

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS OF THE WORD



Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ

We have made known to you the name of our brother, N, here present, having been called as shepherd and teacher of this church. No lawful objection has been raised against his teaching and life and therefore, we now proceed to his ordination in the Name of the Lord. It is however necessary that you, brother N, and all here present first hear what God's Word says about the ordination and office of minister of the Word.

We believe that Christ calls people to the special offices of His church. He therefore gives His church apostles and prophets, others He gives to be evangelists, shepherds and teachers to equip believers for service in building up the body of Christ.

Beloved brother, as shepherd and teacher you have been called to minister to, guide and protect the flock God has entrusted to you through the preaching of the Word, the administering of the sacraments, the offering of prayers and aiding in the governance of the church.

The work of your office is thus as follows:

1. You must study God's Word and proclaim it to the church in all purity and simplicity, holding fast to the trustworthy Word that is sound in doctrine. You are to instruct and comfort, admonish and correct members in church and during home visitation, as circumstances demand. As Paul tells us: "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:1–2).
2. You must administer the sacraments the Lord instituted as signs and seals of his covenant of grace. It is clear from Christ's command to His church that the baptism must be administered and that His death must be commemorated through the Lord's Supper.
3. You must call on the Name of the Lord in confession of sin, in worship and thanksgiving and pray for all people.
4. You are to instruct the children of the covenant in knowledge of the Word of God, in remembrance of Christ's words to Peter: "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15).
5. Together with the elders, you are to oversee the church and ensure good order, protecting the church against heresy and living in sin like the godless. It is for this purpose that God entrusted the apostles and in them the overseers, of which you are one, with the keys to heaven.
6. You have also been called to proclaim the Gospel to the world and to encourage believers to witness to people in the Name of the Lord Jesus. It is furthermore your duty to seek out those who have strayed and bring them back to the fellowship of the church.

You hereby realise how glory, but also the responsibility of the calling and service of the minister of the Word, while keeping the following words of the apostle in mind: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18–20).

Questions

N, you have heard the duties to which you have been called. We now ask you to answer the following questions:

1. Do you sincerely believe that you have been called by this church and therefore by God Himself to this holy ministry?
2. Do you believe that the Holy Scripture is the Word of God, the perfect teaching of salvation, and do you reject any doctrine in conflict with it?
3. Do you promise to faithfully and diligently fulfil your godly calling in adherence to this teaching?
4. Do you promise to live in accordance to this doctrine?
5. Do you promise to submit yourself to the admonition and discipline of the church should you deviate in doctrine and life?

What is your answer:

He is to answer:

Yes.

Then, laying on him the right hand, the officiating minister and other ministers of the Word say:

May God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this service, enlighten you by His Holy Spirit, strengthen you by His hand and guide you in life and ministry to the glory of His Name and to the advancement of the kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ! Amen

Then the officiating minister urges the ordained minister of the Word and the whole congregation as follows:

Beloved brother and fellow minister,

Love Christ and as their shepherd feed His lambs, watch over them, not out of duty but willingly, not for the wrong reasons but gladly, also not out of imperiousness over those God entrusted to your care, but with the sincere desire to be an example to the flock.

Set an example to believers in word, life, love, spirit, faith and in purity. Continue in reading, admonition and teaching.

Do so that your growth may be evident to all. Do not neglect the gifts you have been given.

Take care of your life and doctrine, persevere therein, because by doing so you save both yourself and those who hear you. Suffer oppression, like a good servant of Jesus Christ. Then when the supreme Shepherd appears, you will receive the eternal crown of glory.

And you, beloved church of God, receive with joy and due esteem your minister of the Word, bearing in mind that God speaks through him. Let his coming to bring the good news be pleasing and lovely. Keep him in your prayers.

Be sure to obey your leaders, they watch over your life and will have to give account to God. In doing so, the peace of God will enter your home and in receiving this brother, as prophet, you will obtain the reward of a prophet. Since through his word you believe in Christ, through Christ you will inherit eternal life.

Since not one of us is capable of this in ourselves, let us with thanksgiving pray to God.

Prayer

Merciful Father, thank You for blessing this church with a faithful servant. Make him, by your Spirit, all the more able for the task for which You have prepared and called him. Grant him the necessary understanding of your Word and the confidence to reveal the mystery of the Gospel. Grant him the wisdom and insight to govern the church together with the elders according to your will and to preserve the Christian peace that the church may increase in number and virtue through his ministry and good example. Grant him courage in all difficulties he may face and strengthen him in the comfort of your Holy Spirit that he may remain steadfast to the end and one day be received together with all faithful servants in the joy of the Lord.

Grant your church the grace to treat their shepherd as they should, as one sent by You and submit to his teaching and admonition that through his ministry of the Word they may believe in Christ and obtain eternal life. Hear our prayer, o Father, through your beloved Son. Amen

Trial Translation