

Diaconal Services for Congregants in Need of Emotional and Spiritual Support at GPEI Bitung

Pelayanan Diakonal bagi Jemaat yang Membutuhkan Dukungan Emosional dan Rohani di GPEI Bitung

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Abstract:

This study explores the role of diaconia in providing emotional and spiritual support to the congregation at GPEI Bitung. By implementing community services such as home visits, prayer gatherings, and Bible study groups, the congregation has strengthened emotional bonds between the pastor and the congregation, particularly those facing challenges like health or financial issues. The results show significant improvements in emotional and spiritual growth, engagement in church activities, and stronger interpersonal relationships within the community. Diaconia effectively nurtures solidarity, builds a caring environment, and enhances spiritual maturity within the congregation. The challenges faced include limited human resources and operational funding. This study emphasizes the importance of holistic ministry and recommends the replication of the program with contextual adaptations.

Contribution:

This community service article contributes by demonstrating how diaconal ministry at GPEI Bitung provides emotional and spiritual support that strengthens congregational bonds, fosters solidarity, and enhances spiritual maturity through visitation, prayer, and pastoral care.

Keywords: diaconia; emotional support; spiritual support; community service

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran diakonia dalam memberikan dukungan emosional dan spiritual kepada jemaat di GPEI Bitung. Melalui pelaksanaan pelayanan masyarakat seperti kunjungan rumah, pertemuan doa, dan kelompok belajar Alkitab, jemaat telah memperkuat ikatan emosional antara pendeta dan jemaat, khususnya mereka yang menghadapi tantangan seperti masalah kesehatan atau keuangan. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam pertumbuhan emosional dan spiritual, keterlibatan dalam kegiatan gereja, dan hubungan interpersonal yang lebih kuat dalam komunitas. Diakonia secara efektif memelihara solidaritas, membangun lingkungan yang peduli, dan meningkatkan kedewasaan spiritual dalam jemaat. Tantangan yang dihadapi meliputi

keterbatasan sumber daya manusia dan dana operasional. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pelayanan holistik dan merekomendasikan replikasi program dengan adaptasi kontekstual.

Kontribusi:

Artikel pengabdian masyarakat ini berkontribusi dengan menunjukkan bagaimana pelayanan diakonia di GPEI Bitung mampu memberikan dukungan emosional dan rohani yang memperkuat ikatan jemaat, menumbuhkan solidaritas, serta meningkatkan kedewasaan spiritual melalui kunjungan, doa, dan pendampingan

Kata Kunci: *diakonia; dukungan emosional; dukungan spiritual; pelayanan masyarakat*

INTRODUCTION

Diaconia is an important aspect of church life because it reflects the identity of the Christian community that prioritizes love and care for others.¹ Diaconal ministry is considered as important as the ministry of the word in the context of the church.² Diaconia means the prophetic critical attitude of the church to restore and straighten out the wrong direction of development and uplift those who are excluded and forgotten.³ As well as the aspects of sanctification and proclamation, diaconia shapes and reveals the identity of the Church as a community of Jesus' disciples.⁴ Diakonia reflects the Church's calling to serve in the manner of Christ, who "came not to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). John N. Collins emphasizes that the original meaning of *diakonia* extends beyond charitable acts and is rooted in active participation in God's mission (*missio Dei*), bringing God's love, justice, and presence into the lived realities of the community. Therefore, diaconal work should not be reduced to social aid alone but recognized as an expression of spirituality that forms and animates the life of the faith community. Through activities such as communion and visitation for the congregation, the diaconal ministry not only helps improve the spiritual life but also builds emotional bonds between the congregation and the church, as seen in the communion service and prayer support for families experiencing life problems.

¹ Isabel Apawo Phiri, "The Imperative of Diakonia for the Church and Theological Education," *Ecumenical Review* 71, no. 4 (October 1, 2019): 482–91, <https://doi.org/10.1111/EREV.12443>.

² Nimrot Doke Para, Ezra Tari, and Welfrid F Ruku, "Peran Gereja Dalam Transformasi Pelayanan Diakonia," *Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual Indonesia* 1, no. 2 (2020): 81–93.

³ G.P Harianto, *Teologi Pasroral* (Yogyakarta: PBM Andi, 2020).

