

# Ordination

## Definition

- Webster's 1828 Dictionary provides the following definitions for *ordain*:
  - Properly, to set; to establish in a particular office or order; hence, to invest with a ministerial function or sacerdotal power; to introduce and establish or settle in the pastoral office with the customary forms and solemnities; as, to ordain a minister of the gospel. In America, men are ordained over a particular church and congregation, or as evangelists without the charge of a particular church, or as deacons in the episcopal church.
  - To appoint; to decree.
  - To set; to establish; to institute; to constitute.
  - To set apart for an office; to appoint.
  - To appoint; to prepare.
- "Ordination in popular usage among the churches refers primarily to the selection and consecration of spiritual leaders" – Way of Life Encyclopedia

## Scriptural Basis

- The choice or appointment to the ministry
  - Christ ordained the disciples to preach the Gospel – Mark 3:14
  - Matthias, the replacement of Judas in the Twelve, was ordained – Acts 1:22
  - Paul recognized that he was ordained into the ministry – I Timothy 2:7
  - Elders were ordained by Paul and Barnabas – Acts 14:23
  - Titus ordained elders in Crete – Titus 1:5
- The ceremonial commissioning of ministers
  - The first deacons were ordained in the church at Jerusalem – Acts 6:6
  - Paul and Barnabas were ordained in the church at Antioch – Acts 13:1-3
  - Timothy was ordained (likely by the churches of Lystra and Iconium) – I Timothy 4:14
- The ceremony including the "laying on of hands" – Acts 6:6, 13:3; I Timothy 4:14
  - Timothy was warned to "lay hand suddenly on no man" – I Timothy 5:22
  - This act symbolizes identification (Exodus 29:15), blessing (Genesis 48:14, Matthew 19:13), commission (Numbers 27:18), and empowerment (Acts 8:19).

## Process of Ordination

- God calls a man to the work of the ministry.
- The man prepares and engages in the work.
- The local church witnesses this call and its evidence.

- The local church leadership votes to proceed with the ordination.
- An ordination council/presbytery, made up of ordained ministers from the local church and sister churches, is called.
- The ordination council examines the candidate and votes to proceed.
- A public ordination service is held.
  - The candidate is presented to the congregation, typically giving their testimony and fielding some questions.
  - The ordination council makes their report.
  - The local church votes to approve the ordination.
  - The ordination council lays hands on and prays for the candidate.
    - This is the actual ordination.
  - The newly ordained minister is presented with a certificate of ordination and possibly other tokens of appreciation.
  - A preacher delivers a charge to the newly ordained minister.