

*Coming Alive in Christ:  
Training for PC(USA) Ruling Elders  
and Deacons Based on the Constitutional Questions*

**Session 3 Reflection Questions**

**Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?**

What gives you energy? What depletes you? When you consider the ecosystem of your congregation, what requires the most energy? How might you replenish it? What might you need to let go of in order to be restored?

Tell a story about a time you experienced restoration. Where were you? Who were you with? What did you see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or feel in this place?

Energy Inventory

Invite the leaders to make a list of all the areas in their lives in which they give energy. This might include jobs, family, hobbies, friendships, volunteer work, caregiving responsibilities, etc. Ask them to circle the things that require the most *energy*—which may be different from the things that take the most *time*. Encourage them to consider not only physical effort, but emotional, spiritual, and intellectual energy as well. For the visual thinkers in the group, invite them to make pie graphs to illustrate their lists. Invite them to reflect on what in their graphs surprises them or resonates with them.

Now invite them to do the same activity collectively, reflecting on the time and energy of the congregation. Take into account not only where the bulk of time and energy is spent but also the financial resources. Take time to reflect as a group on how the matrix of time, energy, and resources spent might match what Frederick Buechner describes as the intersection of the congregation's deep gladness and the world's hunger.

In what ways have you deepened your understanding? What are you still learning? When you consider the ecosystem of your congregation, what information, learning, or training would enable you to deepen your understanding of the community you are called to serve, or expand your impact as followers of Jesus?

Tell a story about a time you experienced growth in your own understanding. Who was your teacher/mentor? How did this growth change or shape you? Is it connected to your call to service in the church?

What sparks your imagination? Is it a good story? Vibrant words? Art? Music? When you consider the ecosystem of your congregation, is there a biblical story that stretches your imagination or that might inspire the work God is calling you to do together?

Tell a story about a time your own imagination was sparked. Did it help you take a leap of faith or make a decision about the future?

What are the marks of your most loving relationships? What is the greatest challenge you encounter as you work to deepen your relationships? When you consider the ecosystem of your congregation, what are the marks of how you relate to one another? In what ways do you care for one another? Are there barriers that keep you from asking for what you need or sharing your whole selves?

Tell a story about a time you gave or received love in community. Where were you? How did you open yourself up to receiving love and care? Was it easy or difficult?

Three guiding questions for group or small group discussion to get to know each other better:

What brings you joy?

Why do you love about our church? What keeps you up at night?

**Will you be a faithful ruling elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?**

What are some ways the session can encourage community and trust-building among its members?

How can the session foster healthy relationships and safe, productive working environments?

How do you model self-care and spiritual care for yourself and others?

*For Further Study*

Scripture passages

- a) Acts 15:1–29; 16:4
- b) Ephesians 4:1–13
- c) Colossians 3:1–17
- d) 1 John 4:18–21
- e) 2 Timothy 3:14–4:5

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

- a) “A Brief Statement of Faith,” *Book of Confessions*, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Section 11.4.
- b) “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity,” particularly Section F-3.0202.
- c) “The Form of Government,” particularly sections G-2.0301 (“Ruling Elder Defined”) and G-3.0201 (“Composition and Responsibilities”).
- d) “Directory for Worship,” particularly Sections W-2.0303 (“Ruling Elders”) and W-4.0301 (“Acts of Christian Service”).

**Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people’s help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?**

In discerning a call to the ministry of deacon, what aspects did you consider?

How does a look into Acts 6:1–7 and some history behind the biblical concept of deacon assist you in moving forward with this call?

How can the framework of charity being a “love of persons” transform your ministry and the way that you minister to those in need?

Consider the ways in which the Gospel’s depict Christ’s ministry of compassion, witness, and service with individuals and communities.

Beyond your initial training to serve as a deacon, how might you keep these examples in the forefront of your ministries, reminding you of the “why” of service as a deacon?