⁴ Jontha Freshly Sembiring, "Gereja Dan Diakonia," *Jurnal Teologi Pondok Daud* 6, no. 1 (March 3, 2020): 35–42.

There are various challenges facing the church in fostering the spirituality of the congregation. One of them is increasing secularism and declining interest in religious life, especially among the younger generation. Research shows that lifestyle changes and modernization often hinder faith growth, as the younger generation is increasingly attracted to worldly values that conflict with Spiritual principles. Another challenge comes from teenagers who often want convenience and instant gratification.⁵ This mentality, if continued, will result in their difficulty in attending church, impatience in practicing their spirituality, and lack of enthusiasm in engaging with the church. In addition, the covid-19 pandemic that requires churches to do online services has resulted in less than optimal diaconal services.

Economic factors can also be a challenge for congregations to grow in faith. The motivational needs originated by Maslow said that when a person still has difficulty fulfilling physiological needs, it will be difficult for him to fulfill even higher needs such as transedental needs, namely the need to relate to the Divine.⁶ Diaconia service is one of the services that help them to overcome economic problems.⁷ Diaconal services such as distributing funds and providing assistance can help congregations feel loved and cared for.⁸

Emotionally, humans will experience distress due to unpleasant or undesirable life experiences. This can also be an obstacle to one's faith growth if one does not get emotional support from someone or a community. Diaconal ministries such as comfort visits to those who are grieving can help one feel loved as one body of Christ.⁹ Not only grief, emotional distress can also be experienced by individuals who drop out of school.¹⁰

⁵ Sondang Lastiar Sianipar and Andar Gunawan Pasaribu, "Metode PAK Dalam Pertumbuhan Iman Rohani Remaja Madya," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 3 (2023): 10569–10583.

⁶ Gregory J. Feist, Tomi-Ann Roberts, and Jess Feist, *Theories of Personality*, 10th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2021).

⁷ Mariani Febriana, "Pietas Dan Caritas : Pelayanan Diakonia Sebagai Suatu Implementasi Kepedulian Sosial Gereja Untuk Menolong Meretas Angka Kemiskinan Di Indonesia," *SOLA GRATIA: Jurnal Teologi Biblika Dan Praktika* 2, no. 2 (February 6, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.47596/SOLAGRATIA.V2I2.26>; Y.K Zega, "Pelayanan Diakonia: Upaya Gereja Dalam Mengentaskan Kemiskinan Bagi Warga Jemaat," *IMMANUEL: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen* 2, no. 2 (2021): 88–102, <https://doi.org/10.46305/im.v2i2.64>.

⁸ Welhelmus Abraham Beresaby, "Pemberdayaan Jemaat Dalam Perspektif Diakonia Transformatif: Studi Implementasi Dana Sharing GPM," *ARUMBAE: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi Dan Studi Agama* 3, no. 2 (December 30, 2021): 201–17, <https://doi.org/10.37429/ARUMBAE.V3I2.715>.

⁹ Tirta Susila, "Pendampingan Pastoral Holistik Dari Pendeta Bagi Keluarga Berduka Di Jemaat GKE Nanga Bulik Kabupaten Lamandau," *Danum Pambelum: Jurnal Teologi Dan Musik Gereja* 2, no. 1 (2022): 81–92.

¹⁰ FS Pakiding, "Analisis Terhadap Pendampingan Pastoral Pada Remaja Yang Putus Sekolah Di Gereja Kibaid Jemaat Batupapan". Doctoral dissertation. Institut Agama Kristen Negeri, 2022.

Difficult experiences in life can make someone feel worthless and think that God is punishing them. Therefore, spiritual experiences such as being visited by a servant of God can help someone to see that they are an image of God who was created very well and is valuable.¹¹

Diaconal ministry is very effective in helping church growth. This is proven by research that has been conducted, especially during the pandemic.¹² The influence of diaconal services carried out directly by servants of God and ministers also has an impact on faith growth as research proves that congregations who get good diaconal services experience faith growth.¹³

GPEI (Gereja Presbyterian Evangelikal Indonesia) Bitung indicates that there is a significant need to improve the quality of spiritual ministry, especially among the spiritually weak congregation. Diaconia, as a form of loving service, often faces challenges in terms of resource support. Churches in rural or less developed areas experience difficulties in providing assistance due to limited funds and manpower. This condition shows the urgency of developing a more structured ministry, as it not only impacts the spiritual development of the congregation but also helps address the daily life issues they face. Spiritual support provided through visits and other ministry activities helps build a sense of caring and togetherness within the church community.

