

# FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS



Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

You know we have announced on different occasions the name(s) of our brother(s) who have been chosen as elder(s) and deacon(s) of this church in order to ascertain whether someone has any reason why he/they may not be ordained into office. Since no one has presented a lawful objection against his/their ordination we will now proceed to ordain him/them into his/their office. Brother(s), for this purpose, you who are to be ordained, and all here present, must first hear a brief exposition from the Word of God regarding the institution and office of the elders and/or deacons.

An elder is someone who exercises the office of government in the church of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the time of the apostolic church,<sup>2</sup> the elders or overseers<sup>3</sup> governed and cared for the church with the Word according to the gifts given by the Holy Spirit.

*Regarding the deacons: An office to help the church live as one community in Christ soon became necessary in the apostolic churches.<sup>4</sup> This office is clearly distinct from the ministry of the Word and prayers as well as the office of governance.*

We believe that Christ calls people to special offices in his church in order to equip believers for their works of service for the building up of the body of Christ. To that end, Christ also equips them with the necessary gifts.

Beloved brother(s), as elder(s) you are called to govern and care for the church. This task is not entrusted to one or two only, but to all the elders together<sup>5</sup> who form the church council under the guidance of and together with the minister of the Word. In order to exercise this office properly it is necessary for the elders to diligently study the Word of God and live in the riches of the gospel.

*Beloved brother(s), as deacon(s), you are called to ensure that the church exercises their unity in Christ in actual deeds of mutual love. You must also see to it that the believers do good to all, so that, the love of Christ might be revealed in this manner.*

Your task as elder(s) is therefore the following:

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

1. You must ensure that everything in the church takes place properly in accordance with good order; that the Word and sacraments are regularly and purely ministered; and that the sacraments are kept 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 you must assist the minister(s) of the Word with good advice.

*visit all members and encourage them to show actual deeds of love to their fellow believers and all people;*

2. You must carefully attend to the doctrine and life of every member and support all Christians with advice

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

*You must also carefully manage the means which are given for the service of those in need, allocate them wisely, and distribute them with comfort from Scripture.*

*In doing so, you must serve Christ, your fellow believers and all people, equip the church for service and let the*

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Phil. 1:1

<sup>4</sup> The churches which are built on the foundation laid by the apostles (Acts 2:45; Eph 2:20)

<sup>5</sup> Acts 15:6

<p>and comfort. You are to admonish and discipline members who refuse to repent and persist in their sinful living.<sup>6</sup> The repentant must be received back into the fellowship of the church.</p> <p>3. You must especially supervise the doctrine and conduct of ministers of the Word so that everything is done for the building up of the church and no strange doctrine is presented.<sup>7</sup></p> <p>4. You must also call the backsliders and pagans to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, for this is how Christ gathers his church.</p>	<p><i>love of Christ shine in the world to the glory of God.</i></p>
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NAME, you have heard what your task is. We ask you now to answer these questions in all sincerity:

### Questions

Are you convinced in your heart that you have been lawfully called to this holy service by the church of God, and therefore by God himself?

Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and contain the complete doctrine of salvation, and do you reject all teachings that contradict them?

Do you promise to discharge the God-given duties of your office faithfully and with diligence, in accordance with this doctrine and to live according to it?

Do you promise to submit yourself to the admonition and discipline of the church, if you should deviate in doctrine or life?

*Then the minister asks: NAME, 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 a faithful and fruitful servant in this office!

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

<p>Elder(s) be diligent in the governance of the church. Be like (a) shepherd(s) over the house of God, admonish and comfort everyone according to his need. See to it that doctrine is kept pure and that the church lives godly lives.</p>	<p><i>Deacon(s), you must be devoted in your office. Determine the need of believers and come to their aid. Encourage everyone to share with one another. Be careful in the allocation of the means that have been entrusted to your care.</i></p>
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Be faithful in your office and be (a) good example(s) for the whole church.<sup>8</sup> In doing so, you will obtain for yourself an honourable place in the church and great boldness in your faith in Christ, and after this life enter the joy of the Lord.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Eph. 4:1, 3, 2 Tim. 2:25-26

<sup>7</sup> Acts 20:29

<sup>8</sup> 1 Timothy 3:13.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 25:21, 23.

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

Willingly submit to their supervision and governance, because they keep watch over your life as those who will have to give an account.<sup>10</sup>

Let yourselves be guided by the deacons in the exercise of the fellowship of the saints.<sup>11</sup> Give without ulterior motives and not under compulsion, for “God loves a cheerful giver.”<sup>12</sup> Do your daily work faithfully, so that you can also help those in need.<sup>13</sup>

Keep the elders and deacons in your prayers.

### **Prayer**

Since we are unable to do it from 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. We beseech you to replenish him/them more and more with such gifts that is necessary to perform his/their service. Give him/them 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 church over which you have placed him/them. Make every one willing to submit him/themselves to the admonition of the elders, in honour of their calling. Graciously provide the church with the necessary means to be rich in generosity in every good work. Teach us, through the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to think of one another's interests.

May your holy Name be honoured in this way and the kingdom of your Son, Christ, come.

Hear us, o Father, through your beloved Son.

Amen

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<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 13:17.

<sup>11</sup> Romans 12:8.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:7.

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 4:2.8