

SPECIAL ISSUE OF DIACONIA JOURNAL:  
PASTORAL CARE AS DIACONIA – DIACONIA AS PASTORAL CARE

Dear colleagues,

The practice of pastoral care has been defined as ‘supportive and crisis care offered by ordained and lay leaders within religious/Christian communities’ (Doehring, 2015, 190). Such care practices may be situated in local congregations/parishes, at institutions or in public spaces, for instance, in the aftermath of national crises. The contexts in which pastoral care practices take place are diverse and may vary nationally and internationally.

During the last few decades, the communal-contextual and intercultural paradigm has gained support in the academic field of pastoral care (Miller Mc-Lemore, 2018). This has drawn attention to the individual as a relational being that is always part of a larger network of communal and social life. Consequently, in studying pastoral care and counselling, interdisciplinarity has been important to expand perspectives from theology and psychology as the core interpretive disciplines to include disciplines such as sociology and cultural studies.

In creating a special issue on pastoral care in the journal *Diaconia*, the question of self-understanding of diaconia and pastoral care becomes a theme. In some contexts, interpreting pastoral care as diaconia is obvious: pastoral care is a core task of priests’ and deacons’ professional work and is interwoven in their diaconal practices. Others place pastoral care in the framework of liturgy or as part of the *missio Dei*, thus weakening the link to diaconia. Further, establishing pastoral care as diaconia insists on personal conversational encounters as part of diaconal studies. This position implies that diaconia is related not only to system levels of the society such as political structures and empowerment, but also to individual, personal encounters through the practice of pastoral care. It may also imply that personal encounters in pastoral care are challenged by the notion of structural and system-oriented issues. In all cases, however, there is a need to further explore and discuss these relations from different theoretical and disciplinary angles.

This call for papers invites international scholars to submit papers on pastoral care practices in different cultural contexts. We welcome empirical, theoretical and review studies. While other topics are welcome, the following topics offer guidelines for paper contributions:

- Theoretical discussions on the relationship between pastoral care and diaconia
- Self-understandings of pastoral care
- Empirical studies of pastoral care as a diaconal practice
- Pastoral care, secularization and religious plurality
- Pastoral care in highly religious societies.

**Tentative completion schedule:**

- Full manuscript deadline: 15 March 2023
- Publication of special issue: Summer 2023

Manuscripts will enter through a double-blind review process before decisions are made by the editors.

Guest editors are:

Mikkel Gabriel Christoffersen, Assistant Professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Marianne Rodriguez Nygaard, Leader of Institute for Pastoral Care, Modum Bad and Associate professor at VID Specialized University, Norway

Anne Austad, Associate professor, VID Specialized University, Norway

References:

Doehring, C. (2015), *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (rev. and expanded ed.), Louisville: John Knox.

Miller-McLemore, B. J. (2018), The Living Human Web: A Twenty-five Year Retrospective, *Pastoral Psychology*, 67(3), 305–321, <https://doi:10.1007/s11089-018-0811-7>.