The purpose of this Community Service is to explore more deeply how diaconal ministry can have a significant impact on the community, especially in the context of GPEI Bitung which has various constraints in ministry. The main focus is to find solutions to improve the quality of ministry and ensure that the spiritual needs of the congregation are met. This is in line with Pope Benedict XVI's statement, which emphasizes the importance of the church as a community of service called to serve with love.¹⁴ In

¹¹ Beta Ria Sonata et al., "The Dynamics of Body Image Formation in Emerging Adult Women," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Educational Research (IJMCER)* 6, no. 6 (2024): 52–64.

¹² Tirta Susila and Yola Pradita, "Peran Pelayanan Diaconia Terhadap Pertumbuhan Gereja Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Jurnal Ilmiah Religiosity Entity Humanity (JIREH)* 4, no. 1 (June 29, 2022): 124–33, <https://doi.org/10.37364/JIREH.V4I1.95>.

¹³ Destra Ginting, "Pengaruh Pelayanan Diaconia Karitatif Dan Reformatif Terhadap Pertumbuhan Gereja Di GBI RMK Permata Buana Jakarta Barat," *Oice of HAMI: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 4, no. 2 (2022): 103–16; Yessy Kenny Jacob, "Diaconia Transformatif Sebagai Aktualisasi Missio Dei Dalam Membangun Jemaat," *KURIOS: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 8, no. 2 (2022): 574–83, <https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v8i2.264>.

¹⁴ Martin Chen and Agustinus Manfred Habur, *Diakonia Gereja: Pelayanan Kasih Bagi Orang Miskin Dan Marginal* (Jakarta: Obor, 2020).

practise, this ministry is an integral part of the church's identity as a community concerned with the spiritual well-being of its congregation.

GPEI Bitung is one of several churches that have been established by the GPEI Synod based in Tangerang. This church was built in order to serve unserved from the city to remote areas. The first pastor here was Ps. Henny Tannod who is also a pastor at GPEI Manado, he initially received the task of serving in these two churches, the first is GPEI Manado and the second is GPEI Bitung. In the Bitung congregation, only visits were made and there was no permanent congregation and also did not conduct services directly. After he no longer shepherded the GPEI Bitung congregation, he was replaced by a new pastor, Ps. Sameul Kilikily, who is in charge of shepherding the GPEI Bitung congregation. In the shepherding that he carried out, from the beginning that did not have a congregation now it has developed and has a congregation of approximately 45 people even though many have become sympathizers but activities such as worship, sunday school, youth, counseling and visits for the congregation already exist.

METHODS

Community service was carried out on January 01, 2024 until May 31, 2024. Located at GPEI Bitung, Raya Madidir Ure Street, Central Bitung District, Bitung City, North Sulawesi, Indonesia 95515. This community service is carried out with service learning. Service Learning is a community service approach that integrates academic learning activities with community service. Students or learners are directly involved in service activities, where they apply the knowledge they have learned in class to help the community, while gaining hands-on experience that deepens their understanding of the subjectmatter.¹⁵ By utilizing service learning methodology, students can play an important role in assisting ministries in the field, both by providing real experience in church services and contributing to improving the spirituality of the congregation and providing support to those in need.

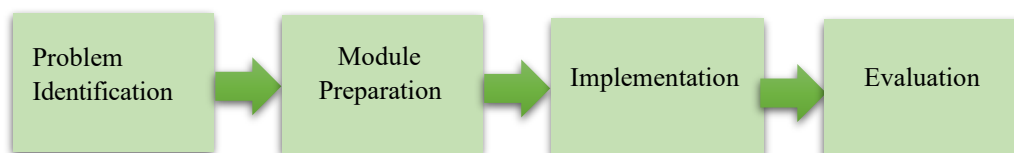


Figure 1. Stages of Community Service Implementation

¹⁵ Agus Afandi et al., *Metodologi Pengabdian Masyarakat* (Jakarta: Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI, 2022), <http://diktis.kemenag.go.id>.

