

Ordination Process

Harpeth Christian Church

Definition and Basis

Ordination is the action of our congregation and elders to set apart a person for specific ministry (e.g., ministers, chaplaincy, administration, missions), whereby we confirm the person's eligibility for this ministry and acknowledge the Holy Spirit's calling of that person. Through ordination, we demonstrate our confidence in the person and accept responsibility for the candidate's specific ministry, symbolized by the laying on of hands. This follows the pattern seen in Acts wherein the congregation and its leaders singled out various people to accept and accomplish special ministries of leadership and mission. Examples of the ordination procedure can be seen in Acts 6:1-4; Acts 13:1-3 (sometimes called commissioning); Acts 14:23; II Timothy 1:6.

Licensing & Ordaining Ministers

All ministers must be licensed or ordained. Both of these are cultural practices to signify the individual's calling by God and the church to ministry. This also signifies to civil authorities (such as the IRS) that the individual is a duly appointed and credentialed minister. *Background: All ministers must be licensed, commissioned or ordained. This process is the formal recognition by the church of his or her ministry in the church. None of these classifications are expressly biblical in nature but serve as cultural and statutory markers of position.*

The Purpose

We confer ministerial authority and responsibility by the elders on a minister, as a representative of the church and the Renew/Restoration Movement. This is an acknowledgement for the congregation, the community, and for sending out as church planters, missionaries, and ministerial leaders for other churches (I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17).

Qualifications for Ordination

The candidate, at a base level, affirms Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior – and the Holy Spirit's leadership into ministry. The candidate must have demonstrated spiritual and general maturity (Hebrews 5:12-14; Ephesians 4:13-15; I Timothy 3:6). The candidate must have demonstrated quality of character and life as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Galatians 5:22-23. The candidate must have demonstrated proficiency and fruitfulness in ministry as evidenced by positive changes and effects in the lives of those ministered to and/or by other specific accomplishments. (John 15:16; Matthew 7:17-20). The candidate must have demonstrated both possession and proper use of spiritual gifts and abilities consistent with the specific ministry to which the candidate wishes to be ordained (I Corinthians 12:1-11; Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:6). And the candidate must demonstrate a sufficient knowledge of the scriptures and theology to serve as go-to-person and leader in the church. The candidate, if a woman, must not be seeking a ministry which would place her in a position of spiritual headship either over her husband, if married, or over men in an authority context of a local church congregation. This would permit ordination to such positions as Minister to Women, Minister to Children, Ministry of Caring and Fellowship, Minister of Counseling, or a Hospital Chaplain, but would exclude ordination as a preaching minister (for the whole church).

Ordination Oversight Team

Dr. Bobby Harrington, Mike Eagle & Chad Ellis (elders), and Chad Harrington (Deacon of the Teaching Ministry) form the Ordination Oversight Team. These men will affirm to the body of elders that a person is suited for ministry based upon their lifestyle, ministry fruit, and successful completion of the ordination courses. In the norm, this process will take two-year years. The key focus is lifestyle, established fruit in ministry, and competency in knowledge.

Courses for Ordination

There will be an open-book, take home exam after each class. The questions will be from the teachings/readings and will be used by the elders during the ordination examination. The take home test will be graded either pass or re-take.

The following is a ***draft list*** of the courses for ordination (2020)

- 1. Spiritual Formation** – an overview of the key elements of how we partner with the Holy Spirit so that we are formed into the image of Jesus.
- 2. Biblical Theology to Fuel Disciple Making** – an overview of the key teachings in the Bible. From the Grand Storyline through doctrines of Scripture, God, the Fall, Israel, the Gospel, New Birth, Baptism, Saving Faith, Church, Disciple Making, Ethics, and Final Restoration.
- 3. Old Testament Survey** - An overview of the Old Testament highlighting key Biblical passages and customs leading up to Jesus the Messiah.
- 4. Jesus Christ and the Gospels** – An overview of the life, teachings, disciple making ministry, Cross, and great commission of Jesus.
- 5. Acts of the Apostles** - A study of the early church's start, expansion, and disciple making endeavors leading to the Gospel being preached in Rome.
- 6. Romans through Revelation** – a survey of the rest of the New Testament from 1 Corinthians through to Revelation.
- 7. End Times (Eschatology)** – what does scripture teach about the end of human history and the new Creation. What are the core doctrines, important doctrines and peripheral doctrines.
- 8. Apologetics** - A defense of the faith by examining common attacks against Christianity and how best to answer tough questions while seeking to make disciples.
- 9. Exegesis, Hermeneutics and Renewing/Restoring Christianity** - provides background on the basic methods and tools of Biblical interpretation. Includes basic tools that equip leaders to interpret hard teachings of the Bible in the midst of cultural challenges. Shows the history and contemporary interpretive focus in the Renew/Restoration Movement.
- 10. Crisis and Pastoral Counseling** -provides practical and basic training in such items as crisis intervention, mental health, and the types of issues church leaders and those involved in discipling relationships deal with everyday.

Elders Final Testing and Affirmation

The elders will receive a recommendation from the Ordination Oversight Team, recommending a candidate for ordination. During an intense interview, the elders will draw upon the teaching and the questions given at the end of each class. They will also review the 100 memorization verses as a part of the ordination. A person must be an active faithful member of Harpeth Community Church and be recommended by the Ordination Oversight Team to stand before the elders for ordination. People from other churches, with approval, may take the courses, but they can only receive ordination from the elders of the church they attend.