

One-Day Training for Ruling Elders Leader Development and Continuing Education

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Benediction

**Ruling Elder Training
February 26, 2022
Opening Worship**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy One, we bring to you our fears and concerns as we are called to the ordered ministries of Your church. We acknowledge our inadequacies, but we rejoice that when we are weak You are strong and provide all we need to respond to Your call. Open our ears to hear Your voice, our eyes to see Your glory, and our mouths to proclaim Your Good News, for we ask this in the name of Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Because of God's grace, our sins are forgiven.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 6:1-8

REFLECTIONS

HYMN "I, the Lord of Sea and Sky" (Here I Am, Lord) Page 69

BENEDICTION AND BLESSING

Go forth in joy, you beloved of the Lord. Make disciples, teach the faith, and above all, delight in the Lord who is with you always even to the end of the age.

May God take you deep into rivers of blessing, lead you beside refreshing streams and anoint you with the waters of everlasting love. Amen.

Roots and Foundations of The Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church was born out of the fires of the Reformation...and under the leadership of a French lawyer by the name of John Calvin, who believed that the reformation of the church was essential if we were to get back to the Bible as the sole source of authority for the Church.

The church, in obedience to Jesus Christ, is open to the reforming of its standards of doctrine as well as its governance. In Section F of the *Book of Order*, the church affirms “The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God” in the power of the Spirit.” F-2.02

We are a:

Connectional Church – We believe in one body, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and we belong to the holy catholic (universal) church.

Covenantal Church – We make promises to God and to each other, most particularly at baptism and ordination.

Constitutional Church – We endeavor to do God’s work in the spirit of consistency (decently and in order).

The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, section 1 of the *Book of Order* affirms the following:

God’s Mission: to transform creation and humanity through the proclamation of the good news to all people offering to all people God’s grace at font and table and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. F-1.01

Jesus Christ Is Head of the Church: Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills. F-1.02

The Calling of the Church: The Church is the body of Christ. Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. F-1.03

Openness to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit: In the power of the Spirit, Jesus Christ draws worshiping community and individual believers into the sovereign activity of the triune God at all times and places. F-1.04

The Church and Its Confessions: The Creeds and Confessions declare who we are and what we believe. These confessional statements are subordinate standards in the church, subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him. F-2.01 and F-2-02

The Presbyterian Church upholds the affirmations of the Protestant Reformation:

Solo grati – Grace alone

Solo fide – Faith alone

Solo scriptura – Scripture alone (F-2.04)

Discussion:

Let's flesh out some of this. How are we a Connectional Church? A Covenantal Church? A Constitutional Church?

Connectional: Each congregation is part of a web of relationships in our Presbyterian family. In part, this means that each congregation and each session is accountable to the larger church through another council – the presbytery. The presbytery is accountable to the synod, and then to the General Assembly.

The decisions of one council influence the work of another. Persons ordained by one council are ordained in the whole church.

We support and pray for each other.

Those elected as ruling elders to serve on their sessions may also be called upon as commissioners to presbytery, synod, or General Assembly.

Covenantal: A covenant is a promise. God made eternal covenants throughout the ages and a New Covenant sealed in the blood of Jesus Christ. We make

promises to each other at baptism, at ordination, at installation, and simply as a family of faith serving the Lord together. A covenant is a holy promise made before God and His people.

Constitutional: Our constitution is far more than a set of rules. In fact, Part I of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the **Book of Confessions**, consisting of 12 documents whose origins span 1,800 years of church history.

Part 2 of the Constitution is the *Book of Order* with four sections describing the way we order our lives together. The first section, *The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity*, is a three-chapter synopsis of what we believe. The other sections, *The Form of Government*, *The Directory of Worship*, and *The Rules of Discipline*, help us to order our lives while remaining true to the historical principle that “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of people which are in anything contrary to God’s Word, or beside it, in matter of faith or worship.”

BREAK

Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning (W-4.04)

Constitutional Questions (W-4.0404)

Personal Faith

Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

This question to me is of utmost importance! If someone is coming to be ordained and/or installed or commissioned and cannot answer this question in the affirmative, how can they lead God's people? The question has several components: Savior, Head of the Church, and belief in the Trinity. It is in the required training and session examination that any reservation in any of the questions, but certainly this one, must be resolved.

I invite you now to write your own Personal Statement of Faith. At the top of the sheet I have written a sample statement for you – not to copy but to see that a statement of faith is what you believe and not necessarily your faith journey, although that may be part of your statement. We will take about 15 minutes to write, and then, if you like, you may share with the group. No one is required to do that, but it is a good spiritual practice and one you may need at some point.

After sharing, we will have lunch.

