

MINISTER ORDINATION

In Southern Baptist churches, according to the Baptist Faith and Message by Hershel H. Hobbs, “The officers in a local New Testament church are pastors and deacons (Philippians 1:1). The same office is variously called bishop, elder, or pastor.”¹ These two officers are generally placed in their respected offices by the local congregation through a service of ordination. The model for this service is found in Acts 6:1-7. The term ordination is the setting aside of an individual for a particular purpose. In Acts 6, the Greek word for appoint in verse 3, is *kathistemi*, pronounced *kat-is'-tay-mee*. It comes from the combination of the Greek word “*kata*” which means down, or over against. This is combined with the word, “*histemi*” meaning to cause to stand, to set. Combined it is translated “to ordain” or in the case of Acts 6:3, to Appoint.

The purpose then of ordination for the individual is the signifying of the sense of calling by God and their committing of their life to a particular ministry. For the local congregation it is the acknowledgement, approval and authorization for the individual to serve the church in ministry.

In the New Testament there is no prescribed procedure for the service of ordination other than what is depicted in Acts 6. It was something the congregation was called upon to do, rather than an appointment by an individual or group. The church was charged with selecting men whose walk with the Lord was respected, wise and demonstrated by lifestyle that they were full of the Holy Spirit. The one particular thing that stands out ceremonially is the laying on of hands. This was frequently used in the New Testament as a public and formal act of setting aside for ministry individuals (Acts 6:6, 13:3, 1 Timothy 4:14 and 5:22, and 2 Timothy 1:6).

Ordination is (1) a function of the local church, (2) It is an open and public service, (3) Consists of the laying on of hands, and (4) It is for deacons and ministers of the gospel. Beyond these four things, we must develop our own services of ordination. Traditionally, the ordination service consists of two parts, the coming together of the ordaining council and the Ordination service. This is true for the ordination of deacons and ministers. The difference between the two services is whether the local congregation chooses to make the deacon ordination service local or inviting others to participate. Another difference is that there may be multiple individuals ordained in a deacon ordination, as opposed to only one in a ministry ordination.

ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

Prior to the Ordination Service:

It should be decided prior to the Minister's Ordination Service if the questioning of the candidate will be with the Ordaining Council only or if it will be a part of the public Ordination Service. A second thing that should be considered is preferences of speakers by the candidate. They are usually ordained individuals who have impacted the candidate's life, who He might want to participate in certain parts of the service.

The Minister's Ordaining Council:

The ordaining council should be composed of ministers and deacons from various churches that convene for the explicit purpose of ordaining a person to the gospel ministry. This council shall convene before the actual ordination service. During the organization of the Ordaining Council the first order of business should be the election of officers. Officers for the Ordaining council shall be the moderator, who will preside of the council and the service. An interrogator or questioner to examine the candidate. And a secretary/clerk to record the actions of the Council.

Questioning the Candidate:

The candidate will be asked by the moderator to present himself before the council either by sitting in front of the council or by standing behind the pulpit before the congregation. This will be determined by either a public or private examination.

1. Tell of your conversion experience
2. Relate your call to the ministry
3. What do you believe about the Bible?
4. What do you believe about God?
5. Who is Jesus Christ?
6. Who is the Holy Spirit?
7. What is a New Testament Church?
8. What is the mission of the church?
9. What are the ordinances of the church? And what is their significance?
10. Tell how you personally have led a person to be saved?
11. What do you believe about sin?
12. Tell of your involvement in Christian ministry through the local church?
13. What are your belief about and the practice of Christian Stewardship?
14. What do you believe about Heaven?

15. What do you believe about Hell?
16. What do you believe about the second coming of Christ?
17. If this council should choose not to ordain you, how will that affect your ministry?
18. How does your wife feel about you and the ministry?

The floor is then open for questions from members of the Ordaining council.

The candidate is then dismissed while the council formulates their recommendation. The action is recorded by the secretary/clerk and the certificate signed by each member of the ordaining council.

Sample Service for Ordination of Minister

Hymn of Consecration

Prayer

Welcome and Introductions

Presentation of the Candidate

Testimony of the Candidate

Recommendation of the Ordaining Council to the Church

Vote of the Church to approve or proceed with the ordination

Special Music

Ordination Sermon

Charge to the Church: If the ordination is in the candidate's church.

The Laying on of Hands

The Prayer of Dedication

Presentation of the Certificate, Bible, and appropriate gift for the wife.

Closing Prayer

Hand of Fellowship

Reception honoring the candidate and family.