constant prodding and motivation to keep the deacons consistent in their ministry performance. At times, it seems as if the ministry to widows is a drudgery rather than a privilege. Letters and pep talks sometimes do not seem to be enough. As with any ministry, it is slow going and has many frustrations. Nevertheless, the deacons in recent weeks have performed extremely well and the commitment level has deepened.

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<sup>131</sup>See Appendix 2.

Two-By-Two

Finding the time and energy to visit a widow can sometimes be difficult. Working alone enables the deacon to fit visits into his busy schedule. However, the servant-leader must use extreme caution and good judgment concerning visiting alone. It is advisable and encouraged to take someone along whenever possible. This affords others the opportunity to minister to the needs of a widow and gives reasonable protection against false accusations. Jesus sent his disciples out by two's and it only stands to reason that this should be the practice of those involved in the ministry to widows whenever possible.



## CONCLUSION

The church is commissioned to bear the burdens of the widow. Williams B. Oglesby, Jr. says it best:

The bearing of burdens is not something done simply for others; rather it is a corporate venture done with others, since each man will have to bear his own load (Gal 6.5). Every member of the laos of God participates to some degree or other in pastoral ministry, just as each is the recipient of pastoral care. It is a process whereby we listen with gentleness and patience, speak with truth and love, hold out a hand in time of loneliness and fear, sit in silence through the long night watches, and rejoice when the shadow of distress is dissolved in the warm sun of deliverance.<sup>132</sup>

There is so much to be said concerning ministry to widows. In the opinion of this writer, one of the greatest witnesses to the world is a body of believers ministering to one another and bearing each other's burdens. The Bible states, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). For the church to adopt a ministry to serve precious widows in the congregation will have tremendous impact on the local community. After all, the thrust and focus of the church is reaching

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<sup>132</sup>William B. Oglesby, Biblical Themes for Pastoral Care (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 40.

the world for Christ. The ministry to widows is just another vehicle to accomplish that goal. When the love of Jesus is demonstrated before mankind, they will ask the question, "Why do you do what you do?" Failure to love and care for the widow will have a negative and adverse effect on society as well. Therefore, the servant-leaders have an awesome responsibility to reflect Jesus through their ministry. The Bible states, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

The ancient words of Ignatius of Antioch to the Bishop of Smyrna should be heeded by every church and Christian in the twentieth century, "Widows must not be neglected. After the Lord, you must be their guardian."<sup>133</sup> May this study be instrumental in helping pastors and servant-leaders to answer the God-given challenge of watching over and ministering to the widows. To God be the glory. Great things He has done! . . . Great things He will do through his faithful servants.

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<sup>133</sup>William M. Clements, ed. Ministry With the Aging (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 40.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO PASTOR CONCERNING QUESTIONNAIRE

SENIOR PASTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

# Immanuel Baptist Church

264 New Hope Road, Princeton, WV 24740 ❖ (304) 425-0651

**PLEASE**

⇒ **Do Not Trash or Stash**

Dear Fellow Pastor:

I am presently working on a post graduate degree having selected the topic of widows as my thesis. The enclosed forms, *Senior Pastor Questionnaire* and *Widow Questionnaire*, are research instruments that will help me determine what is presently being done to assist widows in the Southern Baptist churches of West Virginia. The Bible is crystal clear concerning our responsibility to the widow. James 1:27 states, "This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." Another strong biblical injunction regarding the care of older women in the church is found in Acts 6:1-6. In this passage, the church selected seven men to minister to a group of widows that were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. Without question, the church has been commissioned to minister to the widow. The forthcoming governmental cutbacks and the increase in the elderly population is a clarion call to the Body of Christ to take hold of their God given responsibility.

Please take 10 minutes and fill out the *Senior Pastor Questionnaire*. For your convenience, a self-addressed stamped envelope is provided for you to mail the completed questionnaire back to me. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or write.

In addition to the *Senior Pastor Questionnaire*, I have enclosed a form to be given to several widows in your church. The following are guidelines for distribution of the questionnaire:

- Please select two widows to complete the *Widow Questionnaire*.
- Looking at your widows alphabetically, choose the first two widows in the alphabet who are physically capable of filling out the form. This will stimulate a more random selection.
- After explaining the project to the widows, please give them a questionnaire and a self-addressed stamped envelope.
- Ask them to fill out the questionnaire and mail it.

I greatly appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to assist me in this project. It would have been impossible to gather this kind of data without your generous help. I hope to publish the results in our state paper in the near future. Again, thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rick Sadler, Pastor  
 Immanuel Baptist Church  
 264 New Hope Road  
 Princeton, West Virginia 24740

# Senior Pastor Questionnaire

## ❖ Personal Information ❖

The purpose of this instrument is for gathering information concerning widows and the care afforded them in Southern Baptist Churches of West Virginia. Please answer all questions as objectively and candidly as possible. The answers should reflect the way things actually are not the way you would like them to be.

Your Age: \_\_\_\_\_ How long in present ministry: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years in ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Education</b>  Circle the Highest Grade or Degree Obtained	<i>Grade:</i> 9 • 10 • 11 • 12
	<i>College:</i> 1 • 2 • 3 • 4
	<i>Seminary:</i> MA • MRE • MDiv • ThM • DMin • ThD • PhD
	<i>Other:</i> _____

- I have a parent who is widowed.     My spouse has a parent who is widowed.  
 I am a bi-vocational pastor.     I am a native of West Virginia

**On a scale from 1-8, one being the highest, prioritize the following areas of ministry. Do not put the ideal but what is actually taking place in your ministry.**

Sermon Preparation: \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Prayer Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Outreach: \_\_\_\_\_

Visiting Homebound, Widows & Elderly: \_\_\_\_\_ Administration: \_\_\_\_\_

Problem Solving: \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_ Counseling: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**On an average week, how much time do you spend in the homes of elderly widowed members.**

- None     1-2 hours     3-5 hours     5-10 hours     10 - 20 hours     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## ❖ *Facts About Your Church & Ministry* ❖

When was the church founded? \_\_\_\_\_ The association the church is in: \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Please (✓) all paid staff positions which is applicable to your church.</i>							
<b>Full-Time</b>	Sr. Pastor	Associate	Music	Education	Evangelism	Youth	Elderly
<b>Part-Time</b>	Sr. Pastor	Associate	Music	Education	Evangelism	Youth	Elderly

<i>Please (✓) the size of your congregation</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> 10-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-100	<input type="checkbox"/> 100-200	<input type="checkbox"/> 200-400	<input type="checkbox"/> 400-600
<input type="checkbox"/> 600-800	<input type="checkbox"/> 800-1000	<input type="checkbox"/> 1000-1500	<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-2000	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**What percentage would be elderly (60 plus):**

10%    15%    25%    35%    45%    55%    Over 60%: \_\_\_\_\_

**In reference to the elderly (60 plus), what percentage would be widows?**

5%    10%    15%    20%    25%    30%    Over 35%: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approximately how many widowed members are living alone in their home? \_\_\_\_\_ Living with relatives? \_\_\_\_\_ In a Nursing Home? \_\_\_\_\_**

**Do you have an organized effort of ministering to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the widows in your church?**

Yes    No

**Please rate from 1-10 your personal efforts in ministering to the needs of the widows (① being very little effort & ⑩ being a great effort).**

①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   ⑥   ⑦   ⑧   ⑨   ⑩

**What are some of the needs and problems of the widows in your church?  
(Select all that apply):**

Loneliness    Assistance in the home (i.e. snow removal; repairs; etc.)    Transportation  
 Financial    Physical    Grief    Fear    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Is your facility designed with the elderly in mind? (i.e. elevator; hearing aids in the pews; large print Bibles & lesson books available; designated parking; etc.)**

Yes    No

**Would you say that your deacons are true servants (διακονος) of the people?**

Yes    No

**As a whole, do your deacons minister to the personal needs of members?**

Yes    No

**Below, indicate the following ways your deacons are involved in ministry:**

- Family ministry plan?                       Yes    No
- Regular visitation program?               Yes    No
- Ministry to the shut-ins?                     Yes    No
- Nursing Home Ministry?                     Yes    No
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall, how do you feel your church is doing in taking care of the widows?**

Poorly    Fair    Good    Very Good    Excellent

**Would you be interested in a teaching module that would train the deacons in ministering to the widows in your church?**

Yes    No

**Do the non-elderly members seek for opportunities to fellowship and/or serve the widows in the church?**    Yes    No



With the anticipated cutbacks in governmental assistance to the elderly, do you believe that in the future the church will have to assume a greater responsibility in taking care of widows?  Yes  No

As pastor, what age group do you tend to gravitate toward?

- 4-12       13-19       20-37       38-54       55 & Older

What are some areas the church should assist the widows in:

- Financial       Visitation       Service Tasks       Special Ministries  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments:*

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*Thank you for taking the time to help me with this ministry project. If I can ever be of assistance to you in the future, do not hesitate to contact me. May God richly bless you, your family and ministry.*

**Please mail the questionnaire to:**

Richard W. Sadler  
 Immanuel Baptist Church  
 264 New Hope Road  
 Princeton, West Virginia 24740

## **Results**

### **Senior Pastor Questionnaire**

The *Senior Pastor Questionnaire* is an instrument designed to help gain a greater understanding of the widow and her needs as seen through the eyes of the local Southern Baptist pastor in West Virginia. The survey reveals what churches are presently doing to meet the needs of the bereaved elderly widow. Of the 160 churches in the state, 45 pastors (28%) completed and returned the questionnaire. The findings proved to be enlightening, confirming and in some cases alarming.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
1	The average age of pastors completing the questionnaire is 51 years old.	Perhaps older pastors are more sensitive to the needs of widows.
2	The average number of years in ministry is 21.	This is a seasoned group of pastors who filled out the survey drawing from years of pastoral experience.
3	14% of pastors finished high school; 38% have had between 1-4 years of college; and 48% have earned either a MA, MRE, MDiv, ThM, ThD, PHD. 31% of the pastors are bi-vocational.	Almost one-third of the pastors taking the survey are bi-vocational; it is expedient that assistance be given them in taking care of the widow's needs due to their limited time frame.
4	17% of the pastors have a parent who is widowed. 22% of the pastor's wives have a widowed parent.	A small percentage of pastors and their wives have a parent who is widowed. The advantage of having a widowed parent is the increased sensitivity that comes. Though not proven, it stands to reason that they would be more inclined to assist widows due to their empathy for those who have lost a spouse.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
5	<p>In the questionnaire 8 areas of ministry are listed for the pastor to prioritize. However, only four of the areas are listed below with their priority rating.</p> <p>The <u>lower</u> the number the higher the priority. Sermon preparation seems to rate highest on the list--2.5. Prayer is 2.8; outreach is 4.2; and visiting widows is 5.9.</p>	<p>As seen here and elsewhere in this report, in many instances widows have taken a back seat in being the recipient of ministry in the local church. Caring for the widow, which James 1:27 calls pure religion, does not seem very important in many churches. A reevaluation of ministry goals and objectives would be in order for most churches.</p>
6	<p>80% of pastors surveyed spend between 0-2 hours per week visiting widows. Several of those who put "0" hours either had no widows or just a few.</p> <p>Two pastor who put "0" hours have large churches and have others on the staff to make visits. Their answers have not been included in the figure below.</p> <p>Those who put "0" hours per week visiting have an average of 2.23 widows in their church.</p> <p>Those who put 1-2 hours per week for visiting widows have an average of 9.2 widows in the church. (Note: For the sake of a more accurate picture, the above figure did not include a church that has 294 widows of which 168 are living in their own homes.)</p>	<p>Pastors in small to medium churches have many hats to wear. Hence, they need assistance in the caring of widows. Bi-vocational pastors have even less time for one-on-one types of ministry.</p>

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
7	69% of the pastors stated that there is no organized effort to minister to widows in their church.	The need for an organize ministry to widows is evident and necessary.
8	Pastors were asked to rate from 1-10 their personal efforts in ministering to the needs of widows (1 being very little effort and 10 being a great effort). The mean was 4.95. In other words, pastors rate themselves as average in taking care of widows.	Before ministry to widows can be successful in the local church, the pastor must develop a sensitive heart for the older people. However, this does not mean that he must be the soul provider of assistance. He must lead others to take an interest.
9	The membership size of those congregations surveyed is as follows: * 10-50 members equals 30% of the congregations; * 50-100 equals 30% of the congregations; * 100-2400 equals 40% of the remaining congregations surveyed.	
10	The survey asked pastors what their understanding is concerning the needs among widows: * Loneliness = 86% * Assistance in & around the home = 64% * Transportation = 44% * Financial = 33% * Physical = 42% * Grief = 33% * Fear = 42%.	The pastors hit the target. The widow survey demonstrated one of their greatest needs being loneliness. The other great need is assistance around the home. The church has a great opportunity afforded them in ministering to the body of Christ.
11	Question: Is the church designed with the elderly in mind? 58% said yes.	Many churches need to examine their facilities and upgrade them to meet the needs of the elderly. Such things as accessible parking, hearing aids, etc. need to be considered.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
12	<p>Question: Would you say that your deacons are true servants of the people?</p> <p>56% of the pastors stated yes.</p>	<p>Almost half of the pastors do not see deacons as true servants. This is a serious problem that must be addressed.</p>
13	<p>Question: As a whole, do your deacons minister to the personal needs of members?</p> <p>58% of the pastors stated yes.</p>	
14	<p>Question: Overall, how do you feel your church is doing in taking care of the widows?</p> <p>56% stated poor to fair and 44% said good to excellent.</p>	
15	<p>Pastors were asked if they would be interested in a teaching module that would train the deacons in ministering to the widows.</p> <p>78% of the pastors stated yes.</p>	<p>This is an indication that there is a desire and need for assistance in this area of leadership training.</p>
16	<p>Question: Do the non-elderly members seek for opportunities to fellowship and/or serve the widows in the church?</p> <p>71% of the pastors stated yes.</p>	<p>This is a boon for establishing a ministry for widows. The believers' hearts are right; there must now be guidance and instruction.</p>

