

Ordination & Licensing Guidelines

Theology

We find no instruction in the New Testament concerning the common practice of ordination, but there are numerous texts which indicate a “setting apart,” “anointing,” “laying on of hands” and “sending out” (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 2:7; Titus 1:5; Acts 6:6, Acts 13:3; 1 Tim. 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6).

Most, if not all, churches and denominations have a way to publicly recognize and confer authority to those God has entrusted to guide, equip and lead them. Although the call on a pastor/minister’s life is wrought in the heart and is not contingent upon titles, ordination provides the opportunity for the church to affirm and recognize this calling.

Philosophy

“A church officer is someone who has been publicly recognized as having the right and responsibility to perform certain functions for the benefit of the whole church.” The Village Church recognizes both the role of the pastor and minister to carry out these functions. The executive directors of the church also have collaborative involvement in ministry services that benefits the whole church that would qualify them for ordination.

There is no direct instruction in the New Testament for ordination, nor is there any requirement by our denomination or government. Because of the historical tradition of ordination, we believe that The Village Church can practice the ordination of pastors, ministers and executive directors.

In summary, we will use the term “ordination” to mean “to invest with ministerial services, ministry duties or to confer pastoral authority.”

Practice

1. Make provision in the church constitution and bylaws to provide specific authority to the central elder body to license and ordain individuals as ministers of the gospel.
2. The central elder body determines the qualifications for ordination, and thereby, appoints qualified people.
3. The central elder body has the authority to also revoke ordination status upon termination of employment or for disciplinary reasons. This would also by default mean a change in the person’s pastoral or ministerial services and roles.
4. All ordained staff members are eligible for a housing allowance.
5. All ordained staff members are permitted to exempt themselves from Social Security coverage if they meet the qualified conditions:
 - Church ordination
 - File Form 4361 with the IRS
 - Certify religious opposition to accepting public insurance benefits
 - Notify church that they are opposed to Social Security coverage for the services they perform in the exercise of ministry
 - IRS verification

Ordination Process

Hiring

Typically, ordination will begin during the hiring process.

- The following pastoral/ministerial positions are eligible for ordination:
 - i. Pastors
 - ii. Associate pastors
 - iii. Ministers
 - iv. Associate ministers
- Executive directors are also eligible for ordination.
- Ordination from another church or denomination will not be carried forward to The Village Church unless the staff position is eligible for ordination.

Ordained Pastoral/Ministerial Staff Members

All ordained pastoral/ministerial staff members must fulfill the following:

- All ordained staff members are expected to fulfill their specific job-related role as it pertains to equipping the church (Eph. 4:12).
- All male, ordained staff members are expected to be available to perform weddings and funerals.
- All ordained staff members are expected to help in the planning, preparation and execution of the church's various worship services and ministry programs.
- All ordained staff members are expected to be available to help in the planning, preparation and execution of baptism, communion services and weekend response times.

Clarification on the Extension of Ordination and Licensure

1. The Village Church does not license pastoral/ministerial staff members; rather we ordain qualified pastoral/ministerial staff.
2. The Village Church does not ordain non-staff members.
3. The Village Church will consider licensing qualified Covenant Members on a case-by-case basis. This may include a church staff member (non-pastoral/ministerial) who is a Covenant Member seeking licensure. Again, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis. See "Ministerial Licensure Process" below.

Ministerial Licensure Process

The church does understand that Covenant Members (e.g. staff or non-staff) may desire to be licensed in order to provide ministerial services to a select population, perform a wedding or funeral, go on the mission field, etc. Therefore, the church will consider licensing qualified Covenant Members on a case-by-case basis.

In order to be considered for licensure, the following process shall be followed:

1. The Covenant Member shall submit a request to their campus pastor.
2. The request shall include the scope of the ministerial services the candidate desires to perform, along with a basis of reasoning for their performance of said services.
3. In concert with the campus pastor, the request will be considered, discussed and prayed over.

4. If the campus pastor believes the request deserves further merit, then he shall submit it to the central elder body as a whole.
5. The central elders maintain the final level of authority to grant ministerial licensure, and licensure shall have a term not to exceed two years from the date of approval.
6. The secretary of the central elders shall maintain a record of the request, along with the respective decision.
7. An approved candidate for licensure would not receive financial compensation from the church for the performance of ministerial services. In addition, the licensed candidate is responsible to seek professional tax advice concerning the tax implications of compensation received for ministerial services.
8. The executive assistant to the lead pastors shall prepare a license for the central elders' signatures.
9. The campus pastor shall deliver the signed license and inform the candidate of approval.
10. The executive assistant will also update the church database system to notate the information and date of licensure on the individual's record.
11. Previously issued ministerial licensures may be revoked. The decision to grant or revoke licensure remains under the sole authority of the central elders.

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