



Deacon's voice in a Bishop Search

Archdeacon and Director's Conference: Open Space Notes - Spring 2014

Every year, AED convenes a large group of Archdeacons and Deacon Directors for a professional learning lab. Using [Open Space Technology](#) methods to shape the discussion, these experts in diaconal formation and management of deacon programs provide peer review of adaptations made in their local programs, or raise timely issues for general discussion. Discussion notes are kept. These "Open Space Notes," while often written informally, provide the best and most recent thinking on a variety of diaconal theological and management challenges by a body of experienced deacons with a wealth of knowledge. Names listed are those of the Conveners. Contact information to initiate further discussion may often be located in the [Directory of Deacons](#) published by AED annually.

What should be done to ensure the deacons' voices are heard in a Bishop Search Process?

Facilitator: Ed Richards

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Also in discussion group: Betsy Bennett, Carole Maddux, Molly Solbak

Recommendations for deacons' voices to be heard in Bishop Search Process...in no particular order

1. When a call for application to be on the search committee is issued, be sure one or more deacons apply
2. If no deacon is selected for committee, be sure the chair of the committee hears from deacons concerning questions that might be asked of bishops, the concerns of deacons, etc
3. If possible, plan a walk-about just for deacons; or at least ensure deacons are included on walk-about teams
4. Suggested that a deacon serve as chaplain for the candidates and the search committee to 'wrap the whole process in prayer'
5. Prepare a list of questions that deacons can ask on walk-about
(*Tina Campbell has a list from a few years ago...hopefully we can get it and include with these notes)

Some possible questions:

- What is your vision of deacons and their ministry?
- How do you feel regarding ministry to the poor?
- What is your vision of the relationship between a bishop and the deacons?
- What is your vision of the pastoral care ministry of deacons?



Important: *How do you see the role of the deacon in the diakonia of all believers?*

If candidate is currently a parish priest, ask: *What is your experience of deacons?*

Have deacons come together and share answers they heard...then share report with chair of search committee

6. Prepare a booklet to give to each of the candidates. Book to include picture of each deacon, name, and parish, brief description of their call to the diaconate, current ministry beyond liturgical role, what they see as their growing edge...how they are growing toward the future (Note: some dioceses give this booklet to the Bishop-elect during the transition phase)
7. Know that candidates will be checking parish websites in the diocese...be sure there is a visible presence of the deacons in all their roles in parishes and in diocesan activities...showcase the deacons' ministries
8. If possible learn which bishops throughout the church each of the candidates admire...it will give a clue regarding the candidates leanings
9. Be sure to read candidate statements before meeting and questioning them. Deacons' questions will be more meaningful.