The following is a curriculum of activities carried out during community service:

Table 1. Activity Implementation Curriculum

Thema	Date	Words	Purpose	Points
Strong in God	January 21 2024	Ephesians 6:10	Preparing God's people with the spiritual armor to face spiritual battles with the courage and strength from God.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spiritual preparation 2. Dependence on God
Quality faith will defeat fear	January 28, 2024	Matthew 14:22-33	Teaching the congregation to always draw close to God and always cultivate faith with the knowledge of God.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quality of faith must be evidenced by the knowledge of God 2. Belief in God 3. Surrender
Toxic relationships	February 4, 2024	2 Chronicles 18:1-34	Commemorating the congregation, especially young people, so that they are not easily instigated and do not live in relationships that is toxic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilized 2. Triggered 3. lazyness
Become a friend of Christ	February 18, 2024	John 15:9-17	To invite the followers of Jesus to understand the importance of a closer relationship with Jesus. Him and each other, and to living in love according to the example of Christ.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A close relationship with Christ 2. The call to love one another
The betrayal of Judas Iscariot	March 3, 2024	Mark 14:10-11	is to describe the betrayal of Jesus Christ by Judas Iscariot.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching on Greed 2. Betrayal 3. Fulfillment of Prophecy
From ordinary to extraordinary	March 10, 2024	Luke 9:1-10	Teaching believers not to rely on people and to always Try	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Great spirit 2. Not relying on humans
Having eternal life	March 27, 2024	1 John 5:6-12	Teach the congregation to always trust in Jesus and believe in Jesus as the Lord Savior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eternal life is only in Jesus 2. We must have Jesus
Don't get entangled	April 7, 2024	Luke 21:34-36	Teaching the congregation to always be on guard	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warning against excessive attention to worldly pleasures 2. Spiritual readiness 3. Anticipation of the coming of Christ.

Man fell into sin	April 28, 2024	Genesis3:6-7	Showing and teaching the congregation the consequences of sin and its effects for life now	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Experiencing death2. The result is experiencing difficulties in life
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The stage carried out in this community service is to identify problems. Problem identification is done by conducting observations and interviews with pastors in Bitung. The questions given were arranged in such a way as to get information on the problems that occur in GPEI Bitung. After obtaining this information, a needs assessment was conducted. The needs assessment became the basis for formulating the topic and what kind of diaconal services are needed to fulfill these needs. Then, a module that will be conducted for several months at GPEI Bitung was formulated. After the preparation of the module, community service activities in the form of diaconal services were carried out for several months.

Finally, conducting an evaluation to see the effectiveness of the activity. The evaluation is done by conducting observations and interviews with the congregation and the accompanying pastors. Observations were conducted during the service activities to understand the direct response of the congregation to the services provided. In addition, interviews with the congregation and pastors were also conducted after each main activity to gain a deeper understanding of the emotional and spiritual impact of the service on the congregation. This interview technique involves questions regarding the feelings, experiences, and changes experienced by the congregation after participating in the activities.

RESULT

Some of the activities that will be discussed in this report are diaconal services in the form of visits and spiritual support for congregations in need.

Diaconia Service on January 20, 2024

Diaconia service is carried out by direct visits with several congregations in Madidir Ure by bringing several gifts in the form of fruit, because of the long distance from the Shepherd's house to the intended congregation, it takes approximately 1 hour

to get to the place. The activity started from the Shepherd's house at 08.30 WITA with a travel time of 1 hour, so approximately researchers arrived at 09.30 WITA.

When arriving at the place of visit the pastor of the GPEI Bitung congregation greeted with a word of welcome so that the atmosphere became more familiar between the pastor and the congregation, then continued with sharing from the congregation about their current situation and any complaints or problems that the pastor wanted to pray for then after that continued. The prayer finished around 11:00 and continued with the distribution of gifts to the congregation and the service of love ended at 13:00 with a prayer together to separate to their respective places.



Figure 2. Visit To Bitung Madidir Urre Congregation

The purpose of this diaconal ministry is to build care and togetherness. Based on observations, the diaconal ministry through visits and counseling has succeeded in building a sense of care and togetherness among the congregation. The congregation feels emotionally and spiritually supported, especially those who are experiencing difficulties in life. This activity is very helpful in creating a close relationship between the pastor and the congregation, where the congregation feels more valued and cared for.

