

"Women and Diaconal Ministry in the Orthodox Church:
Present Work and Future Opportunities"

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Abstract

Since biblical times, women have participated in the diaconal ministry of the Church. Women continue to serve similarly today. This paper will highlight ways that women are serving Christ and His Church through diaconal work today, focusing primarily on the work that women are doing in the western context (i.e. United States). I will begin by describing the work that women are doing as chaplains, spiritual directors, ministers of the Word and parish administrators and outreach coordinators. I will then examine the question of the ordination of women—what an ordination means and how these ministries could be enhanced through a diaconal ordination. If time allows, I will present some possible short and longer term steps that could be taken for the restoration of the office and the rejuvenation of the entire diaconate—male and female—for the building up of the Church today.