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
17	<p>Question: With the anticipated cutbacks in governmental assistance to the elderly, do you believe that in the future the church will have to assume a greater responsibility in taking care of the widows?</p> <p>84% of the pastors stated yes.</p>	<p>The vast majority of pastors are aware of the coming and inevitable governmental cutbacks. With this understanding, it should take very little to convince the congregation of the need to establish a ministry for widows.</p>
18	<p>The pastors were asked what age group do they gravitate toward.</p> <p>44% of the pastors stated that they gravitate toward the 55 year or older group.</p>	<p>This means that 56% of the pastors have a greater interest for the younger crowd. Hence, this may make it difficult for the establishment of a ministry to widows. A gym would most likely be considered before the church would install an elevator.</p>

#### Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

#	Special Comments Made by Pastors Who Completed the Questionnaire
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I am writing to encourage you in the good work you are doing in studying the needs of elderly men and women who have lost their spouse and now live in need of the support that only the Body of Christ is equipped to give.... I agree with you that this is and will become an important ministry in our churches in the very near future. At the moment not many of us are prepared to handle it."</li> <li>● "I do feel that we could and should as a church do a better job with our widows."</li> <li>● "Any inquiries to their individual situations (financial needs) is considered as prying and is not well received."</li> </ul>

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire	
#	Special Comments Made by Pastors Who Completed the Questionnaire (Continued)
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● "I have personally found that the greatest need in a widow's life seems to be working through the first two years after death of a husband. I have discovered that cards, visitation, phone calls . . . have been very fruitful."</li><li>● "We are in the process of organizing a specific ministry to widows through our deacon ministry. They are largely being overlooked in our church."</li><li>● "Part of the problem lies in the fact that the former pastor did 90% of this type of ministry."</li><li>● "I would like to know more about your research project."</li><li>● "We are always open to better ways of ministering. As (with) so many churches, we admit the elderly are usually next to last on priority. We love them and want to do better by them and for them."</li></ul>

APPENDIX 2

WIDOW QUESTIONNAIRE GIVEN TO WIDOWS IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST  
CHURCHES OF WEST VIRGINIA

RESULTS OF WIDOW QUESTIONNAIRE



## *Widow Questionnaire*

**Special Instructions:** The data from this questionnaire will be used to help West Virginia churches realize their responsibility in caring for the widow. Please answer the following questions as objectively and candidly as possible. Your immediate response will be greatly appreciated. God bless and thank you very much!

State your age: \_\_\_\_\_ How long has your spouse been deceased? \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been a member of your present church? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the name of the Baptist Association that your church is affiliated with: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated income per year:

- 2000-5000     5000-8000     8000-12000     12000-15000  
 15000-18000     18000-25000     25000-30000     30000 & Over

Do you support the church financially on a regular basis?     Yes     No

Do you live by yourself?     Yes     No

Where do you live?     Your Home     Government Subsidized Housing  
 Apartment     With Relatives     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If you reside in your home, how long have you lived there: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Number of Years)

Do you feel comfortable in calling upon your family for help?     Yes     No

Are there times when you feel that you are a burden:

- On the family?     Yes     No  
 On the church?     Yes     No  
 On society?     Yes     No

Do you feel that you still have something to contribute:

- To the society?     Yes     No  
 To the church?     Yes     No  
 To the family?     Yes     No

Do you experience times of loneliness?     Yes     No

*Widow Questionnaire* -- Page 2

Do you ever wish you had someone to talk to?  Yes  No

Do you sometimes feel misunderstood?  Yes  No

Being a widow, you are well aware of the frustrations, difficulties and fears of widowhood. With this in mind, answer the questions below:

(1) If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?

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(2) What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?

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When you talk to other widows, what seems to be their greatest need(s):  
(Check "✓" all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Help around the home such as doing repairs, raking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Visit       | leaves, cleaning gutters, etc.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | <input type="checkbox"/> Need a friendly visit (loneliness)                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:               | _____   |

Do you think that your widowed friends feel comfortable to call on the church for assistance.  Yes  No

Do you feel that it is the church's place to assist widows?  Yes  No

Would you personally desire some form of assistance?  Yes  No

If your answer is yes to the above question, what type of assistance would you desire most frequently? \_\_\_\_\_

How often does someone check to see if you are doing okay:

- Daily  Weekly  Monthly  Twice a year  Never

*Widow Questionnaire -- Page 3*

**Who usually checks on you? (Check "✓" all that apply.)**

- Family       Neighbor       Pastor       Church Member  
 Deacon       Another Widow       A Government Agency

**How often does the pastor visit or call you?**

- Daily     Weekly     Monthly     Twice a year     Never

**How often does a deacon visit or call you?**

- Daily     Weekly     Monthly     Twice a year     Never

**Let's suppose that you desire assistance from the church -- Do you feel you could call on: (Check "✓" all that apply)**

- Several members of the church       The Pastor  
 Deacons       Sunday School Teacher       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**When you die, are you positive that your future home will be in Heaven?**

- Yes       No       Not Sure

**Have you made funeral arrangements?  Yes     No**

**Have you considered what you want done during the funeral service (i.e. Scriptures read; hymns; pallbearers, preacher; etc.).  Yes     No**

**Do you feel that you are forgotten by the younger generation?  Yes     No**

**Do you sense younger people are not interested in what you think or believe about matters pertaining to the church?  Yes     No**

**Do you feel that your church genuinely loves and cares for you?  Yes     No**

**In what ways does the church demonstrate their love to you: \_\_\_\_\_**

**How does your family minister to your needs in the course of a week: \_\_\_\_\_**

*Please mail this questionnaire as soon as you finish to:*

Pastor Rick Sadler ❖ Immanuel Baptist Church ❖ 264 New Hope Road  
 Princeton, West Virginia 24740

**Results**  
**Widow Questionnaire**  
**Part A - SBC Churches in West Virginia**

This questionnaire was distributed to 160 Southern Baptist churches in West Virginia. Each pastor was given two *Widow Questionnaires* to distribute to widows in their congregation. In order to prevent the pastor from selecting favorite widows, he was instructed to give two questionnaires to widows who came first alphabetically. Of the 320 potential questionnaires received, 15% were returned. The first page of this instrument is distinctly different than those given to widows who live in the two Princeton high-rise apartment complexes. Please note the differences in the two instruments.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
1	The average age of the widow filling out the questionnaire is 72 years old.	Their age demonstrates the need for assistance in and around their home. Note: Widows tend to be anxious concerning maintenance of their dwelling.
2	The average time a spouse has been deceased is 12.75 years.	It appears that a ministry dealing with grief is not of utmost importance due to the length of time a spouse has been deceased. However, most widows still have moments of grief that occur years after the death of their husband. This is perfectly normal. The servant-leader must be aware of this and be willing to listen and encourage the widow during such episodes.
3	The average number of years widows have belonged to their present church is 19.	Those who completed the questionnaire are dedicated servants of the Lord. Most likely, they have been the mainstay in the church for many years.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
4	82% of widows have an income of 2,000 - 18,000 dollars.	This figure may mean that many widows do not have adequate resources to handle major repairs in and around their homes.
5	Almost every widow supports her church on a regular basis (92%).	Since widows are so faithful in ministering financially to the church, should the church also be faithful in ministering to their needs as well?
6	97% of widows live by themselves.	Another reason a servant-leader needs to assist and visit.
7	81% live in their own dwelling.	Many widows living in their home need assistance with maintenance and upkeep. This affords the church a wonderful opportunity to really get involved in ministering to the needs of these dear ladies.
8	The average number of years widows have been living in their homes is 28. It stands to reason that repairs are a constant item of concern for the widow.	The home represents many memories of past years. Independence is another significant factor concerning the widow. Many do best in a comfortable and familiar setting where they are free to make choices. Hence, living in their own home is very important.
9	Over 1/3 felt as if they were a burden on their families. However, the overwhelming majority felt that they were not a burden on society or their church.	Working with the widow's relatives is an important and necessary step in assisting them. Cases where the family refuse to help the widow are times of special ministry afforded the church.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis		
10	Widows were asked if they still feel that they had something to contribute to <b>Society, Church, and family</b> :	Widows are not ready to be put out to pasture. It would be well to tap the hidden resources of widows in the local church. Much can be gleaned from their experience and skills. Also, their willingness to contribute states that widows are still interested in the church, family and the world they live in.		
	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	<b>BLANK</b>
	S-81%		S-6%	S-13%
	C-98%		C-0%	C-2%
	F-96%		F-2%	F-2%
11	78% of widows experience times of loneliness.	This statistic communicates a urgent need of making more contacts with the widows in the church. Telephone calls and friendly visits are a part of caring and is greatly needed.		
12	71% wished they had someone to talk to.	There is a critical need to stay in touch with the widow.		
13	Half (50%) feel they are misunderstood at times.	The servant-leader needs to take time to listen and understand what the widow is trying to communicate.		
14	The greatest needs of widows are as follows: - Financial.....27% - Pastoral Visit.....35% - Transportation.....69% - Help in Home.....69% - Friendly Visit.....75%	Other than helping in the home, the percentages are almost identical to those taken in the elderly high-rise. Again, a critical concern, unlike living in an high-rise apartment, is helping around the home.		

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
15	The question was asked, "Do you think that your widow friends feel comfortable to call on the church for assistance?" 46% said Yes; 42% said No; 13% did not respond. Note: It is much easier for the widow to respond honestly when directed at another person than for themselves.	This type of question was asked to ascertain not their friend's heart but their own heart. The widow is more apt to be concerned for a widow friend than for herself. Many times a widow has difficulty in asking for help in fear of losing their independence. Again, this question was answered almost identically to the widows living in the high-rise.
16	The question was asked, "Do you feel that it is the church's place to assist widows?" 77% said Yes; 17% said No; 6% did not respond.	The church must listen seriously to what is said here and be ready to respond. Note: Compare this question with the one below (17). Which question reflects the true heart of widow?
17	The question was asked, "Do you personally desire some form of assistance?" 17% said Yes; 75% said No; 8% did not respond.	In comparison to the above (16), the widows recognized the need for the church to give to other widows but not to them personally.
18	The following are the times widows are checked on: 65% daily; 23% weekly; 2% monthly; 4% never; 6% no responses.	There seems to be an adequate network in place to watch over many of the widows.
19	77% percent have families checking on them on a regular basis. Also, 48% have neighbors checking on them and 25% have church members.	Being that the neighbors sometimes check on widows, it is a good idea for the deacon to contact the neighbors leaving his name and telephone number.
20	Pastoral visits of widows is as follows: 29% never; 15% weekly; 19% monthly; 8% twice a year; and some did not respond.	The pastor might want to beef up his efforts at visiting the widow.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
21	Deacon/elder visitation of widows is as follows: 60% never visit; 4% monthly; 4% daily; 8% twice a year; some did not respond.	This indicates that the servant-leaders must become serious concerning the ministry to widows.
22	Approximately 62% stated that they could call on members or pastors for assistance. Only 29% felt that they could call on a deacon.	One of the major objectives of this project is to activate the servant-leaders (deacons) to minister to the needs of widows. Widows need to feel comfortable in calling their assigned deacon.
23	<p>96% stated that they are sure that heaven will be their future home. 4% did not respond.</p> <p>(Note: Of the 8 Baptist that completed the survey at the Princeton high-rise, 6 believed that salvation was belief in Jesus <b>plus</b> what they could do; one stated that salvation was trusting in Jesus alone; and one did not respond. There is a lot of work to do in educating those who are trusting in works.)</p>	<p>The questionnaires given to widows in the highrise had an additional question. They were asked, "When you die, what gives you the right to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?" 71% stated they were trusting in Jesus <b>plus</b> their works!</p> <p>Are the SBC widows also trusting in Jesus plus works? Every indication suggest the affirmative. The servant-leader has an important task of sharing the Gospel with the elderly.</p>
24	Many widows stated that they have made funeral arrangements. However, 58% stated they had not. Also, 65% of widows surveyed have not considered the particulars of their funeral service (Hymns, Scriptures, pall-bearers, etc.)	The servant-leader has in his ministry workbook a form for each of the widows to complete concerning funeral arrangements. This should be filled out as soon as their is a rapport established with the widow. (See Appendix "5")



#	Results of Questions	Analysis
25	25% of widows surveyed felt that they have been forgotten by the younger generation.	Servant-leaders need to work hard in getting the young people involved in caring for the widows.
26	One third of the widows feel that the younger people are not interested in what they think in matters pertaining to the church.	Again, there needs to be a greater effort in bringing both young and old together. A good place to start is getting youth involved in meeting the needs of widows.
27	Widows were asked, "Do you feel that your church genuinely loves and cares for you?" 76% truly believe that their church loves them.	Either the church remains as a positive image or they are apprehensive in sharing their true feels. Hopefully the former is the case.

#### Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

In what ways does your church demonstrate their love to you?	How does your family minister to your needs in the course of a week?
* Shoveling snow from my walk; bringing food when I'm ill; cards and calls. -----	* My daughter lives nearby and is always there if needed. -----
* Seeing that I have a ride; honoring the older members one Sunday during the year. -----	* Calling me every morning & night & sometimes through the day. By taking me for appointments and seeing that I get groceries. -----
* By being friendly -----	* Calls me and takes me to the store or doctor's office; sometimes helps me financially. -----
* Love; friendliness & concern.	* Only during church services.

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

In what ways does your church demonstrate their love to you?	How does your family minister to your needs in the course of a week?
<p>* Hugs me; call me on the phone; tell me they love me.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Everyday take me to shop or post office.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Lets me know they are praying for me and offers to help me in times of need... such as sickness and death of husband.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Cut grass and do things that I can't--as they have time.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* By talking to me; seeing if I have any needs.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Taking me shopping.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Some care &amp; visit and/or call.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Visit and call.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Phone calls from members and greetings at church.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Children live at a distance; grandchildren come at least every 2 weeks.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* I feel I can call on some of them and they would help me.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* By being there for me.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Visitation, phone calls.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Mostly visitation; many, many phone calls.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* They are always praying for me and ready to help me in any way I need help.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* They live away but they call me every week to see if I am okay.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* They call if I am not in church; visit in my home; visit me when in the hospital; offer to help.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Calls occasionally and visits...; asks if I need assistance.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* They are always there for me; all I need to do is make a phone call.</p>	<p>* Daily visits.</p>

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

In what ways does your church demonstrate their love to you?	How does your family minister to your needs in the course of a week?
<p>* Call if I miss church; offer transportation in bad weather....</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* I have a son in Texas and a daughter in Pennsylvania. They call several times a month and visit during holidays.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* By always being ready to help; showing their love and concern for me.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* By checking to see if I have a need.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Fellowship; by calling</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Calls sometimes.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* They are friendly</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* They keep in touch by phone, cards and letters, and visit when they can!</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* (Blank)</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* I minister to their needs. I cook the evening meal every day and carry it over to their home. We eat together. That is when I have an opportunity to talk to them.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* A call from some once in a while.... In fact the older ones in church take care of the younger generation.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* My grandson cuts my lawn and plows my garden for me in which I pay him. Also, my son keeps my car going.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* By their greeting me in the church.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Almost none.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Members tell me they care; members provide transportation.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Purchase groceries, etc. for me; take me places sometimes.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Call me if I miss church to see if I am sick.</p>	<p>* By checking to see if I am alright.</p>

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire	
In what ways does your church demonstrate their love to you?	How does your family minister to your needs in the course of a week?
<p>* We have one of the best pastors I have ever known. He is never too busy to help in any way he can.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* The seniors are very nice; baby boomers and below are not friendly and not concerned. I am speaking what I think of the majority; there are a few that care.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* I feel included in the family of God; I feel appreciated and prayed for and loved.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Visits and concern by the pastor; friendliness of members when I'm there.</p>	<p>* My daughter calls every day and comes as often as she can.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* If I call them (my son and wife) they do what they can. My daughter calls long distance several times a week.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* My daughter calls and comes to visit; my younger daughter lives out of town; I have very few family members.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Never.</p>

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire	
If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?	What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?
<p>* The ones who are shut-ins that I talk to want to have more contact with the church such as phone calls, visits and letters or cards.</p>	<p>* Same</p>

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?	What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?
<p>* Don't forget to include widows in social functions. Ask advice when needed-- just be friendly! If the widow doesn't have family nearby, invite one to be an "adopted grandma." As a friend to a widow, I could see the needs and be more able to fill that need.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Just call once in a while to see if there are needs.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Encourage them more. See that they have a place to be active in the church.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Be there for them.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Take a widow out to lunch or shopping or visit other widows; take them walking.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Send cards; offer to do things that older people can't do; offer to drive them places; visit them or call them; have a get-together at church for them once a month or so (include singles outside the church who have no one or no church . . . good way to witness to them also.)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Visits and calls</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Visit them one-on-one; start a support group for widows or widowers.</p>	<p>* Widows have time for daytime Bible studies and visiting. Most of us do not have jobs outside the home and no children to look after.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* (Blank)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* (Blank)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* (Blank)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* (Blank)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Members take turns visiting and talking with them to find out their needs. Some have too much pride to go to members and some don't want to be a bother as so many people rush around to make ends meet and widows don't feel like taking their time.[sic]</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Same</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Even in a church group or any other time, a widow still feels alone.</p>

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?	What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?
<p>* Take them out for a burger some time; call and talk.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Visiting them and talk to them on the telephone.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Take some of the responsibilities of the church, instead of thinking, because you are a widow, you have time for everything. [sic.]</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Offer to help in any way I could; help with shopping or household chores; visit them regularly.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* I would go and visit with them sometimes. If I owned a car, I would take them where they needed to go.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Visit them; drive them; call them; any odd jobs I could do for them.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Invite them to a meal and visit and phone them occasionally.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* By keeping in touch with activities for older folks.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Make more visits; check to see if I could run errands or do odd jobs.</p>	<p>* Visit, call and ask.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Visit, phone call, taking little gifts from time-to-time.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* A widow must take care of her financial needs as well as chores which normally fall on the husband, such as lawn care, painting, servicing of car, etc.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Not to forget about them.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Explain my feelings about everything.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Visit by phone or in person to see if they need groceries; visits.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* That we don't like asking for help. Help with some things could be offered.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* More visits by the members; don't leave everything and everyone to the pastor to look after!</p>

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?	What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?
<p>* Ask periodically if they are getting along okay and need any help.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* She has all the things to do in keeping home up, financial, etc. Just because she is alone doesn't mean there isn't lots of work to keep her busy.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Be friendly, visit occasionally, and don't wait until they are ill.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Widows living alone become set in their ways and others should show patience with them. Include them in decision making where applicable.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* James 1:27</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* James 1:27</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* I would make calls to them. I would be sure to let them know they are important. I would also find some way they could minister to someone that also has a need, . . .</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* ...widows are neglected in society as well as in organizations. They are also taken advantage of in many areas of life. The church has a wonderful opportunity for a true mission service but in many cases it is ignored.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Try to visit widows and try to aid them in their need.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* Try to be more caring.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* Offer transportation and food in times of illness.</p> <p>-----</p>	<p>* A call or visit (loneliness); food when widows are ill. Offer transportation to church meetings, doctors and the hospital.</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>* I would do like my pastor...he always ask if me or my mother need anything when he visits or calls.</p>	<p>* First of all, we don't like to ask for help. When you can afford to pay someone to do things, they are usually busy.</p>

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?

What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?

\* Make them feel that they are still important to the church.

\* Don't just ask if they need help around the home, make a point to visit and offer your help.

-----  
\* Be considerate of what they want to do.

-----  
\* Slow down; be a good listener in what they have to say and what they want to do.

-----  
\* Visit, see if they needed anything; call them on the telephone.

-----  
\* Put yourself in the widows place.

-----  
\* At least smile and speak; try to make them feel wanted and needed.

-----  
\* This can happen to you.

-----  
\* Be a better listener; have real concern. If you can't solve a problem or a need as widows might have, help find someone who can; keep in touch.

-----  
\* I need to feel needed and be involved and be included. Our church has a support group for widows and those who live alone.

-----  
\* Give to help financial needs; visit them and make them a close friend.

-----  
\* Visit and spend time with the widows.

-----  
\* I would call them on the telephone. I would offer to take them on errands or out to eat.

-----  
\* (I don't really know)



APPENDIX 3

WIDOW QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTED TO WIDOWS LIVING IN HIGH-  
RISE APARTMENTS IN PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA

RESULTS OF WIDOW QUESTIONNAIRE

## *Widow Questionnaire*

**Special Instructions:** The data from this questionnaire will be used to help West Virginia churches realize their responsibility in caring for the widow. Please answer the following questions as objectively and candidly as possible. Your immediate response will be greatly appreciated. God bless and thank you very much!

State your age: \_\_\_\_\_ How long has your spouse been deceased? \_\_\_\_\_

What denomination are you affiliated with:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Baptist    | <input type="checkbox"/> Pentecostal Holiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Baptist | <input type="checkbox"/> Church of God        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Methodist           | <input type="checkbox"/> Assembly of God      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian        | <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic             |
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been a member of your present church? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you attend church on a regular basis?  Weekly  Bi-monthly  Seldom

Would you attend church more often if you had transportation?  Yes  No

If a local church sponsored the activities below, which would you be interested in (Mark ALL areas of interest):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Adult Choir       | <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt or be adopted by a family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study (Protestant) | <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Socials                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worship Service          | <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Involved in mission work | <input type="checkbox"/> Aerobics                        |

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you on a fixed income?  Yes  No

Do you support the church financially on a regular basis?  Yes  No

Do you live by yourself?  Yes  No

Are you happy in your apartment?  Yes  No

What do you like or dislike about your apartment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Widow Questionnaire* -- Page 2

If you owned a home before renting this apartment, were you forced to sell it?

Yes     No

If you answered yes to the above question, did you lack the strength or resources to keep your home?  Yes     No

If you previously owned a home, how long did live there: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Number of Years)

Do you feel comfortable in calling upon your family for help?  Yes     No

Are there times when you feel that you are a burden:

On the family?     Yes     No

On the church?     Yes     No

On society?     Yes     No

Do you feel that you still have something to contribute:

To the society?     Yes     No

To the church?     Yes     No

To the family?     Yes     No

Do you experience times of loneliness?     Yes     No

Do you ever wish you had someone to talk to?     Yes     No

Do you sometimes feel misunderstood?     Yes     No

Being a widow, you are well aware of the frustrations, difficulties and fears of widowhood. With this in mind, answer the questions below:

(1) If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?

---



---



---



---

(2) What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs? \_\_\_\_\_

---



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*Widow Questionnaire -- Page 3*

**When you talk to other widows, what seems to be their greatest need(s):**

(Check "✓" all that apply)

- Financial assistance       Help around the home such as doing repairs, raking  
 Pastoral Visit                      leaves, cleaning gutters, etc.  
 Transportation                       Need a friendly visit (loneliness)  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you think that your widowed friends feel comfortable to call on the church for assistance.**     Yes     No

**Do you feel that it is the church's place to assist widows?**     Yes     No

**Would you personally desire some form of assistance?**     Yes     No

**If your answer is yes to the above question, what type of assistance would you desire most frequently?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How often does someone check to see if you are doing okay:**

- Daily     Weekly     Monthly     Twice a year     Never

**Who usually checks on you? (Check "✓" all that apply.)**

- Family     Neighbor     Pastor     Church Member  
 Deacon/Elder     Apartment Manager     A Government Agency

**How often does the pastor visit or call you?**

- Daily     Weekly     Monthly     Twice a year     Never

**How often does a deacon/elder visit or call you?**

- Daily     Weekly     Monthly     Twice a year     Never

**Let's suppose that you desire assistance from the church -- Do you feel you could call on: (Check "✓" all that apply)**

- Several members of the church       The Pastor  
 Deacons       Sunday School Teacher       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**When you die, are you positive that your future home will be in Heaven?**

- Yes     No     Not Sure

**When you die, what gives you the right to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?**

- Trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life (Eph. 2:8-10)
- Doing good works
- Living a good moral life
- Being baptized and going to church
- All the above
- None of the above

**Have you made funeral arrangements?**    Yes    No

**Have you considered what you want done during the funeral service (i.e. Scriptures read; hymns; pallbearers, preacher; etc.).**    Yes    No

**Do you feel that you are forgotten by the younger generation?**    Yes    No

**Do you sense younger people are not interested in what you think or believe about matters pertaining to the church?**    Yes    No

**Do you feel that your church genuinely loves and cares for you?**    Yes    No

**In what ways does the church demonstrate their love to you:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**How does your family minister to your needs in the course of a week:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to Valeria Simmons (#503) within seven (7) days or mail this questionnaire to:**