Diaconia service on February 21, 2024

In this activity, the counseling was carried out at Mrs. Elsadai's house which was also accompanied by a lot of prayer support for families who were experiencing family problems and in the process of life struggles so that in the future the problems experienced in the family could quickly improve and open a way out of the problem.



Figure 3: Implementation of Bible study group

The purpose of this diaconal ministry is to build care and concern togetherness. Based on observations, the diaconal ministry through visitation and communion has succeeded in building a sense of care and togetherness among the congregation. The congregation feels emotionally and spiritually supported, especially those who are experiencing difficulties in life. This activity is very helpful in creating a close relationship between the pastor and the congregation, where the congregation feels more valued and cared for.



Figure 4. Providing prayer support for Mrs. Elsadai's family

Diaconia is the direct response of the church or faith community to suffering and crisis. In situations of great challenges experienced by society, it triggers the church to act through diaconia, providing physical, emotional, and spiritual assistance. This diaconia is not just about meeting material needs, but also creating a sense of solidarity and presence in the midst of suffering ¹⁶.

Diaconia Service on March 24, 2024

Diaconal ministry is carried out by preaching God's Word in front of congregation. The theme taught the congregation to guard against excessive attention to worldly pleasures. As a result, the congregation showed intentions to improve their life habits to focus more on God. Some congregants even did a self-evaluation and began to reduce activities that could interfere with their relationship with God.



Figure 5. Shermon the Word of God



Figure 6. GPEI Bitung Pastor and Congregation

Diaconia Service on March 28, 2024

The visit this time was to a congregation who was experiencing problems and needed prayer support. Visits are conducted at 19.00 WITA evening. This visit aims to exchange stories and give advice and pray for the congregation.

¹⁶ J.S. van der Watt, "Missional-Diaconal Practices in Japan and South Africa: Tracing Its Formative Potential during Natural Disasters," *Acta Theologica* 39, no. 2 (December 13, 2019): 147–71, <https://doi.org/10.18820/23099089/actat.v39i2.9>.



Figure 7. A visit to a congregation that is experiencing problems

Diaconia Ministry on April 14, 2024

The diaconal ministry is carried out by preaching the word of God to Sunday School children.



Figure 8. Preaching to Sunday school

Diaconia Service on April 23, 2024

Diaconal services are carried out by visiting congregations who are sick. The pastor and students went to the hospital to pray for Mrs. Pomay who was lying in the hospital. The service was carried out at 19.23 - 20.35 WITA after finishing the prayer, the pastor still took the time to talk to the congregation who was experiencing illness.



Figure 9. A visit to a sick member of the congregation

DISCUSSION

Unpleasant experiences often leave people feeling isolated, hopeless, and confused. People who are unable to see the crisis of life as part of the process of growing faith will fall into feelings of abandonment by God and anger at God. However, those who experience a crisis can make them see God's love through the people who serve them so that they can further strengthen their faith.¹⁷ Diaconia comes as a concrete act of love to restore confidence, restore hope, and foster a sense of community. Through the relationships built in diaconia, people begin to see the church not just as an institution, but as a caring community.¹⁸

The diaconal ministry through visitation and communion in GPEI Bitung has succeeded in strengthening the sense of care and togetherness among the congregation. Observations show that through visitation activities, the pastor and ministry team are able to build deeper relationships with the congregation, especially those who are facing challenges.

¹⁷ Beta Ria Sonata, "Religiositas Tanpa Legalitas: Pemaknaan Praktik Keagamaan Berdasarkan Iman Kristiani," *Didache: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen* 5, no. 1 (June 12, 2023): 35–49, <https://doi.org/10.55076/DIDACHE.V5I1.180>.

¹⁸ Timotius, Agus Santoso, and Marthin S Lumingkewas, "Menelusuri Konsep Pelayanan Sosial John Calvin Dan Implikasinya Bagi Peran Gereja Dalam Pelayanan Sosial," *Mitra Sriwijaya: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen* 3, no. 1 (September 12, 2022): 71–86, <https://doi.org/10.46974/MS.V3I1.55>.