Sample Faith Statement

I believe...

That God's grace, even though I don't deserve it, is all sufficient for me. That is response to this unconditional love first given by God, which God sealed for my sake through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, I am called through faith to share that good news with others by both word and deed. That our one and only Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is Sovereign, a sovereignty I trust without hesitation or reservation. That Jesus Christ is my personal Lord and Savior and also my constant companion through the Holy Spirit, who, like a close friend, will never give up on me no matter how often I may try to ignore or even deny Him. That as a disciple of Jesus Christ, I am also called to a different way of life – one that constantly seeks, in community with other believers, to discern the will of God for myself, God's church, and this world. That because I have been richly blessed in so many ways, I must therefore use and share those God-given gifts in ways that, hopefully, will both honor God and be a blessing to others.

Now for your Statement of Faith...

Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning (W-4.04)

Constitutional Questions (W-4.0404)

Doctrine and Theology

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you? (W-4.4003 b)

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God? (W-4.4003 c)

Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions? (W-4.4003 d)

Worksheet: To Be or Not to Be – Reformed!

Share Responses

Handout: Some Essential Tenets of the Reformed Faith

To Be or Not to Be – Reformed

Instructions: Evaluate each of the following statements or viewpoints using the following scale:

1= Definitely a Presbyterian/Reformed point of view

2 – Don't Know (Maybe??)

3 – Definitely NOT a Presbyterian/Reformed point of view

___ Human beings are certainly sinful but God has given humans the freedom to choose between good and evil.

___ Infants should be baptized as soon as possible so that, if they were to die, they would still be saved and go to heaven.

___ When you stop your busyness and really focus on listening, then God will speak to you.

___ Christians should stay out of social issues and focus on developing their own personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

___ God spoke to humans through the divine words written down as Scripture and has preserved them to reveal God's truth for every age.

___ The first priority of Christians is to share the good news with others and lead them to Christ.

___ If we, after helping ourselves as much as we can, reach out to God, God is ready and waiting to help and will reach out to us.

___ I don't have to go to church to be spiritual, and being a spiritual person is more important than being religious.

___ Why should I bother going to church if the church isn't meeting my spiritual needs?

___ The problem with many Christians today is they spend too much energy on trying to make sense of their faith instead of just experiencing God and living their faith.

___ God looks at the motivations in our hearts. If we try our best and do more good than bad in this life, God will honor our intentions and reward us in heaven.

___ If people would only read the Bible, they would find answers to all their questions from modern life.

Some Essential Tenets of the Reformed Faith

<u>Tradition</u>	<u>Tenet/Belief/Doctrine</u>
Catholic (universal)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Trinity – the mystery of the triune God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit2. Incarnation – of the eternal Word of God in Jesus Christ
Protestant	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Justification by grace through faith – grace alone, faith alone4. Scripture reveals God’s grace in Christ – Scripture alone
Reformed	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Sovereignty of God – the majesty, holiness, and providence of God who creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love6. Election for service and salvation – love of neighbor as well as love of God7. Covenant life – marked by disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God8. Stewardship – that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God’s creation9. Human tendency toward idolatry and tyranny – which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God

-From the *Book of Order* F-2.0300-2.0500

Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning

Constitutional Questions (W-4.0404)

Governance, Worship, and Discipline

The Presbyterian Way **W-4.4003 e,f,g,h**

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline?

Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

When Things Go Wrong – How We Work for Reconciliation **W-4.4003 e**

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline?

Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

Governance – A Polity for the Church

Although the church was founded by Jesus Christ and is uniquely spiritual in character, it is also a human organization, which requires structure and system of agreed-upon rules in order to carry out the tasks. The system of rules that governs a church is called its “polity.” While there is a wide variety of belief and practice among Christian churches today, church polities can be roughly divided into three basic kinds. These are congregational, episcopal, and presbyterian.

Congregational Polity – Direct governance of the church by the people who make up the congregation characterizes the congregational style of polity. The final authority on any question is the vote of a majority of the members of that particular congregation. Most churches with congregational polity do have a board of people (often called deacons) who administer the will of the congregation and make recommendations to it, but finally it is the congregation that governs the life of the church.

Episcopal Polity – This form of church government takes its name from the Greek word for bishop: *episkopos*, literally “shepherd.” While congregational polity gives virtually all authority to the congregation, in episcopal polity power is lodged in the highest-ranking bishop and is delegated downward through the clergy. One important facet of episcopal polity is the doctrine of “apostolic succession.” Simply stated, this is the belief that those who are ordained as clergy stand in an unbroken line of authority going back to Jesus and the apostles. More Christians by far belong to churches holding to some form of episcopal polity than belong to either congregational or presbyterian polities. Included in their number are the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches. The Methodist, Wesleyan, and Anglican churches depart in a number of ways from strict episcopal polity, especially in giving more authority to laypersons. Their use of the office of bishop, however, qualifies them for inclusion in this category.