Pastor Rick Sadler ❖ Immanuel Baptist Church ❖ 264 New Hope Road  
Princeton, West Virginia 24740

*Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. May God continue to bless you with strength and health.*

**Results**  
**Widow Questionnaire**  
**Part B - Highrise Apartments**

Questionnaire "B" was given to widows who live in two government sponsored high-rise apartment buildings for the elderly in Princeton, West Virginia. Twenty-one questionnaires (16%) were received back out of a total of 130. There were instances where the widow was not home due to visiting with family or friends or in the hospital. **Please note** that the first page of this instrument (Appendix 3) was different than those given to Southern Baptist Widows residing in their home (Appendix 2). Also, there is a mixture of denominations represented in this survey as seen in block number three(3)below.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
1	The average age of the widow filling out the questionnaire is 70.5 years old.	Most would have remained in their own dwelling if they could have managed. However, it is interesting to note that the average age of those living in their home was higher--72 years old (See Appendix 2). Other factors for moving into the high-rise is discussed further in this report.
2	The average time a spouse has been deceased is 14.45 years.	It appears that a ministry of dealing with grief would not be of utmost importance due to the length of time a spouse has been deceased. However, most widows still have moments of grief many years after the death of their husband. This is perfectly normal. The servant-leader must be aware of this and be willing to listen and encourage the widow during such episodes.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
3	<p>Denominations represented in this survey are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SBC (33%)</li> <li>- Independent Baptist</li> <li>- Methodist</li> <li>- Presbyterian</li> <li>- Pentecostal Holiness</li> <li>- Church of God</li> <li>- Assembly of God</li> <li>- Mormon</li> <li>- Other...did not name</li> <li>- Calvary Tabernacle</li> <li>- Advent Christian</li> <li>- Church of Christ</li> <li>- Christian</li> </ul>	<p>There is not much difference in the way non-Southern Baptist answered the questionnaire than Southern Baptist.</p>
4	<p>67% of widows attend church services on a weekly basis. 33% of widows rarely attend .</p>	<p>One-third of the widows have little exposure to a church setting. There seems to be a need for some type of worship service where they live. This will be seen in later statistics.</p>
5	<p>29% of those surveyed stated they would attend more services if transportation is available.</p>	<p>This indicates the need for churches to consider some form of transportation for the elderly widow. A church van or bus would be a great asset to a church who desires to reach out to the widows.</p>
6	<p>Widows were ask if they would like to participate in specific ministries. The results are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bible Study 62%</li> <li>- Worship Service 81%</li> <li>- Senior Choir 29%</li> <li>- Missions Project 10%</li> <li>- Be Adopted 5%</li> <li>- Socials 38%</li> <li>- Crafts 33%</li> <li>- Aerobics 14%</li> <li>- No Answer 5%</li> </ul>	<p>There seems to be an interest in spiritual matters. Already, Immanuel Baptist Church has established a Bible study and Senior Choir in the high-rise. The choir was a direct result of the survey.</p>

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
7	100% stated they were on a fixed income.	This was expected due to the fact that they are in government housing.
8	62% support the church on a regular basis.	This correlates perfectly with their attendance as seen in block four (4).
9	95% are happy living in their apartment. 5% did not respond.	Contentment of living in the high-rise was a pleasant discovery when considering the next block (10).
10	43% feel like they were forced to sell their home.	The question must be asked--would this percentage be lower if the church had an organized effort to assist the widow living in their own home?
11	37% stated that they lacked the strength or resources to maintain their home.	Again, there is a need for the church to respond in cases where finances or physical strength is lacking in being able to maintain their home.
12	The average length they owned their home was 21.42 years. 29% of the women did not respond to this question.	There is much that churches can do to help maintain an older home. Ministry is abounding for those who have maintenance skills.
13	62% felt comfortable in asking their family for assistance. Over 1/3 were not comfortable.	Working with relatives of the widows is an important and necessary step in assisting them. Cases where family refuses to help the widow are times of special ministry afforded the church.
14	1/3 felt as if they were a burden on the family. However, the overwhelming majority felt that they were not a burden on society or the church.	33% are uncomfortable in asking the family for assistance. The deacon needs great wisdom in dealing with the widow and her family.



#	Results of Questions	Analysis												
15	Widows were asked if they still feel that they had something to contribute to <b>Society, Church, and family</b> :	The answer to this question was very encouraging. The church must not forget the great resource they have in their elderly.												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>YES</th> <th>NO</th> <th>BLANK</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>S-43%</td> <td>S-10%</td> <td>S-47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C-71%</td> <td>C-0%</td> <td>C-29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>F-67%</td> <td>F-5%</td> <td>F-28%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	YES	NO	BLANK	S-43%	S-10%	S-47%	C-71%	C-0%	C-29%	F-67%	F-5%	F-28%	Siblings should remember that their mothers have a desire to contribute to the family by drawing from the many years of wisdom and experience.
	YES	NO	BLANK											
	S-43%	S-10%	S-47%											
C-71%	C-0%	C-29%												
F-67%	F-5%	F-28%												
16	76% of widows experience times of loneliness.	This statistic communicates a tremendous need of more contacts with widows in the church.												
17	62% wished they had someone to talk to.	Same as above.												
18	Almost half (48%) felt they are misunderstood at times.	There is a need to listen and understand what the widow is trying to communicate. They have much wisdom to share.												
19	The greatest needs of widows are as follows: - Financial.....29% - Pastoral Visit.....14% - Transportation.....71% - Help in Home.....10% - Friendly Visit.....81%	The church should pay close attention to these statistics. Friendly visits and transportation are two very critical needs.												
20	The question was asked, "Do you think that your widow friends feel comfortable to call on the church for assistance?" 43% said Yes; 43% said No; 14% did not respond.	This type of question was asked to ascertain not their friend's heart but their own heart. The widow is apt to be more concerned for a widowed friend than for herself.												

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
21	The question was asked, "Do you feel that it is the church's place to assist widows?" 62% said Yes; 14% said No; 24% did not respond.	The church must listen seriously to what is said here and be ready to respond to needs. Note: compare this question with the one below (22). Which question reflects the true heart of widows?
22	The question was asked, "Do you personally desire some form of assistance?" 24% said Yes; 52% said No; 24% did not respond.	Compare with block 21.
23	The following are times widows are checked on: 61% daily; 14% weekly; 5% monthly; 10% never; 10% no responses.	There seems to be an adequate network in place to watch over the widow.
24	76% percent have family checking on them on a regular basis. Also, 43% have neighbors checking on them and 29% have church members.	With neighbors checking on widows, it is a good idea for the deacon to check in with neighbors leaving name and telephone number.
25	Pastoral visits of widows is as follows: 24% never; 10% weekly; 19% monthly; 29% twice a year; and some did not respond to the question.	Pastors might want to beef up his efforts in visiting the widow on a more regular basis. For most small churches, this would not be a burden.
26	Deacon/elder visitation of widows is as follows: 43% never visit; 14% monthly; 5% daily; some did not respond.	This indicates that the servant-leaders must be more serious concerning the care of widows.
27	Approximately 50% of the widows stated that they could call on members or a pastor for assistance.	The real question is-- should the widow have to be the one who always calls? Should the servant-leader be so close to the widow that he is able to detect areas of concern?

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
28	71% stated that they are sure that heaven will be their future home. 14% are not sure and 5% said no. 10% did not respond.	The next question will demonstrate what the widow is trusting in.
29	<p>This question probes the widow's faith: "When you die, what gives you the right to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?"</p> <p>A.) Trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life (Eph. 2:8-10)  B.) Doing good works  C.) Living a good moral life.  D.) Being baptized and going to church.  E.) All the above  F.) None of the above</p> <p><b>71% of the widows answered "E" all of the above.</b> Only 19% could say that they were trusting Jesus alone for their salvation.</p>	<p>It is utterly amazing how many people are trusting in works to get them into heaven. Many widows testify that the believer has to do their part in order to reside in heaven for eternity. There is much work to be accomplished in presenting the truth to widows concerning soteriology-including grace and unconditional love. The church must care for the spirit while not forgetting the physical needs.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> 6 out of 8 Baptist trust in Jesus plus works for salvation. Only one trusts in Jesus alone. One did not respond.</p>
30	<p>Many widows stated that they have made funeral arrangements. However, 28% stated they had not.</p> <p>Also, there are widows who have not considered the particulars of their funeral service (hymns, Scriptures, pallbearers, etc.)</p>	The servant-leader has in his ministry workbook a form for each of the elderly widows to complete concerning funeral arrangements. This should be filled out as soon as their rapport established with the widow. (See Appendix 5)
31	28% of widows surveyed felt that they have been forgotten by the younger generation.	Servant-leaders need to work hard in getting the young people involved in caring for the widows.

#	Results of Questions	Analysis
32	One third of the widows feel that the young people are not interested in what they think in matters pertaining to the church.	There needs to be a greater effort in bring both young and old together. A good place to start is for the youth to be involved in meeting the widow's needs.
33	Widows were asked, "Do you feel that your church genuinely loves and cares for you?" 76% truly believes that their church loves them.	Either the church remains as a positive image or they are apprehensive in sharing their true feelings.

#### Quotes Taken From Questionnaire

In what ways does your church demonstrate their love to you?	How does your family minister to your needs in the course of a week?
* (Blank)	* Calls almost daily; visits several times a week; takes me to the doctor and other places; sees to my needs and helps wherever needed.
-----	-----
* (Blank)	* Taking me to the doctor and stores; I can't drive anymore.
-----	-----
* Visits and prayer.	* (Blank)
-----	-----
* Calling and visiting.	* (Blank)
-----	-----
* Calls, some visits and I'm sure they pray for me.	* They are there for me if I need help in anyway that was possible.
-----	-----
* They call me, visit me and take me to church in their cars when I can't drive.	* I don't have a family where I live; my children live in Nebraska, Connecticut, and North Carolina. They come if I really need them.
-----	-----
* Good fellowship.	* Anything I need

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire	
In what ways does your church demonstrate their love to you?	How does your family minister to your needs in the course of a week?
<p>* (Blank)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Concerned about me; welcomes me to the church; visits.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* By telling me, hugging me, and saying so.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* They're always there for me.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Prayer.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* They come to see me, and helped me greatly when my husband died.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Call on the phone and visit sometime.</p>	<p>* House work and grocery shopping as well as phoning each day.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Takes me when and where I need to go; phone calls.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* (Blank)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* They check daily about me since I'm not a well person.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* Prayer.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* I don't have hardly any family living in Princeton. My cousins help me when they can.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* They clean my house when I'm not able; go to the grocery store; see that I get to my doctor's appointment; fix food as needed.</p>

Quotes Taken From Several Questionnaires	
If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?	What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?
<p>* Call by phone to check on them; If they weren't in church, try to arrange to have them picked up the following week or checked on.</p>	<p>* Treat them as a member of your personal family and love them as much; we all are members of God's family.</p>

Quotes Taken From Several Questionnaires	
If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?	What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?
* Visiting and doing errands. -----	* (Blank) -----
* By doing anything that would help or make them happy. -----	* Transportation and companionship. -----
* I would be there for them; take them places; do things with them and be a friend. -----	* They need more attention and understanding. -----
* Visit them regular. -----	* Visit regularly and see if they need help like grocery shopping, and medicine,.... -----
* Be a companion and help out if they were not able to care for themselves. -----	* (Blank) -----
* Help them get to church; see that they eat right or need anything done. -----	* That they are lonely and need help. -----
* I would help in any need the widow has. -----	* The apostle James said, "true religion is to visit the widows and orphans in their affliction." -----
* To be there for them. -----	* Compassion -----
* Visit them as much as possible; if they needed something done, I would try and do it for them if at all possible. -----	* (Blank) -----
* Check and see if there were needs.	* If they were a real Christian widow, be there for them.

Quotes Taken From Questionnaire	
If you were a younger member of the church, how would you help widows?	What would you say to the church to help them understand the widow's needs?
* I would visit if they were lonely; if they were disabled, I would shop for them; do household chores; check on them by telephone.	* Talk to them about their frustrations, difficulties, and fears. Let them know someone cares.

APPENDIX 4

STUDY SHEET FOR MINI-WORKSHOP  
HELD AT EAGLE-ERIE SOUTHERN BAPTIST RETREAT CENTER  
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA



## The "Why" of Ministry to Widows

There are at least five (5) excellent reasons why believers should minister to widows in the church.

1.) s \_\_\_\_\_: The *Baptist Faith & Message* states:

*The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. **It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction.** It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the **supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.** The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ. [Hobbs, Herschel H. *The Baptist Faith and Message* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1971), 18.]*

The Scriptures are not only given to reveal the Savior, but also to show the believer how to live the Christ-like life. Christians can trust the Bible to lead them perfectly in all matters of life. One of the prime areas of His faithfulness is in the care and treatment of widows.

