**Form for Ordination of Ministers of the Word**

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ

We have before made known to you the name of our brother [NAME], here present, who is now to be ordained to the ministry of the Word. No one has appeared to allege anything against his person or teaching. We shall therefore proceed, in the name of the Lord, to ordain him. First, it is necessary that you, brother [NAME], and everyone who is present here listens to what the Word of God teaches us about the institution and the work of the pastors or ministers of the Word.

We believe that Jesus Christ calls people to special offices in his church. Therefore he gives apostles and prophets to his church; others he gives as evangelists, still others as pastors and teachers, in order to prepare the believers for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.[[1]](#footnote-1)

As pastor and teacher, you, beloved brother, have been called to care for, guide and protect the flock that God has entrusted to your care. You are to do this by preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, persevering in prayers and helping with the government of the church.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Your work as office-bearer is therefore the following:

1. You must thoroughly examine the Word of God and proclaim it to the church in a pure and simple manner. As a shepherd, you must hold fast to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, and handle it correctly.[[3]](#footnote-3) In the worship services and at home visitations, you must teach and comfort, admonish and rebuke the members according to the demands of each one's circumstances. Paul says: “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

2. You must administer the sacraments which the Lord has instituted as signs and seals of his covenant of grace. From Christ’s command to his church it is clear that baptism must be administered[[5]](#footnote-5) and that his death must be commemorated in the Lord’s Supper.

3. You must call on the Name of the Lord in the worship service with confession of sin and with praise and thanksgiving, and you must intercede in prayer for all people.[[6]](#footnote-6)

4. You must teach the children of the covenant in the knowledge of the Word of God, remembering Christ’s command to Peter: “Feed my lambs.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

5. Together with the elders, you must oversee the church and make sure that everything is done in an orderly manner. The church must be protected against heresy, and members should not live sinful and wicked lives like unbelievers. For this purpose the keys of the kingdom of heaven were entrusted to the apostles and in them to the overseers, of whom you are one.[[8]](#footnote-8)

6. It is also your calling to preach the gospel to the world[[9]](#footnote-9) and to encourage the believers to confess the Name of the Lord Jesus before the people. You must also seek out those who have strayed, in order to bring them back into the community of the church.[[10]](#footnote-10)

You see therefore that the minister of a Word has a glorious calling and service, but also a great responsibility. Keep in mind these words of the apostle: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Questions**

[NAME], you have heard what your task is. We ask you now to answer these questions in all sincerity:

1. 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?

2. Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God that contains the perfect doctrine of salvation, and do you reject all teachings that contradict them?

3. Do you promise to discharge the duties of your office faithfully and with diligence, in accordance with this doctrine?

4. Do you promise to conduct yourself in accordance with this doctrine?

5. Do you promise to submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, if you would perhaps go astray in doctrine or in life?

What is your answer?

*To this he should answer: Yes*

*The officiating minister and other ministers of the Word should then lay their right hands on him[[12]](#footnote-12) and say:*

May God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this service, enlighten you with his

Holy Spirit, strengthen you with his hand, and so govern you in your ministry that your life and work will be to the glory of his name and the expansion of the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Thereafter the officiating minister should admonish the ordained minister and also the whole church from the pulpit, saying:*

Beloved brother and fellow servant:

You must love Christ and pastor his flock, oversee them as a shepherd – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but with the heartfelt wish to be an example for the flock.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in spirt, in faith and in purity. Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Give yourself to these matters, so that your progress will be clear for all to see. Do not neglect the gifts of grace that have been given to you.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Watch your life and doctrine closely, persevere in them, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.[[15]](#footnote-15) Endure hardship like a good soldier of Jesus Christ.[[16]](#footnote-16) And when the Chief Shepherd appears you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.[[17]](#footnote-17)

And you, beloved congregation, receive the minister of the Word with joy.[[18]](#footnote-18) Hold him in

honour. Remember that through him God himself speaks to you. Let the coming of him who bring the Good News be beautiful and pleasant to you. Remember him in your prayers.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Obey those that go before you, for they keep watch over your lives and will have to give account to God.[[20]](#footnote-20) If you do these things, the God of peace shall enter your homes. You who receive this brother, who is a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward,[[21]](#footnote-21) and because you believe in Christ through his word, you will inherit eternal life through Christ.

No man is of himself sufficient for these things. Let us then call upon the name of God with thanksgiving:

**Prayer**

Merciful Father, we thank you that you have given a faithful minister to this congregation. We pray that, through your Spirit, you will enable him more and more for the task that you have prepared him for and to which you have called him. Enlighten his mind to know the truth of your Word. Give him the words to proclaim the mystery of the gospel with boldness. Give him the wisdom and insight to rightly oversee the congregation together with the elders, and to preserve Christian peace, so that the congregation will increase in number and in virtue under his ministry and through his example. Give him courage for all the difficulties that he may encounter in his service. Strengthen him through the comfort of your Holy Spirit, so that he may be steadfast until the end and one day be received in the joy of the Lord together with all the faithful servants.

Grant to this congregation the grace to conduct themselves as they should toward their pastor. Let them acknowledge him as your ambassador and let them subject themselves to his teaching and admonition, so that they may believe in Christ through his ministry of the Word and may inherit eternal life. Hear us, o Father, through your beloved Son. Amen.

1. Ephesians 4:11-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Acts 20:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Titus 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 2 Timothy 4:1-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Matthew 28:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 1 Timothy 2:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. John 21:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Matthew 16:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Matthew 28:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Luke 15:1-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Only when a proponent is ordained. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 1 Peter 5:2-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 1 Timothy 4:12-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 1 Timothy 4:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 2 Timothy 2:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 1 Peter 5:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Isaiah 52:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Hebrews 13:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Matthew 10:41 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)