As a tangible form of care, these visits are accompanied by the provision of assistance such as food or daily necessities that show the church's attention to the physical needs of the congregation. This has a great impact on the psychological and emotional aspects of the congregation, as they feel less alone in facing life's challenges, and feel cared for and supported by their church community. This sense of acceptance and appreciation increases the sense of community among congregants, making them more connected to each other and feeling closer to the church community. Diaconal ministry can provide comfort and healing for people who feel distressed because their complaints are listened to, they feel understood and cared for.¹⁹

The commune, which is also conducted in congregants' homes, serves as a place of fellowship where congregants gather, share the word, and pray for one another. During huddle activities, participants are given the opportunity to be actively involved in sharing testimonies about their personal experiences with God. Through group discussions and prayers, congregants find encouragement to support and motivate one another.

Congregants who were previously less active in church activities also began to get more involved after experiencing the positive impact of these activities. The congregation's attendance at cell meetings has increased, which shows that the emotional bonds built between congregants through the cell is very strong. Through the evaluations conducted, it was found that congregants became more open and trusting of each other, which is an important foundation for a strong and healthy community.

In addition, the relationship between the pastor and the congregation is also getting closer. The pastor is not only seen as a spiritual leader but also as a friend and companion in the midst of their difficulties. Congregants feel freer to talk about personal problems, due to the bond of trust that has been built through these visitation and counseling activities. The stronger relationship between pastor and congregation makes congregants feel more valued and feel that they have a safe place in the church community. This also impacts their satisfaction to the church.²⁰

¹⁹ Conny Hjelm, "The Human Related Conversation and The Professional Tension Between Diakonia and Nursing," *Https://Doi.Org/10.13109/Diac.2021.12.2.137* 12, no. 2 (December 15, 2022): 137–60, <https://doi.org/10.13109/DIAC.2021.12.2.137>.

²⁰ Maurit Simanjuntak, Timotius Tan, and Timotius Bakti Saron, "View of Impact Of Koinonia, Diakonia, and Marturia On Congregational Satisfaction at HKBP Cijantung Church," *International Journal of Christian Education and Philosophical Inquiry* 1, no. 4 (2024): 16–27.

These diaconal service activities also help create a sense of mutual support among the congregation, where they learn to not only receive but also provide assistance to others. The growing concern among the congregation is not only limited to the church community but also extends to their daily lives, where they begin to be more sensitive to the needs of others in the neighborhood. Thus, this ministry not only impacts the spiritual aspect but also strengthens social values in the life of the congregation, reflecting the church's mission to be present and serve others.²¹

Diaconal ministry often has a good impact on spiritual growth.²² This happened to the congregation after participating in the diaconal service activities at GPEI Bitung which showed a significant impact. Through interviews conducted with several congregants, many of them revealed that this ministry made them feel closer to God. Previously, congregants may only feel that worship and service are weekly routines, but after engaging in diaconal ministry that directly touches personal lives, they feel that God is realistically present in their daily lives. The service of others can be a context for an encounter with God.²³

Diaconal ministries, such as home visits, communion, and corporate prayer activities, provide opportunities for congregants to actively experience God's love and care through the physical presence and attention of pastors and ministry teams. These activities introduce congregants to deeper spiritual practices, such as self-reflection, more intense personal prayer, and engagement in the discussion of God's word. This brings about a change in attitude, from being a "spectator" to an "active participant" in their spiritual experience.²⁴

Congregants who initially felt hopeless due to economic, health, or relationship problems in the family, now feel more confident in facing these challenges. They realize that they are not alone; God is with them, and the church is ready to support them. This change is supported by a closer relationship between pastor and congregation, where

²¹ Susila and Pradita, "Peran Pelayanan Diakonia Terhadap Pertumbuhan Gereja Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19."

²² D Ver Elst, "A Powerful Encounter: The Relation between Diaconia and Spirituality," *Ajol.Info*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.18820/23099089/actat>.

²³ Ver Elst.

²⁴ Hannes Knoetze, "Diaconia as a Sustainable Form of Transformation and Development amongst Emerging Adults in a Globalised South Africa," *Practical Theology* 12, no. 2 (March 15, 2019): 208–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2019.1597489>.

congregants feel comfortable to share their personal problems, get support, and find strength through God's word and prayer.²⁵

Some of the church members involved in the interviews stated that the biggest change they experienced was in terms of patience and hope. Those who previously felt hopeless when facing obstacles, now have a deeper understanding that God has a better plan, and they must be patient and trust God's timing. This shows an improvement in the quality of faith, where believers are better able to understand and accept the concept of "surrender" in the Christian faith, which makes them emotionally and spiritually stronger. Unpleasant experiences leave not only physical but also emotional scars. Trauma, loss, and a sense of uncertainty require a deep healing process. This is where diaconia comes in as a means of healing, not only in providing direct assistance but also in providing emotional companionship.²⁶ People experiencing suffering can feel that they are not alone and that there is a community that cares and is present with them.

