

# DEACON-LED WORKDAY PLANNING GUIDE

The concept of a "Deacon Workday" was created so that, on a specific date, a large group of men could work together to encourage and support our widows by helping them in the maintenance of their homes and landscapes.

The idea of a "Deacon-Led" Workday was developed in 1998 so that others (men, women and children) could join the deacons, thereby sharing the blessings and enabling us to accomplish even more.

Priority should be placed on those projects:

- a) which benefit those widows who are least able to afford the repairs on their own
- b) which benefit those widows who have no family members who are able to assist, either by completing the needed repairs themselves or by paying to have a contractor to complete the repairs
- c) which are most critical to the maintenance of the home.

## IDEAS FROM PAST SUCCESSFUL WORKDAYS:

### 1) CAREFULLY SET THE DATE MONTHS AHEAD, THEN PROTECT IT

- >> Typically a Saturday works best. Pick a time of year when the weather will be mild. The first Saturday in May and the first Saturday in October have worked well in the past.
- >> Plan an early start-time!! If serving breakfast, start serving by 7:00. Dispense work-crews by 8:00.
- >> Plan an ending-time (2:00 PM, for instance) and encourage the workers to try and stay for the entire session.
- >> Consult with church staff and church calendar to anticipate and avoid conflicts (major events, holidays, etc.)
- >> Place the event on the church calendar early (preferably at least 6 months in advance). Currently this is done through the CARF system and must be done in person through the Church Receptionist. The kitchen can be used, but requires a member of the kitchen-staff to be present (a fee is required).
- >> Ask the staff to help us "protect" the date and time of this event by not scheduling other events on top of it.
- >> Notify the deacon body of the chosen date of the event as soon as it is selected

### 2) ASSIGN A WORKDAY CHAIRMAN (OR CHAIR-COMMITTEE)

NOTE: We think it is helpful to consult with the Helping Hands Ministry (HHM) for recent service-information to specific widows, but we strongly feel it is appropriate that this chairman or chair-committee NOT come from the HHM so that the Deacon-Led Workday and the HHM can remain separate and distinct.

#### TASKS TO COMPLETE WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE WORKDAY:

- >> Encourage the deacons to contact their widows to determine needs then to report back to the chairman
- >> Verify that all widows have been contacted
- >> Be the main contact-person(s) to collect project-requests from widows and to gather worker-commitments
- >> Analyze the requests and prioritize those to be included in the workday
- >> Recruit a "foreman" for each project to visit the site, plan the job and compile materials and tools-lists
- >> Assign workers to specific teams (helps them know what tools to bring and how to dress)
- >> Purchase materials and/or gather tools and arrange for their delivery to each site prior to the workday
- >> Recruit at least one workday "gopher" to procure unexpected supplies or tools and deliver to site
- >> If breakfast is to be provided, recruit workers to plan the meal, procure food and serve the meal

#### TASKS ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT:

- >> Begin early!! Be organized and efficient. Have assignments, workers, tools and materials ready.
- >> Encourage the workers to be safe on the job and not to take excessive risks
- >> Exchange cell-phone numbers of the foremen to ensure efficient communication during the day
- >> Encourage the workers to take time during the day (perhaps during a break or at lunch) to visit with the widow and minister to her. Her home-maintenance project is important, but **encouraging her is our top priority!!!**
- >> Assign late-comers to work-groups
- >> Monitor job-progress during the day, and as small jobs are finished, redirect those crews to larger projects.

## IDEAS FROM PAST SUCCESSFUL WORKDAYS (continued):

### 3) ADVERTISE WELL TO RECRUIT AS MANY DEACONS AND NON-DEACONS AS POSSIBLE:

- >> Begin publicity and recruitment early (4-6 weeks in advance of the event)
- >> Advertise early and often, utilizing different forms of advertisement (a combination of these):
  - church publications (give date & time, list types of projects, and who can participate and point-of-contact)
  - In-person Sunday School announcements (send deacons to make the pitch to various departments or classes)
  - testimonials from the pulpit (spark interest; convey the benefits to both the widow & the worker)
  - staff announcements from the pulpit
  - emails to deacons (current and reserve)
  - postcards--they can be placed on the fridge or bulletin board as a reminder to the deacon (and his wife!)

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### EXAMPLES OF THE TYPES OF PROJECTS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED IN PAST WORKDAYS:

- >> Yard clean-up (raking leaves, cleaning gutters, trimming trees or shrubs, blowing leaves off of roof)
- >> Small roof repairs (repairing leaks, replacing small patio covers)
- >> Installing smoke-detectors or changing batteries in existing units
- >> Light home-maintenance items (changing light bulbs, replacing A/C filters, freeing sticky doors or windows)
- >> Cutting down dead trees that threaten to fall and harm the house, the car or people
- >> Plumbing repairs (dripping faucets, "running" toilets, leaking pipes)
- >> Installation of underground drains to protect the home from flooding
- >> Small painting projects (sometimes the prep-work has been done by deacons on a previous day)
- >> Fence repair (raising gates, replacing broken posts or pickets, etc.)
- >> Installing more secure locks on doors or windows

### EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS THAT PROBABLY SHOULD BE AVOIDED:

- >> Roofing or painting an entire house
- >> Projects requiring a city permit
- >> Dangerous or risky projects that would be better-suited for a contractor with expertise and/or liability insurance

### MISTAKES WE'VE MADE IN THE PAST (lessons we've learned the "hard way"):

- >> Poor calendarization: placing the event on the calendar too late or placing the event on a holiday weekend
- >> Poor advertising: Late or insufficient ads or Not directing advertisement to the entire church body
- >> Not contacting all of our widows (sometimes this has been due to last-minute advertisement to the deacons)
- >> Getting started late. An 8:00 breakfast results in the workday not starting until 9:00 or 9:30. Crews don't get to the site until 10:00 and many go home at noon. Result: very little work gets done.
- >> Not planning an end-time and not re-grouping crews when short projects are completed
- >> Waiting until just a few days before the workday to plan the projects
- >> Waiting until the morning of the workday to buy materials or to assign workers
- >> Trying to do too many projects (know how many workers you will have and assign the projects accordingly)
- >> Attempting a project that is too large for the number of workers or one that is too advanced for our level of expertise
- >> Accepting projects that really should be completed by able-bodied members of the widow's family
- >> Not assigning a specific person to be in charge of either receiving job-requests or worker-commitments.
- >> Turning the organization of the project over to the pastor's secretary. She does great work, but caring for our widows is the responsibility of the deacons and we need to take "ownership" of this project.