Both in the Old and New Testament, God made special provisions for the care of widows (Deut. 14:28,29; Deut. 24:19-21; 1 Tim. 5:1-14; Jam. 1:27; etc.). A woman who has lost a spouse is in danger of mistreatment or being taken advantage of by unscrupulous men. In regards to the church, judgment awaits the assembly that refuses to take care of the widowed saint. The Bible states, "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deut. 27:19). It is clear from this text and others like it that God has a special place in His heart for the widow. Thus, the church must take seriously the ministry to widows.

To be able to fully embrace the ministry to widows, the Christian must first realize that he is called to serve. Jesus is the greatest example of servanthood the world has ever known.

- **Jesus as Our Example of a Servant:** (Washing the Disciples' Feet)

"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:14-17 - NASB).

- **The Early Church Demonstrated Servanthood Through Ministry to Widows:**

"Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task'" (Acts 6:1-3 -- NASB).

- **Paul's Writings Address the Issue of Caring for Widows:** (Key words/phrases are highlighted)

"*Honor* widows who are widows indeed; but if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family, and to *make some return* to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. Now she who is a widow *indeed*, and who has been left alone has fixed her hope on God, and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. But if anyone does not *provide for his own*, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever. Let a widow be *put on the list* only if she is not less than *sixty years old*, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. And at the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, let her assist them, and let not the church be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed" (1 Tim. 5:3-16 -- NASB).

- **James' Epistle Equates Pure Religion With Caring for Widows:**

"If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (Jas. 1:26-27 -- NASB).

● **Other Examples of Caring for Widows:**

\* Though nailed to a cross, Jesus was concerned for the welfare of His mother. He asked John to care for her and to treat her as his own mother.

"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household" (John 19:26-27 -- NASB).

\* Peter taking care of his mother-in-law.

"And immediately after they had come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they spoke to Him about her. And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them" (Mark 1:29-31 -- NASB).

- **In summary:** The Holy Bible declares that the believer is a servant of others. A specific and important example of servanthood is caring for widows. This takes us to the second reason why Christians, specifically Immanuel Baptist Church, should minister to those who have lost their spouse.

2.) W \_\_\_\_\_: There are \_\_\_\_\_ widows in the church. God has placed in our care a large number of people who have lost their spouse. This is a tremendous opportunity and privilege afforded the church to reach out to our own and minister to their needs.

3.) S \_\_\_\_\_: There are 9 men who are called to be servant-leaders in Immanuel Baptist Church. The word deacon (diakonos) literally means "one who serves." The deacon's primary function is to serve the Body of Christ. They are the examples in ministry for the rest of the congregation to follow.

Therefore, it is unmistakably clear in the Scriptures that every Christian is called to be a servant. The perfect servant model is Jesus. The Lord demonstrated a servant lifestyle during His walk upon the earth. He states, "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:44-45 -- KJV). Servanthood is the call of every born again believer. True love for God manifest itself through acts of charity. The Body of Christ desperately needs solid examples of the servant model. The leadership, both pastor and deacons, should reflect this self-giving lifestyle. The saying is true, "a picture is worth a thousand words."

4.) C \_\_\_\_\_: The cultural situation is a clarion call for believers to rise to the challenge to minister to widows. Called as disciples of the Lord, every Christian should have a sensitive heart for the hurting women who have lost their spouse. Believers are summoned to demonstrate love and care for the bereaved. Many elderly Christians have been faithful and dedicated workers in the church. They have given their lives for the cause of Christ. The time is ripe for the people of God to demonstrate a liberal and gracious love for their widows. The widow's needs range from loneliness to requiring assistance around the home. Unfortunately, the church has stood idle for years while para-church organizations, institutions, and government subsidized programs have come to the aid of hurting humanity. As the world approaches the twenty-first century, evidence of a weakening support structure prevails. Many middle age adults question whether Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid have a chance of surviving. The government is constantly looking to cut the budget. It is a balanced budget at any cost and the cost will lay heavy upon the elderly people of America. Where will the elderly widows turn when monies evaporate? Who will they call upon when advice or assistance is needed?

5.) N \_\_\_\_\_: The widow has needs. The Bible states, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:16-18 -- NASB). Some examples of needs are as follows:

- |                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) <b>Dealing with grief:</b>         | b) <b>Loneliness and anxiety:</b> |
| c) <b>House maintenance concerns:</b> | d) <b>Financial pressures:</b>    |
| e) <b>Security and safety:</b>        | f) <b>Decision making:</b>        |

**ANSWER KEY:** 1) Scripture; 2) Widows -- 38; 3) Servant-Leaders; 4) Cultural Rationale; 5) Needs.

## The "Way" of Ministry to Widows

- 1) A genuine commitment to serve.
- 2) Earning the right to serve.
- 3) Always looking for opportunities to serve.
- 4) Serving with the total heart
- 5) Getting others involved in serving widows.

Col. 3:17..."And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

APPENDIX 5

A MANUAL/HANDBOOK  
FOR  
MINISTRY TO WIDOWS  
OF THE  
IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

***A Manual***  
**for**  
***Ministry to Widows***  
**of the**  
***Immanuel Baptist Church***

*A Deacon Who Loves the Lord  
Cares for the Widow*

# *Caring for Widows*

A Ministry of the Deacons of Immanuel  
Baptist Church  
264 New Hope Road  
Princeton, West Virginia 24740

by  
Rick Sadler

*This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world (James 1:27 NASB).*

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## A Special Word From the Pastor

Dear Brother Deacon:

When you accepted the call to serve this year, a declaration was made. You made a covenant with the Lord to serve Him through His people at the Immanuel Baptist Church. Both heaven and earth are witnesses to this fact.

Included in this call is the watch care of widows in our fellowship. James 5:27 calls this "pure and undefiled religion." I want you to know that the ministry to widows is one of the most important aspects of being a deacon in this church. To neglect your responsibility in serving your assigned widows is to abandon your ministry as deacon. May God confirm in your heart the seriousness of this most sacred calling.

Pray for your widows often and stay in close contact with them. If you have any questions or need assistance in any way, do not hesitate to call me. May the Lord richly bless you with strength and compassion as you serve this coming year.

In His Service,







*Pastor Rick*

Richard W. Sadler, Pastor  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
Princeton, West Virginia

## Special Instructions for an Effective Ministry

- Make contact with your widows at least twice a month
  - 1.) Phone call
  - 2.) Letter or card
  - 3.) Friendly visit or special project
- Try to visit monthly, but no less than quarterly (four times a year)
- Send a card or flowers for her birthday
- Pray for your widows on a regular basis
- Be on the lookout for special needs or concerns keeping the pastor abreast of anything that may be critical.
- Check with family members on a regular basis keeping them informed of special needs. (Using your judgment, it may be best to communicate with the family before meeting a need so that you do not duplicate efforts.)
- Notify the prayer chain of special requests. Make sure you let the widow know before you place her request on the prayer chain.
- Regularly use members who are on the volunteer list. Not only will this increase the effectiveness of your ministry, but it also gives others a chance to be ministers.
- Inform the widow's Sunday School class of special concerns and needs.

# Miscellaneous

-  Deacon's Widows Assignments
-  Current Widow's List for 1996-97
-  Results of Widows Evaluation Form
-  Sample of Widows Evaluation Form
-  Sample Letter to Mail to Widows
-  Sample Talents Form

## Deacon Assignments for the Widow's Ministry 1996-97

Deacon #1	Deacon #2	Deacon #3
1.) Widow	1.) Widow	1.) Widow
2.) Widow	2.) Widow	2.) Widow
3.) Widow	3.) Widow	3.) Widow
4.) Widow	4.) Widow	4.) Widow
5.) Widow	5.) Widow	5.) Widow
6.)	6.)	6.)

Deacon #4	Deacon #5	Deacon #6
1.) Widow	1.) Widow	1.) Widow
2.) Widow	2.) Widow	2.) Widow
3.) Widow	3.) Widow	3.) Widow
4.) Widow	4.) Widow	4.) Widow
5.) Widow	5.) Widow	5.) Widow
6.)	6.)	6.)

Deacon #7	Deacon #8	Deacon #9
1.) Widow	1.) Widow	1.) Widow
2.) Widow	2.) Widow	2.) Widow
3.) Widow	3.) Widow	3.) Widow
4.) Widow	4.) Widow	4.) Widow
5.) Widow	5.) Widow	5.) Widow
6.)	6.)	6.)

# Current Widow's List for 1996 - 97

1	Widow's Name
2	Widow's Name
3	Widow's Name
4	Widow's Name
5	Widow's Name
6	Widow's Name
7	Widow's Name
8	Widow's Name
9	Widow's Name
10	Widow's Name
11	Widow's Name
12	Widow's Name
13	Widow's Name
14	Widow's Name
15	Widow's Name
16	Widow's Name
17	Widow's Name
18	Widow's Name
19	Widow's Name
20	Widow's Name
21	Widow's Name
22	Widow's Name
23	Widow's Name
24	Widow's Name
25	Widow's Name
26	Widow's Name
27	Widow's Name
28	Widow's Name
29	Widow's Name
30	Widow's Name
31	Widow's Name
32	Widow's Name
33	Widow's Name

## NON-MEMBERS (WIDOWS) & SINGLE SENIORS:

1.) Name 2.) Name 3.) Names 4.) Name 5.) Name  
6.) Name 7.) Name

## WIDOWERS:

1.) Name 2.) Name 3.) Name

## Results of the Widow's Evaluation Form

Every six months an evaluation form is sent to the widows of the church. They are asked to evaluate honestly the ministry to widows that we might better serve them in the future. The following are a few excerpts. The names have been omitted to protect the confidentiality of our widows and deacons.

- *My deacon's heart is truly in this ministry. Praise the Lord for such a caring man.*
- *He always asks me when I meet him at church if there is anything I need.*
- *My deacon has been wonderful to call and check on me and it has been uplifting.*
- *My deacon contacts me weekly...I'm sure he will be there for me if I need him.*
- *I rate the ministry to widows as a 10 (a great benefit to me).*

Please note that not all of the reports were positive. One widow was not sure who her deacon was. Another respondent rated the ministry as average. Still another stated that the ministry was "fair." It is plain to see--every deacon must be careful to fulfill their God given call in taking care of their widows.

The following page is a sample of the questionnaire sent to widows in the Immanuel Baptist Church.

## Widow's Evaluation Form--Fall 1996

Please be honest with your feelings in filling out the evaluation form below. If you should have any questions, feel free to call the pastor. Upon completion, mail within 5 days to the Immanuel Baptist Church, **Widows Ministry**, 264 New Hope Road, Princeton, WV 24740. Your response will be held in strict confidence.

1.) Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

2.) The name of your deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

3.) How often does your deacon make contact with you?

Weekly    Bi-Monthly    Monthly    Seldom    Never

4.) Are there specific needs (physical, spiritual, or emotional) that you have that we can address?

---



---



---



---

5.) What are some prayer concerns:

---



---



---



---

6.) How would you rate the ministry to widows in regard to ministering to you: ( 1 = no benefit to you, and 10 = great benefit to you).   ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩



## Sample Letter to Mail to Each of Your Widows During the Month of October

Dear **(Widow's Name)**

It is a privilege and honor for me to share with you some wonderful news. Beginning October 1, 1996, through September 30, 1997, I will be your deacon. My mission is to assist you in any way possible with your physical and spiritual needs. It is my intention to communicate with you and all my widows on a regular basis. **(Widow's Name)**, I really look forward in developing a meaningful relationship with you in the coming days.

As your deacon, I want to assist you in any way I can. Please feel free to call me at home **(your telephone number)** when there is a need or when you need a listening ear. As your deacon, I will do my utmost to help you in whatever way possible.

Please pray for me! Ask God daily to give me wisdom and strength. I believe this ministry will be a wonderful way to show you, and the other widows of Immanuel Baptist Church our love and concern. I will be calling you in the next few weeks to arrange for a time when we can get together.

*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace (Num. 6:24-26).*

In Christ's Love,

**(Deacon's Name)**

# Special Talents Form

Immanuel Baptist Church  
264 New Hope Road  
Princeton, West Virginia 24740

Mr.  
Mrs.  
Miss.

