

# FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS



Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

As you know we have several times announced the name(s) of our brother(s) chosen as elder(s) and deacon(s) of this congregation in order to ascertain whether there is lawful reason they may not take up the office of elder and/or deacon. Since no such object has been made against him/them, we will now proceed to ordain him/them into the office of elder/deacon. For this purpose you (the brother(s) to be ordained) and all here present must first hear a brief summary from God's Word of the institution and work of the elders and deacons.

An elder is responsible for the governance of the church of Christ<sup>1</sup>. Elders or overseers<sup>2</sup> have always governed and ministered to the church with the Word in the apostolic church<sup>3</sup> according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Regarding deacons: Establishing an office for promoting unity in Christ within the church rapidly became necessary in the apostolic churches. This service is clearly distinct from the ministry of the Word and prayers as well as the governance of the church.

We believe that Christ calls people to special service in His church to equip believers for service towards the building up of the body of Christ. Christ has also given them the gifts they need for this.

As elder(s), beloved brother(s), you are called to oversee and look after the church. This service is not entrusted to only one or two, but to all the elders as a group<sup>4</sup> who form the church council with and led by the minister of the Word. In order to perform this service properly the elders must study God's Word continuously and be well-versed in the riches of the Gospel.

Your task as elder(s) is, therefore, as follows:

1. You must ensure the good order of all aspects of the church; the regular and pure ministry of the Word and sacraments; and that the sacraments remain sacred. You must see to it that the minister(s) of the Word, the elders and the deacons faithfully and diligently fulfil their God-given duties and offer the minister(s) of the Word good advice.

2. You must carefully attend to the doctrine and life of every member and support all Christians with advice and comfort. You are to gently admonish and discipline members who refuse

*As deacon(s), beloved brother(s), you are called to promote unity in Christ and mutual love among the members of the congregation. You must see to it that the believers do good to all that the love of Christ may be revealed in this way.*

*Together with you fellow deacons, you are to:*

*visit all members and encourage them to show love to their fellow believers and all people in word and deed;*

*take care, in such visitation that no one becomes estranged from the community of faith through poverty, loneliness, age, illness or for any other reason.*

*You must also carefully manage, wisely spend and offer with the comfort of Scripture the means entrusted to you in service of the needy.*

<sup>1</sup> Hand./Acts 15:6; 20:28

<sup>2</sup> Fil./Phil. 1:1

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-3

<sup>4</sup> Hand./Acts 15:6

to repent and persist in sin<sup>5</sup>, while the repentant must be welcomed back into fellowship with the church.

3. You must especially oversee the doctrine and conduct of ministers of the Word that all they do may be to the benefit of the church and their ministry conform to God's Word<sup>6</sup>.

4. You must also call the lapsed and unbelievers to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, because this is how Christus gathers His church.

*In doing so, you must serve Christ, your fellow believers and all people, equip the church for service and let the love of Christ shine in the world to the glory of God.*

You have heard the duties of your office. We now ask you to sincerely answer the following questions:

### Questions

Is it your heart's conviction that you have been lawfully called by God's church and therefore, by God Himself to this holy service?

Do you believe that the Holy Scripture is God's Word and the perfect doctrine of salvation and do you reject all doctrine in conflict with it?

Do you promise to faithfully and diligently fulfil this Godly calling and live in accordance to this doctrine?

Do you promise to submit to church admonishment and discipline should you perhaps stray in doctrine or life?

*Then the minister asks:*

N, what is your answer?

*To this he/they must answer:*

Yes.

*Then the minister says:*

May the almighty God and Father grant you the grace to be faithful and fruitful in this service!

*He must also urge him/them as well as the entire congregation as follows:*

Elder(s) be diligent in the governance of the church. Watch over God's house, admonish and comfort each according to need. See thereto that doctrine remains pure and that the church lives holy.

*Deacon(s), be devoted in service. Determine the need of believers and come to their aid. Encourage giving. Spend the means entrusted to you wisely.*

Be faithful in service and set a good example to the church<sup>7</sup>. In so doing, you will earn the favour of the church, grow in confidence in your faith in Christ and enter the joy of the Lord at the end of this life<sup>8</sup>.

Willingly submit to their oversight and governance, because they watch over your life and will one day have to give account<sup>9</sup>.

Let yourselves be guided in the fellowship of the saints<sup>10</sup>. Give from the heart, "not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful

<sup>5</sup> Ef./Eph. 4:1, 3, 2 Tim. 2:25-26

<sup>6</sup> Hand./Acts 20:29

<sup>7</sup> 1 Timoteus/Timothy 3:13.

<sup>8</sup> Matteus/Matthew 25:21, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Hebreërs/Hebrews 13:17.

<sup>10</sup> Romeine/Romans 12:8.

giver<sup>11</sup>. Do your daily work as you must that you also be able to help those in need<sup>12</sup>.

Beloved people of God, receive this(these) man(men) as servant(s) of God.

Keep the elders and deacons in your prayers.

**Prayer**

Since we cannot do it in ourselves, let us call on the almighty God.

Our Father,

We thank You for guiding this(these) man(men) by your Spirit to take up this calling. Grant him/them evermore the gifts to perform his/their services. Bless him/them with wisdom, insight, discernment and love. Grant him/them the grace to faithfully persevere and never falter in the face of disappointment, effort, sorrow or persecution by the world.

Lord, bless the congregation over which You have placed them. Make every one of them willing to submit to the admonition of the elders, in honour of their calling. Provide the congregation with the means to be rich in generosity and all good works. Teach us, through the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep each other's interests at heart.

Let in this way your holy Name be praised and the kingdom of your Son Christ come.

Hear our prayer, o Father, through your beloved Son.

Amen

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<sup>11</sup> 2 Korintiërs/Corinthians 9:7.

<sup>12</sup> Efesiërs/Ephesians 4:2.8