In addition, service activities such as communion encourage them to put God's word into practice in their relationships with one another. The congregation learns about love and forgiveness, not only in the context of their relationship with their neighbors but also in daily relationships with family members, and friends. This change in attitude leads to better social relationships, where they become more patient, forgiving, and more empathetic towards others.²⁷

Evaluation conducted through observation also shows that the congregation has become more motivated to attend church meetings regularly, and they are more enthusiastic in carrying out service tasks, both inside the church and outside. This change in the quality of faith was seen in how they began to allocate time regularly to pray, read the Bible, and engage in other ministries. They are also more eager in sharing their testimonies with fellow congregants, which shows that they are not only growing personally, but also helping others to grow in faith. This is also found in other church congregations, where diaconal ministry has an impact on the commitment to carry out

²⁵ Philipp Ohlmann, "Diaconia and Development: The Study of Religious Social Practice as Lead Discipline in the Religion and Development Debate," *Religions* 2023, Vol. 14, Page 1032 14, no. 8 (August 11, 2023): 1032, <https://doi.org/10.3390/REL14081032>.

²⁶ Watt, "Missional-Diaconal Practices in Japan and South Africa: Tracing Its Formative Potential during Natural Disasters."

²⁷ Neal Krause, Benjamin Shaw, and Jersey Liang, "Social Relationships in Religious Institutions and Healthy Lifestyles," *Health Education and Behavior* 38, no. 1 (February 2011): 25–38, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198110370281;PAGE:STRING:ARTICLE/CHAPTER>.

social responsibilities towards others, provide mutual support, and encourage others to grow.²⁸

This transformation shows that diaconal ministry not only provides physical assistance to those in need, but also provides spiritual support that enriches and strengthens the faith of the congregation²⁹ This impact is sustainable, as congregants become more aware of the importance of their role in the church community, not only as recipients of services but also as servants.³⁰ Thus, congregants actively take part in the church's mission to serve and be a blessing to others, which creates a positive cycle of continuous spiritual growth.

CONCLUSION

Diaconal service not only has a spiritual impact but also strengthens the emotional well-being of the congregation. Those who previously felt hopeless due to life's burdens began to experience comfort, hope, and new strength. Through the experience of both serving and being served, the awareness grows that they are not alone—there is a God who accompanies them, and a church community that cares. Feeling heard, accepted, and appreciated within the community fosters self-confidence and inner peace.

On the other hand, warm relationships with church leaders encourage openness in sharing personal struggles. This process heals emotional wounds and builds healthy bonds among the congregation. They learn to practice love, forgiveness, and empathy not only in church life but also in their families and society. Thus, church service becomes a means of emotional healing that has a tangible impact on daily life.

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²⁸ Simanjuntak, Tan, and Saron, "View of Impact Of Koinonia, Diakonia, and Marturia On Congregational Satisfaction at HKBP Cijantung Church."

²⁹ Hannes Knoetze, "Diaconia as a Sustainable Form of Transformation and Development amongst Emerging Adults in a Globalised South Africa," *Practical Theology* 12, no. 2 (March 15, 2019): 208–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2019.1597489>; Wimpie Tanojo, "Impact of Diakonia, Koinonia and Marturia Services for the Growth of the Indonesian Christian Church Resident Sudirman Surabaya," *Journal Didaskalia* 3, no. 2 (2020): 38–49.

³⁰ Arnhild Leer-Helgesen, "Rethinking Diakonia and Transforming Our World," *The Ecumenical Review* 70, no. 1 (March 1, 2018): 147–62, <https://doi.org/10.1111/EREV.12336>.

servants who have been willing to be respondents and share their experiences and testimonies with sincerity. Hopefully this work can be a meaningful contribution to the development of church services and understanding of the role of the church in shaping the spiritual, social, and emotional lives of the congregation.

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