

# Relationships

By Bernita Tuinenga — [Executive Director of Volunteers in Service](#) — 9/4/2013

Recently my day was blessed by a drop-in visit from a very dear couple who has volunteered for VIS for many years. The day before was their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and they were quite excited to stop in and share a few stories of their celebration. Seeing them was a delightful surprise and their excitement filled our visit with joy and laughter. After they left, I found myself reflecting on a comment they had made reminding me that relationships matter.

While visiting together, I shared how much I enjoyed connecting with the deacon chair of their church. They readily agreed that they too have enjoyed being in her district because she took time to get to know them even though they didn't have benevolent needs. At the same time they made clear that if they had a need, she would be the one they'd call because they knew she cared about them. WOW! I've thought about those words a lot and it made me wonder if we sometimes forget about the impact of relationships.

Diaconate work is not often thought of as relationship-building work but more often thought of as taking care of physical needs by providing church resources through the benevolent fund. Imagine if we would build relationships with people in our districts before they needed help. Through a relationship, would people be more likely to share their life journey with deacons? If they shared life experiences, would deacons be more effective in meeting needs before they became a crisis? If through building relationships, deacons became more aware of life challenges and aware of gifts and talents of people, would they be able to connect each other together and build community through serving?

The truth Jesus taught us is that nothing is more important than relationships. We read in Matthew 22:37-38 *"The most important commandment is this 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*

God created us for relationships. He made us to relate to Him and to others. Your relationship with God and with others will last for eternity.

This September, as you begin another church year season, consider how the people God places in your path are hand picked by Him for you to bump into and when you do, how will you respond? What footprints of Jesus will you leave on their heart through your words and your actions?

God bless all of you as you carry out your very important role as a deacon. Thank you for serving God in this way.