



"What is the difference between Licensing and Ordination?"

This truly is a "Frequently Asked Question." We receive quite a number of calls on this subject. Licensing and Ordination are important matters affecting people who are serving in ministry. Let's deal with Ordination first.

Ordination is not the conferring of power or grace; rather, it is the clear recognition that God by His Grace and Sovereignty has called a man to Himself for specific, ordered ministry among His people. Ordination is the recognition by the church of God's giving a gifted man to the body of Christ for service (Ephesians 4:11-16).

The process, at a minimum, involves three steps:

1. Recognition by the individual that he has been gifted and set apart by God for ministry (I Cor. 9:16; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2:7).
2. Recognition, through observation and examination, by and at the request of that individual's own church, that he has been gifted and set apart by God for specific ministry (I Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9).
3. A public service in which this recognition is declared (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23; 1 Tim 4:14).

Historically the local church has determined who is ordainable.

H Since involvement in an Network means cooperation among its churches, the following guidelines are suggested:

Ordination should be limited to those men who are set aside for direct involvement in the ministry of God's Word to the hearts and lives of people. Evidence of recognized effective ministry of the candidate should be seen, preferably including his having already been licensed by his church.

In accord with the historic interpretation of the biblical passages relating to the office of elder, Ordination is reserved for men.

Why Ordination? The concept of the setting aside of men to ministry is rooted in the Scriptures and in the subsequent practice of the church. Ordination is seen to be a practiced pattern in the New Testament. Men were recognized publicly as being set apart by God for ordered ministry (Acts 6:5,6; 13:2,3; 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14). Ordination has been the historical pattern of the church. Since New Testament times, the church has consistently "ordained" men. Ordination has traditionally found favorable public recognition. Both the church and society, in varying degrees, recognize the place and validity of Ordination. In many cases, Ordination is the requirement of the State for the fulfillment of recognized, legitimate ministerial functions.

Ordination is both a privilege and responsibility of the local church, however, the actions of the local church in Ordination are far-reaching. They affect all the churches within our Network and those of "like faith" outside our Network. In the light of this, it is imperative that Ordination be properly understood, seriously approached, uniformly practiced and widely respected.

**RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM
PACIFIC CHURCH NETWORK**

To serve our churches in this very important and significant matter, Pacific Church Network has established an ORDINATION COMMITTEE. This Committee serves our churches with the deep conviction of the place and importance of the local church in the cause of Christ in today's society.

The Ordination Committee acts on the behalf of the churches in PCN, to examine candidates for the ministry, prior to the call of an Ordination Council. They determine whether the candidate has reached the stage in his Christian experience and education where he is prepared to appear before an Ordination Council, and whether he meets the required standards for Ordination, as approved by the Board. The Ordination Committee also serves as a "Committee of Reference," to which a church may appeal for advice, if necessary.

An excellent ORDINATION MANUAL has been prepared by the Ordination Committee, containing detailed instructions concerning how pastoral staff and churches should proceed. Copies of this excellent manual are available upon request from the PCN Office.

The Manual is full of very helpful information for churches and church staff who are in the process of preparing for Ordination. The Manual also includes some helpful information on Licensing.

Help is also available on procedures for the Ordination Council and a suggested Order of Service or program for the Ordination Service.



LICENSING

Timothy was charged, "*Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands.*" In the normal process of one's calling there should be that time of making certain of God's appointment to serve in a vocational ministry.

It is reasonable that during this period of training and/or internship, a person is involved in a local church ministry and has responsibilities which extend far beyond the normal involvement of a layman.

Some examples of these might be:

1. A theological student who is the pastor of a small church.
2. A graduate of seminary who is called to a full-time ministry and is not yet ready for Ordination.
3. A retired person serving as a minister of visitation and/or desiring a chaplaincy position in a hospital.
4. A person who is serving as an Associate Pastor in a church.

Licensing is never to be construed as Ordination nor a substitute for it.

It is important to note that the License does give the authority to perform all the duties of an ordained man within that local church. One of the questions that may be asked by the Internal Revenue Service is whether or not the person licensed by the church is able to perform all the sacerdotal duties of the church: child/parent dedications, baptisms, weddings, funeral services, etc.

Licensing can never be transferred from one church to another. When a person leaves the church in which he is licensed for the work of the ministry, his License immediately ceases to be effective.

Licensing must have time limitations which will be established by the church and faithfully enforced. The suggested maximum without reviewing the status of the licensee is two years, although many churches prefer to review this matter annually, and extend it for one year at a time.

The decision to license a staff person for the work of the ministry or extend a license, should be properly recorded in the minutes of the church.

A License can be revoked or withdrawn should there be sufficient reason for the local church to find it necessary to take such action (I Timothy 5:19).

A suitable Certificate of License should be provided to the staff person by the local church and this should be displayed in the office or ministry area where that individual serves.