\_\_\_\_\_

First Middle Initial Last Spouse

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street or RFD City State Zip Code

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Office Fax or Pager

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Name Age Name Age Name Age Name Age

Interests or Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills or Talents: \_\_\_\_\_

Availability	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

*Please Indicate the Specific Time(s) Available to Volunteer*

- I will volunteer my time and talents **once** a month not to exceed 3 hours to help a widow in need.
- I will volunteer my time and talents \_\_\_\_\_ x's per {  *Week* or  *Month* } not to exceed \_\_\_\_\_ hours per assist to help a widow in need.
- Help as needed or when available  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Check (✓) as Many Skills/Tasks That You are Comfortable in Performing*

**Carpentry**

- Minor: Fix windows or door; roof repair; weather strip door; fix broken window; etc.
- Major: Gutters; rescreen; trim work; step repair, etc.
- Other: Areas of interest/skill \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Plumbing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor: Change washers; unclog drain; etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Make repairs on a toilet; repair hot water tank; replace/replace faucet; etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Areas of interest/skill _____
<b>Electrical</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor: Change a light bulb; rewire lamp; replace fuse; etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Fix a light switch; replace lighting fixture; fix electrical short; etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Areas of interest/skill _____
<b>Heating</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor: Change filter(s); etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Replace nozzle; adjust mixture or electrodes; circulator pump; etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Areas of interest/skill _____
<b>Appliance Repair</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor: Replace dryer belt, range electric eyes, level washer, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Repair stove, refrigerator, washer, dryer, vacuum, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Areas of interest/skill _____
<b>Auto</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor: Tune-up, oil change, flat tire, etc. ( ) <input type="checkbox"/> Major: Brakes; muffler; body repair; etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Areas of interest/skill _____
<b>Other</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sewing <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture repair <input type="checkbox"/> Baking (sweets or meal) <input type="checkbox"/> Welding <input type="checkbox"/> Sheetrock repair <input type="checkbox"/> Masonry repair <input type="checkbox"/> Painting <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

### *Various Labor & Specialty Projects*

<b>Outside</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mow & trim grass <input type="checkbox"/> Rake <input type="checkbox"/> Trim scrubs <input type="checkbox"/> Cut fallen branches <input type="checkbox"/> Weed <input type="checkbox"/> Split firewood <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel snow <input type="checkbox"/> Clean gutters <input type="checkbox"/> Wash Windows <input type="checkbox"/> Wash Car <input type="checkbox"/> Tackle any project <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<b>Inside</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum & Dust <input type="checkbox"/> Change linens <input type="checkbox"/> Hang a picture or plant <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo rug <input type="checkbox"/> Tackle any project <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<b>Other</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL LABOR: Help tackle any labor project! <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to be a <i>Team Leaders</i> (Note: <i>Team Leaders</i> are needed when three (3) or more persons are working as a group.)
<b>Vehicle &amp; Equipment Use</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Truck Owner → I am willing to use my truck for various projects. <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Owner → I am interested in transporting a widow to a medical facility, grocery store, or for general errand. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How Often?</i>: Per Month: _____ Per Week: _____</p> <input type="checkbox"/> I am willing to use my own tools & equipment if needed.
<b>Friendly Visit, Etc.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Visit a widow in their home whenever possible <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a widow <input type="checkbox"/> Phone widows on a regular basis <input type="checkbox"/> Write notes/letters to widows people on a regular basis

# Ministry Log

**Behind This Page are Names of  
God's Precious Widows**



**They are Given to Your Care  
That You Might Love and Serve Them**

# WIDOW #1

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(Print Widow's Name)



**(Ask the Widow):** Are there any suggestions that you would like to give us that would make your coming to the church more enjoyable. (ie. Hearing aids in the pews; special ramps; assistance to and from church; large print Bibles, etc.)

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**(Ask the Widow):**

- 1.) Would you like to take communion (the Lord's Supper) in your home on a regular basis? (  Yes /  No )
- 2.) Do you desire to receive each quarter the SBC's devotional Open Windows? (  Yes /  No )
- 3.) Would you like a tape of the Sunday Morning service?  
(  Yes /  No )
- 4.) Would you like a tape: (  Weekly /  Bi-monthly /  Monthly /  No Thank You)?
- 5.) Do you have a working tape player? (  Yes /  No ).







 Do you desire the service to be at the funeral home or at Immanuel Baptist Church? (Circle One) Do you desire a grave-side service at the cemetery?  Yes  No.

 What are your favorite passages in the Bible?

NUM.	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
1	
2	
3	

 What are your favorite Hymns?


NUM.	NAME OF HYMNS
1	
2	
3	

 Is there something special you want said, sung, or read?

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 Who do you want to preach your funeral: \_\_\_\_\_

Other considerations or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Do you have the assurance that you will enter Heaven when you die?  Yes  No Why should the Lord give you eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_

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# WIDOW #2

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(Print Widow's Name)



**(Ask the Widow):** Are there any suggestions that you would like to give us that would make your coming to the church more enjoyable. (ie. Hearing aids in the pews; special ramps; assistance to and from church; large print Bibles, etc.)

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**(Ask the Widow):**


- 1.) Would you like to take communion (the Lord's Supper) in your home on a regular basis? (  Yes /  No )
- 2.) Do you desire to receive each quarter the SBC's devotional Open Windows? (  Yes /  No )
- 3.) Would you like a tape of the Sunday Morning service?  
(  Yes /  No )
- 4.) Would you like a tape: (  Weekly /  Bi-monthly /  Monthly /  No Thank You)?
- 5.) Do you have a working tape player? (  Yes /  No ).




 Do you desire the service to be at the funeral home or at Immanuel Baptist Church? (Circle One) Do you desire a grave-side service at the cemetery?  Yes  No.

 What are your favorite passages in the Bible?

NUM.	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
1	
2	
3	

 What are your favorite Hymns?


NUM.	NAME OF HYMNS
1	
2	
3	

 Is there something special you want said, sung, or read?

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 Who do you want to preach your funeral: \_\_\_\_\_

Other considerations or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Do you have the assurance that you will enter Heaven when you die?  Yes  No Why should the Lord give you eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_

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# WIDOW #3

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(Print Widow's Name)



**(Ask the Widow):** Are there any suggestions that you would like to give us that would make your coming to the church more enjoyable. (ie. Hearing aids in the pews; special ramps; assistance to and from church; large print Bibles, etc.)

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**(Ask the Widow):**

- 1.) Would you like to take communion (the Lord's Supper) in your home on a regular basis? (  Yes /  No )
- 2.) Do you desire to receive each quarter the SBC's devotional Open Windows? (  Yes /  No )
- 3.) Would you like a tape of the Sunday Morning service?  
(  Yes /  No )
- 4.) Would you like a tape: (  Weekly /  Bi-monthly /  Monthly /  No Thank You)?
- 5.) Do you have a working tape player? (  Yes /  No ).





Do you desire the service to be at the funeral home or at Immanuel Baptist Church? (Circle One) Do you desire a grave-side service at the cemetery?  Yes  No.



What are your favorite passages in the Bible?

NUM.	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
1	
2	
3	



What are your favorite Hymns?

NUM.	NAME OF HYMNS
1	
2	
3	



Is there something special you want said, sung, or read?

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Who do you want to preach your funeral: \_\_\_\_\_

Other considerations or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have the assurance that you will enter Heaven when you die?  Yes  No Why should the Lord give you eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_

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# WIDOW #4

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(Print Widow's Name)

# Information Sheet on Widows

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Last                      First                      Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Street                      City                      State                      Zip

Home Phone #: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate #: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_ Talents: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Foods: \_\_\_\_\_ Dessert: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Flower/Plant: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Names and Ages of Living Children:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name                      Age                      Name                      Age                      Name                      Age

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name                      Age                      Name                      Age                      Name                      Age

## *Names of Several Relatives Living Close to You:*

① Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Last                      First                      Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Street                      City                      State                      Zip

Home Phone #: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate #: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

② Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Last                      First                      Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Street                      City                      State                      Zip

Home Phone #: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate #: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_



**(Ask the Widow):** Are there any suggestions that you would like to give us that would make your coming to the church more enjoyable. (ie. Hearing aids in the pews; special ramps; assistance to and from church; large print Bibles, etc.)

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**(Ask the Widow):**


- 1.) Would you like to take communion (the Lord's Supper) in your home on a regular basis? (  Yes /  No )
- 2.) Do you desire to receive each quarter the SBC's devotional Open Windows? (  Yes /  No )
- 3.) Would you like a tape of the Sunday Morning service?  
(  Yes /  No )
- 4.) Would you like a tape: (  Weekly /  Bi-monthly /  Monthly /  No Thank You)?
- 5.) Do you have a working tape player? (  Yes /  No ).




 Do you desire the service to be at the funeral home or at Immanuel Baptist Church? (Circle One) Do you desire a grave-side service at the cemetery?  Yes  No.

 What are your favorite passages in the Bible?

NUM.	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
1	
2	
3	

 What are your favorite Hymns?


NUM.	NAME OF HYMNS
1	
2	
3	

 Is there something special you want said, sung, or read?

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 Who do you want to preach your funeral: \_\_\_\_\_

Other considerations or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Do you have the assurance that you will enter Heaven when you die?  Yes  No Why should the Lord give you eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_

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# WIDOW #5

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(Print Widow's Name)

# Information Sheet on Widows

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 Last                                  First                                  Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 Street                                  City                                  State                                  Zip

Home Phone #: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_      Alternate #: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_      Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_      Talents: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Foods: \_\_\_\_\_      Dessert: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Flower/Plant: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Names and Ages of Living Children:*

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
                 Name                  Age                  Name                  Age                  Name                  Age

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
                 Name                  Age                  Name                  Age                  Name                  Age

## *Names of Several Relatives Living Close to You:*

① Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 Last                                  First                                  Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 Street                                  City                                  State                                  Zip

Home Phone #: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_      Alternate #: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

② Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 Last                                  First                                  Middle

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 Street                                  City                                  State                                  Zip

Home Phone #: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_      Alternate #: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

**(Ask the Widow):** Are there any suggestions that you would like to give us that would make your coming to the church more enjoyable. (ie. Hearing aids in the pews; special ramps; assistance to and from church; large print Bibles, etc.)

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**(Ask the Widow):**

- 1.) Would you like to take communion (the Lord's Supper) in your home on a regular basis? (  Yes /  No )
- 2.) Do you desire to receive each quarter the SBC's devotional Open Windows? (  Yes /  No )
- 3.) Would you like a tape of the Sunday Morning service?  
(  Yes /  No )
- 4.) Would you like a tape: (  Weekly /  Bi-monthly /  Monthly /  No Thank You)?
- 5.) Do you have a working tape player? (  Yes /  No ).

# Funeral Arrangements

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
                            Last                                    First  Middle



Do you have a living will?  Yes  No



Are you an organ donor?  Yes  No



Have you made arrangements for your burial with a local funeral home?  Yes  No. If yes, please give the name of the funeral home: \_\_\_\_\_

- Cemetery plot purchased?  Yes  No.

If yes, name of cemetery: \_\_\_\_\_

- Casket & vault chosen?  Yes  No.

- Desire flowers;  memorial Bibles;  designate all gifts to charity or church:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Charity or Church



Have you selected pallbearers?  Yes  No. If yes, list names and telephone numbers:

Num.	NAME	PHONE
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		





Do you desire the service to be at the funeral home or at Immanuel Baptist Church? (Circle One) Do you desire a grave-side service at the cemetery?  Yes  No.



What are your favorite passages in the Bible?

NUM.	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
1	
2	
3	



What are your favorite Hymns?

NUM.	NAME OF HYMNS
1	
2	
3	



Is there something special you want said, sung, or read?

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Who do you want to preach your funeral: \_\_\_\_\_

Other considerations or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you have the assurance that you will enter Heaven when you die?  Yes  No Why should the Lord give you eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Skills

**Listed on the following pages are names of Christians who are willing to minister to a widow in need. Please give them an opportunity to give a blessing that they might receive a blessing.**

**"Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10:43b).**

***The Philippian jailer cared nothing about the sufferings of Paul and Silas until he knew Christ, then he washed the stripes of his prisoners.*** (Vance Havner)

# Key to Talents/Skills

## *SKILLS*

- 1 - **Carpentry Minor** (Fix windows/doors, roof repair, weather strip doors, broken windows, etc.)
- 2 - **Carpentry Major** (Gutter leak; rescreen; trim work; step repair, etc.)
- 3 - **Plumbing Minor** (Washers, unclog drain, etc.)
- 4 - **Plumbing Major** (Change toilet seal, fix leaky hot water tank, change facet set, repair toilet, etc.)
- 5 - **Electrical Minor** (Change a light bulb, rewire lamp, etc.)
- 6 - **Electrical Major** (Fix a light switch, replace lighting fixture, fuse, etc.)
- 7 - **Heating Minor** (Change filter (s), clean, etc.)
- 8 - **Heating Major** (Replace nozzle, adjust mixture or electrodes, circulator pump, etc.)
- 9 - **Appliance Repair Minor** (Replace dryer belt, range electric eyes, level washer, etc.)
- 10 - **Appliance Repair Major** (Stove, refrigerator, toaster, vacuum, etc.)
- 11 - **Auto Minor** (Tune-up, oil change, flat tire, etc.)
- 12 - **Auto Major** (Breaks, muffler, body repair, etc.)

## *MISCELLANEOUS SKILLS*

- 13 - **Sewing** (To mend clothing or curtains, etc.)
- 14 - **Furniture Repair**
- 15 - **Baking**
- 16 - **Welding**
- 17 - **Sheetrock Repair**
- 18 - **Masonry Repair**
- 19 - **Painting**
- 20 - **Budgeting**

## *OUTSIDE WORK*

- 21 - **Mow & Trim Grass**
- 22 - **Rake**
- 23 - **Trim scrubs**
- 24 - **Cut Fallen Branches**
- 25 - **Weed**
- 26 - **Split Firewood**
- 27 - **Shovel Snow**
- 28 - **Clean Gutters**
- 29 - **Wash Windows**
- 30 - **Wash Car**
- 31 - **Tackle Any Project**

## *INSIDE WORK*

- 32 - **Vacuum & Dust**
- 33 - **Change Linens**
- 34 - **Hang Pictures or Plants**
- 35 - **Shampoo Rug**
- 36 - **Tackle Any Project**
- 37 - **General Labor**
- 38 - **Team Leader** (Team leaders are needed when 3 or more persons are working as a group.)

