



Deacon Considerations for Assisting Widows

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Widows “in need”

First, there are no hard and fast rules for assisting widows. Theologically, we are directed to assist widows in need. Just because they are widows doesn't mean they are poor or destitute. Most of our widows are just the opposite. What is “in need”? That will be left up to the individual deacon. Some widows may need home repairs. Some can afford the repairs and just need a little direction and recommendation for a contractor. Some will need a little help with repair, by your labor or a contractor. If a contractor is used by a widow in need, then benevolence should be considered. “Need” can come in many different conditions. The widow may just need a little attention and guidance....some assurance that there's somebody out there for her. That could be invaluable. If she's a new widow whose husband took care of everything, she may be somewhat lost in some areas. You can certainly assist and comfort her by being available and providing some guidance.

Liability for the Deacon and the Church

We all want to help...it's good for our heart and it's good for the widow. However, we must consider potential liability. And, it's not just widows we may be helping.

As much as we may want to help, we must consider the potential for serious damage to a widow's home. Are you an expert in electrical work? Plumbing? Burning a house down or flooding the floors is obviously a consideration. Personally, I require a bonded expert to work on my house for good reasons. Use caution! If you are not confident in your repairs, reconsider.

If the job is beyond the scope of your expertise, then a substitute approach would be to offer the name and number of your contractor after due deliberation with your widow.

Help her make a plan. Have her call, not you. Again, under due circumstances, benevolence could be appropriate. You should contact the Benevolence Deacon for possible assistance.

Bottom Line: Be cautious and use common sense when assisting your widows.

Also, it is highly recommended that you take your wife or another willing person with you for a number of good reasons.