

I Prayed on It

Ask Deaconess Rebecca West-Estell how she has made major decisions and handled significant life events, and she will say, “I prayed on it.” Her trust in the Lord is strong and He does not let her down.

Rebecca heard the call to servant ministry in mid-life. Raised in a faithful home, she had long been involved with leading Sunday School, youth ministry, children’s choir, and other child-focused activities. When her church, St. Philip Lutheran in Toledo, OH, experienced some staffing changes, an elder suggested she consider becoming a deaconess.

Like many people, Rebecca wasn’t quite sure what deaconesses do, but looked into some training programs. She chose the LDA’s program for its flexibility, community and pan-Lutheran approach. She was married with two children and worked full-time as an attorney with her own private practice (not to mention all of her work with the children). The flexibility to fit the program’s coursework and practical experience into her already busy life was important to her.

Through the LDA’s program, she gained a stronger theological foundation for her faith and work as well as a community to support her. One of her deaconess mentors was a fellow attorney who shared Rebecca’s belief that practicing the law is itself a form of ministry. She often meets clients at the darkest times in their lives when they most need to be shown God’s love.

After 15 years in private practice, Rebecca became a prosecutor. She wears her deaconess pin every day and explains to

clients, attorneys, judges and others what it means and why she wears it. “The pin” opens up doors that probably would not otherwise be opened; conversations about “justice” often take on new meaning. She works with people from all walks of life and feels blessed to be able to minister to them even if they don’t recognize that they need help.



The deaconess community has also been a blessing to Rebecca. She has a group of people that help one another through life’s ups and downs, that comfort and strengthen one another, and pray together. Rebecca feels a strong connection with the Deaconess Litany, which LDA deaconesses all over the world pray together on Monday nights. Rebecca believes in its message and it serves as a uniting force among deaconesses, regardless of geographical distance. She feels blessed to have a few hundred sisters!

She also feels blessed to have a supportive family to live this journey along side her. Her home is a faith-centered home. Her husband, Rodney, is active in their church and her children—now grown—are proud of the path their mother has taken and the people she has helped along the way. At times, they have joined her at deaconess conferences and appreciate the prayer and worship time.

Her three ministries—family, attorney and deaconess focusing on children—leave Rebecca busy but fulfilled. She is doing the Lord’s work every day. And, she prays on it.