## *VEHICLE & EQUIPMENT USE*

- 39 - **Truck Owner - Hauling, etc.**
- 40 - **Auto Owner - Transportation**
- 41 - **Willing to Use Personal Tools**

## *SPECIAL WIDOW CARE*

- 42 - **Visit a Widow**
- 43 - **Adopt a Widow**
- 44 - **Phone Widows Regular Basis**
- 45 - **Write Notes to Widows**

# Immanuel Baptist Church

## List of Servants & Skills

<b>Name of Volunteer</b>	Phone # of Volunteer	<p>The numbers in this section stand for specific skills of the volunteer (see the previous page -- <i>Key to Talents/Skills</i>). For example: "1" stands for Carpentry Minor ; "9" stands for Appliance Repair Minor; etc. Notice: The <b>shaded</b> areas represent the talents/skills of the volunteer that he/she is willing to contribute to a widow who is in need.</p> <p>Concerning availability: <b>PERIOD</b> is the frequency that a volunteer is willing to serve (weekly, monthly, when needed, etc). <b>DAY/TIME</b> is the specific time during a week/month that one can volunteer.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Note: 1=Morning; 2= Afternoon; 3=Evening</b></p> <p>Example: <b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun/Mon = 1,2,3; Sat=2 (This means that the volunteer is available on Sunday or Monday in the morning, afternoon, or night; and on Saturday, he/she is available in the afternoon.)</p> <p>Example: <b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=3; Sun/Sat=1,2 (This means that a person is available any day of the week during the evenings. Also, on Sunday and Saturday he/she is available in the morning and afternoon.)</p>
<b>PERIOD:</b> As Needed <i>OR</i> Weekly <i>OR</i> Monthly, etc.		
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun/Mon = 1,2,3; Sat = 2		

VOLUNTEER	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Sun=1,2,3; Sun-/Fri=3		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Once a month		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
VOLUNTEER	325-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	21	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun=2,3; Sat=2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=1		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	NONE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sat=2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sat=1,2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> anytime/advance notice req.		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> 1 per month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Monthly		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=3; Sun/Sat=1,2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD: As needed</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME: Mon-Thurs=3</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD: Occansionally</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD: When available</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD: As needed</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME: Tues=3</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD: As needed</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME: Fri=3;Sat-1,2,3</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD: weekly</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME: Sun/Sat=1,2,3;Mon-Wed=3</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> weekly		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=3; Sun/Sat=1,2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=1,2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	384-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon-Sat=3; Sat=1,2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon/Tues/Fri/Sat=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Weekly-3hrs		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45



<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> monthly		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Tues/Thurs=1,2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> once a month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun/Fri=3; Sat=1		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> advance notice		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Weekly		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat(ex.Wed.)=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	589-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEERS</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun/Sat=1,2,3;Fri=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month/as needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun/Sat=1,2,3; Mon-Fri=1		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sat=1,2,3;		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon-Sat(ex.Wed)=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon-Fri=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sat=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=3; Sun /Sat=1,2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month/3 hrs		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon/Tues=3; Sat=2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Weekly		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Fri=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon-Fri=3; Sat=1,2,3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon-Fri=3; Sat=1,2,3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed (when available)		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Thurs=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon/Tues=3; Sat=2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month/as needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon, Tues, Thurs=2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Weekly (2 hrs)		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Fri/Sat=1		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Weekly (2 hrs)		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sat=1		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	21	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat=1,2,3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon/Thurs=3;Thurs/Fri=2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Weekly (4 hrs)		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat(ex Tues)=2,3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Weekly (4 hrs)		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sun-Sat(ex. Tues)=2,3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Monthly (2 X's 4 hrs)		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Sat=1,2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed (1hr week, 1xmon.3hr)		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	NONE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon-Sat=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> As needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Tues=2		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon=3;Thurs-Fri=3;Sat=1,2,3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month (3 hrs)		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon-Fri=3; Sat=1,2,3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	487-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b> Once a month/as needed		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b> Mon/Thurs=3		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD: 2 X's Month/ 2 hrs</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME: Sun-Sat=3</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	425-XXXX	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD: Once a month (3 hrs)</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME: Sun=2; Thurs-3</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>PERIOD:</b>		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DAY/TIME:</b>		31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45



# *Monthly Report*

**Copy current monthly report and submit  
to the pastor at the deacon's meeting.**

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;"><i>October Report</i></h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;"><i>1996</i></h3> </div>	<b>Deacon's Name:</b> _____
	<b>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</b> _____

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y    N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y    N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y    N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y    N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b>				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>		<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>	
<b>Widow's Name:</b>				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>		<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>	
<b>Widow's Name:</b>				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>		<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>	

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 3px double black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;"><i>November Report</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;"><i>1996</i></p> </div>	<p><b>Deacon's Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</b> _____</p>
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<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 3px double black; padding: 5px;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;"><i>December Report</i></h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;"><i>1996</i></h3> </div>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Deacon's Name:</td> <td style="width: 20%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Deacon's Name:		Total Number of Contacts for the Month:	
Deacon's Name:					
Total Number of Contacts for the Month:					

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b>				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>		<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>	
<b>Widow's Name:</b>				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>		<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>	
<b>Widow's Name:</b>				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>		<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>	

# Monthly Report

<b>January Report</b> <b>1997</b>	Deacon's Name:	
	Total Number of Contacts for the Month:	

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>



Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 3px double black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;"><i>February Report</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;"><i>1997</i></p> </div>	<p><b>Deacon's Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</b> _____</p>
---	--

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y    N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y    N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y    N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y    N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated
Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated
Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated

# Monthly Report

<b>March Report</b> <b>1997</b>	<b>Deacon's Name:</b> _____
	<b>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</b> _____

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y    N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y    N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y    N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y    N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	_____
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	_____
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated
Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	_____
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	_____
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated
Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	_____
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	_____
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 3px double black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;"><i>April Report</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;"><i>1997</i></p> </div>	<p><b>Deacon's Name:</b> _____</p> <hr/> <p><b>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</b> _____</p>
--	--

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	_____
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	_____
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated
Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	_____
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	_____
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated
Widow's Name:			
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____	
How Many Phone Calls Made?		_____	
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		_____	
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y	N	_____
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y	N	_____
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 3px double black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;"><i>May Report</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;"><i>1997</i></p> </div>	<p><b>Deacon's Name:</b> _____</p> <hr/> <p><b>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</b> _____</p>
--	--

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y    N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y    N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y    N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y    N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>



Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 3px double black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;"><i>June Report</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;"><i>1997</i></p> </div>	<p><b>Deacon's Name:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</b> _____</p>
---	--

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>		<b>Type of Project</b>
		<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>		<b>Type of Project</b>
		<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>
<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>
<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 3px double black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;"><i>July Report</i></p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 0;"><i>1997</i></p> </div>	<p><b>Deacon's Name:</b> _____</p> <hr/> <p><b>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</b> _____</p>
---	--

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b> _____		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	

# Monthly Report

<b>August Report</b> <b>1997</b>	Deacon's Name:	
	Total Number of Contacts for the Month:	

Widow's Name:		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y N	
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry	Type of Project	Date Participated
Widow's Name:		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y N	
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry	Type of Project	Date Participated

Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	

# *Monthly Report*

<div style="border: 3px double black; padding: 5px;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;"><i>September Report</i></h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;"><i>1997</i></h3> </div>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Deacon's Name:</td> <td style="width: 20%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Number of Contacts for the Month:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Deacon's Name:		Total Number of Contacts for the Month:	
Deacon's Name:					
Total Number of Contacts for the Month:					

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>

<b>Widow's Name:</b>		
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____
How Many Phone Calls Made?		
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?		
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y   N	
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y   N	
<b>Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Date Participated</b>



Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	
Widow's Name:				
How Many Visits Made?		Special Concerns: _____ _____ _____ _____		
How Many Phone Calls Made?				
Number of Cards or Letters Mailed?				
Contacted a Family Member(s)?	Y			N
Contacted Widow's Neighbor(s)?	Y			N
Names of Volunteers Used in Ministry		Type of Project	Date Participated	

# **Lessons**

**The Following are Lessons**

**To Enable**

**The Servant-Leader**

**To be an Effective Minister**

**To the Widows**

*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;  
and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:5).*

# How to Use this Manual

## Lesson 1

As a servant-leader, you are appointed by God and the membership of the Immanuel Baptist Church to care for the widows. This manual is designed to assist you in this divine privilege and calling. The following guidelines are given to maximize the effectiveness of your ministry. Any suggestions in ways that this manual could be improved will be greatly appreciated.

1.) This worker's manual is your guide in helping you have an effective and fulfilling ministry. Take special care of it and refer to it often! This workbook is yours; feel free to mark it up with notes and prayer requests concerning your widows.

2.) Carry this manual with you on your visits so you can refer to it, and so you can complete the forms for each widow. It is important to keep your records up to date! Note: Two forms, ***Information Sheet on Widows*** and ***Funeral Arrangements***, must be completed by January 31st, 1997.

3.) Review the widows' needs and prayer requests during the week as often as possible. Please--take time to pray for your widows and their needs.

4.) ***Bring this manual to every deacons' meeting!*** You will need to refer to it when giving your monthly report on ministry activities. Before coming to the monthly meeting, copy the appropriate report to be submitted to the pastor.

5.) Keep the manual in a safe and secure place. CAUTION: Information placed in this document concerning your widows is personal and confidential. Be careful who reads it and where you set it.

# Ministering to the Spirit

## Lesson 2

Time should be taken in your visits with widows to discuss spiritual matters. At some point, it would be good for you to share your personal testimony. This should be followed by asking the widow to share her testimony. According to the survey taken at the *Princeton Towers*, 71% of widows responding to the questionnaire believe that they must do certain things to merit salvation. In other words, they believe that being born again means to trust in Jesus plus their performance in life. Spend time sharing the doctrine of grace. Help your widow to understand that only by GRACE (unmerited favor; a free gift) can a person be saved. Never forget, being concerned for their spiritual destiny is the most important service you can render to your widow. Beyond the solid foundation of Christ, assisting your widow in her spiritual development is of utmost importance.

There are several ways to edify and to encourage the widow spiritually. The following are a few suggestions:

R \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_: When visiting, be sure to bring a Bible. At some point, take time to **read** some **Scripture** verses. Passages from the Psalms are very inspirational and soothing.

P \_\_\_\_\_: Before leaving, ask the widow to share her prayer needs. Take a moment to **pray** specifically for her requests. Do not forget her prayer concerns as soon as you leave her house; indicate during your next visit that you have been praying for her, and find out if additional prayer is desired for those needs. **Caution:** If you decide to submit a widow's prayer concern to the prayer chain, make sure she approves. Otherwise, keep all prayer request strictly confidential. Remember, in your personal devotional time, pray for your widows and their specific needs.

C \_\_\_\_\_: Due to the fact that Immanuel has **communion** during evening services each quarter, some widows find it too difficult and dangerous to come out at night. Consider taking communion to those widows who are unable to attend the Sunday evening service or who are home bound.

S \_\_\_\_\_ TAPES: For those who miss a service or are home bound, ask them if they would like **sermon** tapes. (Don't forget to include a bulletin.)

L \_\_\_\_\_: Provide some Christian **literature** such as "Open Widows" or "Daily Bread" to aid them in their devotions. Check and see if they need a large print Bible.

Other suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Understanding Loneliness

## Lesson 3

One of the gravest problems concerning the widow is in the area of loneliness. In a recent survey, 78% of Southern Baptist widows in West Virginia who completed the special questionnaire, stated that they experience times of loneliness. 71% wished they had someone to talk to. According to this same survey, 75% picked a friendly visit as their greatest need. If this is true, then how can the servant-leader minister to the lonely widow? Below are some ways that the deacon can help the widow with her loneliness:

C \_\_\_\_\_: **Call** your widow often. It is amazing how a concerned and loving voice can pick up the spirit of a lonely widow.

V \_\_\_\_\_: **Visit** at least once a month. For the deacon who is assigned to approximately four widows, this would amount to one visit per week. If a relationship is going to develop, there must be a personal encounter--one-on-one contact. This kind of care sends a strong signal to widows that they are loved and appreciated.

E \_\_\_\_\_: According to the same survey mentioned above, 60% of the widows never get visited by a deacon. Only 4% of deacons visit monthly. There needs to be a greater **effort** in reaching out to lonely widowed women. The servant-leader (the deacon) must take the initiative to minister to the widow concerning loneliness.

