

Preparing for Ordination

Ordination from an Evangelical Perspective

1. Affirmation of call to vocational ministry.
2. Acknowledgement of giftedness and character for vocational ministry.
3. Engaged as an act of the community/Congregation, within the community/Congregation.
4. Initiated by the community/Congregation
5. The act of a larger community, through its representatives or designates, within the context of a local church, where call, giftedness and character have been demonstrated and in which ministry will continue, upon the request of and with the approval of the local community.
6. A confirming act of the church: confirming the call to vocational ministry, the character necessary for vocational ministry and the giftedness needed for vocational ministry.
7. An act of setting the candidate apart for vocational ministry.

Process

1. The call, giftedness and character of the individual pastor are witnessed and affirmed by the Congregation.
2. The Congregation, through its designated leaders communicates to the pastor, the desire to exercise its privilege and right to ordain one of its own.
3. The pastor is invited to prepare for ordination.
4. The Congregation asks that the denominational ordination process be initiated.
5. An ordination process coach is appointed to guide the candidate through the preparation protocol.
6. The coach leads the candidate through a study of ordination including: Biblical review; read and discuss *Ordination* by Marjorie Warkentin; read and discuss other relevant material.
7. The candidate collects and reviews several ordination papers used within a similar denominational context. Observations are discussed with the coach.
8. The candidate interviews two pastors who have been ordained in a comparable denominational context (See questions below).
9. The candidate begins working on a paper that will express several things, including: conversion, call, preparation for ministry, ministry experience, and personal beliefs (See outline of topics below).
10. The candidate's credentials as expressed in the paper are examined by the denominationally appointed Credentials Committee who makes recommendations for improvement.
11. When the Credentials Committee is convinced that proceeding is appropriate, it submits a recommendation to the denomination/Association leadership to call an Ordination Council.
12. An Ordination Council, including representatives from a set number of Association churches, is called and convened to examine the candidate's credentials.
13. A recommendation is submitted to the church regarding whether or not to proceed with ordination.
14. In the event of a recommendation to proceed, an invitation is extended to area churches of the same denominational group to send pastors and/or delegates to engage in the act of ordination. Through ordination the church is affirming that God has set the individual aside for ministry and has called and gifted them for that ministry. The Congregation is saying 'Yes' to what God has done. The ordination service then is a 'Yes' service.
15. Ordination credentials are filed with the Association in which the church and individual minister.

Questions for Reflection and Clarification on Call

- Describe your original call to ministry. What key experiences formed your sense of call?
- How old were you? How did you feel?
- Was there a special experience that was significant? (worship, service, project, prayer, Scripture, sermon)

- Who affected your call significantly? (pastor, layperson, writer, teacher, mentor)
- Is there is significant place associated with your sense of call?
- How did you experience the presence of God?
- When and how did you first use the word *call* to describe or understand your experience?
- Who did you first tell of your call? How did you express what had happened?
- How did friends or family members respond when you told them of your call?
- What have been the greatest barriers to pursuing your call?
- Would you describe your call as vocational or contextual, or both?
- What have you done as specific steps toward fulfilling your call?

(Source unknown)

Pastoral Interview re: Ordination

1. Who did you interview?
2. What attitude/impression did the pastor leave regarding ordination?
3. What did you learn about the process which led to ordination?
4. What advice did you receive regarding ordination?
5. What are the strengths of the ordination paper you collected?
6. What are the weaknesses?
7. How would you write differently than this candidate did?

Elements of an Ordination Paper

1. Biographical Sketch
2. Testimony of Conversion
3. Call to Ministry – See below for questions related to call
4. Preparation in Ministry
5. Participation in Ministry
6. Theology of Ministry
7. Doctrinal Statement – Be Biblical
 - God
 - Father
 - Son
 - Holy Spirit
 - Scripture
 - Man
 - Salvation
 - Church
 - Ordinances
 - Governance
 - Last Things
 - Current Issues (x3)

Note: Clarity is more important than length