M \_\_\_\_\_ Involvement: Enlist volunteers of Immanuel to visit, call and write your widow. There are many in our **membership** who would love to have an opportunity to minister to a lonely heart. Familiarize yourself with the volunteers listed in this workbook and use them often.

The Bible states, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). May each deacon set his heart on the divine calling and privilege of taking care of the widow.

# Areas of Caution

## Lesson 4

P\_\_\_\_\_ : When promising a widow that you are going to do something, make sure you follow through. If an emergency arises and you cannot fulfill your promise, be sure to contact her immediately. Remember to reschedule a time suitable for both of you. Being a **promise keeper** will be beneficial in building a solid relationship with your widow as well as bring glory to the name of our Lord.

O\_\_\_\_\_ : Be careful about **over dependency**. There will be occasions when one of your widows will lean on you more than necessary. One symptom of this would be her calling you every day (throughout the day) concerning every situation. Be firm and loving in your dealings if this takes place. Potentially, one widow could burn you out in a matter of a few weeks if she is allowed to be overly dependent.

B\_\_\_\_\_ : Some widows require more attention than others, but strive for **balance**. Though a widow does not appear to have a need, continual contact and acts of care are vital. Don't forget, many of your widows are a part of the communication grapevine. They compare "apples for apples!"

C\_\_\_\_\_ : **Confidentiality** can not be overly stressed when dealing with widows. They must be free to express openly their hearts. If widows know you are one who can keep a secret, they will confide in you. This is a privilege, yet at the same time an awesome responsibility.

D\_\_\_\_\_ : The aging process has a way of making a person inflexible and headstrong. Have patience with those who seem unreasonable. Always treat widows with the utmost of respect and **dignity**. Though you may not agree with their line of reasoning, give them the right to their opinion. Our ministry is not focused on changing the widow, but on loving and caring for them.

# Twelve Tips to Demonstrate Care

## Lesson 5

There are numerous ways that a servant-leader can demonstrate care or express love for their widows. Below are twelve expressions of love and care; however, the sky is the limit, so be creative:

- 1.) C \_\_\_\_\_ : Send a **card** on her birthday or while you are on vacation.
- 2.) L \_\_\_\_\_ : Take her out to **lunch** or bring lunch to her house.
- 3.) P \_\_\_\_\_ : Call her for the express purpose of **prayer**.
- 4.) R \_\_\_\_\_ : **Remember** by card or phone the anniversary of spouse's death; or plant a memorial tree in the widow's yard in memory of deceased spouse; etc.
- 5.) P \_\_\_\_\_ : Take a Saturday morning to do several **projects** like cleaning out gutters or raking leaves.
- 6.) C \_\_\_\_\_ : Have your children bake **cookies** and then deliver them .
- 7.) V \_\_\_\_\_ : Bring her some **vegetables** out of your garden.
- 8.) G \_\_\_\_\_ : Give her a **gift** for Christmas handcrafted by your family.
- 9.) S \_\_\_\_\_ : **Shovel** walks and stay in close communication during snow storms.
- 10.) G \_\_\_\_\_ : Make a special point to **greet** your widow in the parking lot of the church or in her Sunday School class on Sunday morning.
- 11.) I \_\_\_\_\_ : **Invite** a widow home after church for homemade ice-cream.
- 12.) F \_\_\_\_\_ : Make her feel special with a corsage or **flowers** on Mothers' Day. Remember balance!

# Special Issues Concerning Widows

## Lesson 6

S \_\_\_\_\_ : **Security** is a special concern to most widows. Because many live alone, extra precautions are taken in securing doors and windows. It is a good idea to do a spot check of locks and latches. Do not forget to check the basement and attic windows. Make sure that the fire, police, and rescue squad's numbers are in plain view near her phone and written in large bold numbers. Also, you may want to place your name on the list so she can contact you in case of an emergency.

S \_\_\_\_\_ : **Safety** is another area of concern for widows. Make sure smoke detectors are installed and working. If a wood stove is used, a fire extinguisher should be close by. Look for potential safety problems such as: overloaded or frayed extension cords, protruding objects that could cut or trip, gas leaks, leaky flues; etc.

S \_\_\_\_\_ : **Sickness** comes often to the widow. There are occasions when a widow is sick, yet she fails to get the proper medical treatment. Encourage her to acquire medical attention and even offer to take her. If your efforts fail, you may want to alert the family and/or doctor. Contact the members who are on the prayer chain, the widow's Sunday School class, and pastor when your widow is in the hospital or is home sick. Meals, calls and cards can be sent to demonstrate love and concern.

S \_\_\_\_\_ : **Sensitivity** to certain areas of a widow's life is consequential. Remember, widows are anxious concerning many things. Though it may seem trivial to you, be patient and understanding. Also, be sensitive to the widow's need to make decisions. It is important that she is able to feel independent and in control of matters pertaining to her life. Ask God for great wisdom as you deal with these sensitive areas.

From your experience, what are other areas of concern that you could add to this list: \_\_\_\_\_

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# House Maintenance Concerns

## Lesson 7

Only 5% of widows live in nursing homes. This means that many own their dwelling. In surveying Southern Baptist widows, it was discovered that 81% of them reside in their homes. Those surveyed indicated some revealing things concerning their homes:

- 97% live by themselves
- 28 years is the average length living in their home
- 69% indicated that widows need and desire help in maintaining their home.
- 77% feel that the church should assist widows
- Only 46% feel comfortable to call on the church for assistance.

Because many widows feel uncomfortable in asking for assistance, the servant-leader must use several of his "senses" to discover needs.

**L** \_\_\_\_\_: When talking with a widow, the servant-leader should **listen** for areas of concern. Many times in conversations the widow will reveal a particular project that she is attempting to do or hire out. Even in the widow's prayer request, if the deacon is discerning, he can discover potential needs.

**L** \_\_\_\_\_: It is amazing what one can see if he is observant. The servant-leader should keep his eyes open for needs or hazards in and around the home. For example: a door that does not latch, overloaded extension cords, the need for weather strip around windows, flammable chemicals close to a gas hot water heater or furnace, paint peeling off walls, dripping faucets, and a rotted board on the porch steps are just a few areas that volunteers could assist the widow. **Look** for opportunities for ministry. Do not wait for them to call you. Also, be sure to involve the family when possible and members of Immanuel Baptist Church.

**S** \_\_\_\_\_: Beware of unusual odors. If the servant-leader detects a sewage odor, this could mean a leak around the seal of a toilet or a broken sewer line. The most crucial thing to lookout for is a gas leak. Pay particular attention around gas furnaces, stoves, and water heaters. By using one's sense of **smell**, the deacon could save his widow's life.

Because the widow is alone, she attempts to do many things herself. What a relief it would be if widows felt comfortable to contact their deacon for help. What a God-given privilege it is to minister to widows in need.

# Hospital Visitation

## Lesson 8

There will be times when widows will be admitted to a hospital. Though they come for rest and recovery, a widow can literally become exhausted from the visits of sincere family and friends. Listed below are a few helpful hints to help you avoid the errors and mistakes of most who visit in the hospitals. These practical suggestions will enhance your time with your recovering widow.

**G** \_\_\_\_\_: When you do hospital visitation, always carry your Bible--the *Gospel*. If the widow has been in the hospital for an extended stay, bring a weekly church bulletin so she can stay informed. Be sure to have a Gospel tract that you can share with lost family members or with the other patient(s) in the room.

**S** \_\_\_\_\_: Keep your hospital visit *short*. Five to seven minutes is ample time to convey your concerns and best wishes.

**T** \_\_\_\_\_: The *Timing* of a visit is very important. You do not want to visit during meal times. Try to visit before or after meals.

**C** \_\_\_\_\_: Demonstrate *courtesy* by lightly knocking on the door before entering the room. If the door is closed, you may want to check with staff at the nurses station. Never sit on the patient's bed.

**P** \_\_\_\_\_: Use *positive* and encouraging words. For example, if she is in for colon surgery, do not tell her how your cousin died from the operation. Choose your words wisely.

**S** \_\_\_\_\_: Many wonderful statements can be said during your visit, but nothing is as powerful and life changing as the Word of God. Take time to read *Scripture*. Several possible Scripture readings are: Psa. 73:25-28; 103:1-14; 121:1-8; 146:1-10; 147:1-11; Matt 6:25-33; Phil. 4:6-7.

**P** \_\_\_\_\_: Share a *prayer* for encouragement and healing. If it is not a private room, pray also for the person in the next bed.

**G** \_\_\_\_\_: *Gifts* are always appreciated. Flowers, stuffed animals, cards and magazines are niceties that widows love. If you feel lead, you may want to ask if there is anything she needs, or needs done.

# Working With Volunteers

## Lesson 9

God has blessed Immanuel Baptist Church with members who have many talents and skills. Most are willing to share time and talents with a widow in need. However, to profit from our abundant resources you must be willing to utilize members of the church. The following suggestions will assist you in making the best use of volunteers and helping them to engage in meaningful ministry with widows.

F \_\_\_\_\_: Be very **familiar** with the list of volunteers in the back of this workbook. By getting the membership of Immanuel Baptist Church involved, ten times more can be accomplished, and many will be able to share in the wonderful blessing of serving others.

E \_\_\_\_\_ & S \_\_\_\_\_: Make sure that the assigned volunteer(s) has all the **equipment** and **supplies** needed for the job. There will be instances where you will have to place the materials and equipment at the ministry location.

M \_\_\_\_\_: It is important to ensure that the volunteer(s) is well **matched** (job-to-skill). Workers can easily become frustrated if the assignment is beyond their expertise.

V \_\_\_\_\_: Encourage the volunteer to take some time to sit and chat with the widow. Some of the most meaningful experiences come from a cup of coffee and a few minutes of conversation. In many instances, the widow would rather talk with someone than have their home repaired. Therefore, volunteers should plan to spend some time in **visiting** the widow.

E \_\_\_\_\_: Upon completion of a mission task, call or send a note of appreciation to the volunteer(s). This will **encourage** him or her to want to continue in this endeavor of ministering to the widow's needs.

# The Finances of Widows

## Lesson 10

In surveying widows in the Southern Baptist Convention of West Virginia, 82% have incomes ranging from 2000 to 18000 dollars annually. It does not take much imagination to realize that at times widows struggle financially. Below are several suggestions in helping the widow in the area of her finances.

1.) A \_\_\_\_\_: After establishing a trusting relationship with your widow, tactfully make inquiry concerning their monetary needs. Make sure that they have sufficient funds to meet their financial obligations. Winter season can be especially difficult due to the high utility usage. In other words, **asking** the right questions can reveal hidden needs. Be careful not to embarrass or offend them.

2.) A \_\_\_\_\_: Unfortunately, there are unscrupulous people that pray on elderly women taking advantage of them. Be **available** (if they should ask) to scrutinize major transactions taken by your widow. Automobile and home repairs, merchandize sold door-to-door, or anything dealing with substantial amounts of money are openings for flimflam activity.

3.) I \_\_\_\_\_ Relatives: When a widow has a financial need, the family should be notified. **Informing relatives** gives them an opportunity to minister to the widow. The Bible states, "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:4,8).

4.) B \_\_\_\_\_ Fund: In the event that relatives are not able or available to assist, Immanuel Baptist Church has set aside monies for such occasions. The **Benevolent Fund** is a resource that is available to any widow that has a need.

5.) V \_\_\_\_\_ Assistance: Remember, if a widow is planning to hire an individual or a local company to assist her in a project, consider using a **volunteer** from Immanuel Baptist Church. There is a list of members in this manual having a variety of skills who have indicated their desire to contribute time and talents to a widow in need. Every deacon should take advantage of this invaluable resource. Not only will the widow save money, but you provide another opportunity for a member of Immanuel Baptist Church to be blessed by serving another.

6.) A \_\_\_\_\_: Be **aware** and on the lookout for special discounts and/or benefits available to senior citizens. Many times stores run specials on products and services just for the elderly. Communicate bargains and benefits to your widows.

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VITA

Richard W. Sadler

PERSONAL

Born: September 10, 1952  
Married: Candice J. Sadler, January 14, 1972  
Children: Matthew Scott, born September 7, 1975  
          Holly Marie, born November 11, 1978  
          Heather Anne, born August 25, 1980

EDUCATIONAL

B.A., Columbia International University, 1986  
M.Div., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary,  
1988

MINISTERIAL

License: September 14, 1983, First Baptist Church,  
Charlottesville, Virginia  
Ordination: February 24, 1985, Pineview Baptist  
Church, West Columbia, South Carolina

PROFESSIONAL

Associate Pastor, Christian Fellowship Baptist  
Church, Gaston, South Carolina, 1984-1986  
Pastor, New Salem Baptist Church, Pittsboro,  
North Carolina, 1986-1988  
Pastor, Ross Grove Baptist Church, Shelby,  
North Carolina, 1988-1889  
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Plainville,  
Connecticut, 1990-1994  
Pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Princeton,  
West Virginia, 1994-present