Presbyterian Polity – the name of our church, “Presbyterian,” refers not to our doctrine or beliefs but to how we govern ourselves. Presbyterian polity takes its name from the Greek word *presbuteros*, meaning one having great age. “Presbyter,” an English word derived from this Greek word, refers both to teaching and ruling elders as leaders of the church (and does not just apply to old folks!). Each of our congregations is governed by a group of presbyters elected by the congregation and known as the session. Presbyterians have always sought to

base our polity on principles found in the Bible. The *Book of Order* states that “Scripture teaches us of Christ’s will for the Church, which is to be obeyed.” (F-1/0203) In keeping with this idea, the ordered ministries of our church – presbyter (ruling and teaching elders) and deacons – are ones for which there is clear precedent in Scripture. Acts 6:1-6 tells of the origin of an ordered ministry like that of deacon to meet a need in the early church. The New Testament shows evidence of the ordered ministry of presbyter or elder in I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-22; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-10; and Acts 14:23. Presbyterians believe that the New Testament uses the words “bishop” and “elder” to refer to the same ordered ministry. Thus, there is no hierarchy of presbyters in the Presbyterian Church; teaching and ruling elders differ only in the functions to which they are called to perform. We do not have anyone serving with the title of bishop in the Presbyterian Church. Even those elected to be officers of governing bodies, moderators and clerks, have no individual authority outside the body. Their only authority is that which has been assigned to them for their term of office by the council that elected them. Another principle of our polity derived from Scripture is that power within the church is to be exercised by groups of leaders rather than individuals. We believe the Holy Spirit speaks most clearly on matters of government through the prayerful deliberations of groups of presbyters. The Presbyterian Church (USA) is a representative form of governance where the congregation has a fundamental right to elect their representatives.

Application of our Polity:

- The session of Crosslake Presbyterian Church had spent more than an hour debating whether to permit a local non-profit organization to use their fellowship hall. There was nothing about this in their manual of operations. As time for adjournment drew near and no consensus was in sight, one of the ruling elders moved that the question be put to the congregation for a vote. The moderator ruled the motion out of order, but several ruling elders objected. “We have not been able to come to agreement about this, so why not let the congregation decide?”
- The business meeting of the session of Springs Presbyterian Church was winding down. Stan Williams had just been elected commissioner to an

upcoming presbytery meeting. At the meeting several controversial issues were going to be debated. When the agenda was completed, the moderator asked for a motion to adjourn. "Wait a minute!" said a ruling elder. "We haven't given Stan any instructions about how he should vote at the presbytery meeting. As our delegate he needs to know what we want him to do."

What is the premise of those raising the question? What does our polity say about these issues? What do you think about our polity in these areas?

A Brief Look at The Session G-3.02

Composition and Responsibilities: The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders...All members of the session are entitled to vote. The pastor or person designated by the presbytery shall be the moderator, and the session will not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. "The session shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness." In light of this charge, the session has responsibility and power to:

- a. Provide that the Word of God may be truly preached and heard
- b. Provide that the Sacraments may be rightly administered and received
- c. Nurture the covenant community of disciples of Christ

The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly, shall elect a clerk to maintain all minutes and records, annually review the membership rolls (active, baptized and affiliate), elect a treasurer to handle financial transactions and provide for the annual review of financial records, and maintain connection with other councils including the presbytery, synod and General Assembly.

Worship

Christian worship gives all glory and honor, praise and thanksgiving to the holy, triune God. We are gathered in worship to glorify the God who is present and active among us – particularly through the gifts of Word and Sacrament. We are sent out in service to glory the triune God who is present and active in the world. W-1.01

God's gifts of Word and Sacrament establish and equip the Church as the body of Christ in the world. This mission of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church flows from Baptism, is nourished at the Lord's Supper, and serves to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all. In the same way, the Church's ministry emerges from the font, arises from the table, and takes its shape from the Word of the Lord. Therefore the worship of the triune God is the center of our common life and our primary way of witness to the faith, hope, and love we have in Jesus Christ. W-1.0107

In Jesus Christ, the Church is called to be a royal priesthood, giving glory to God in worship and devoting itself to God's service in the world. Worship is a collective activity of the people of God and an expression of our common life and ministry. It demands the full, conscious, and active participation of the whole body of Christ, with heart, mind, soul, and strength. W-2.0201

Let's try our hand at answering the questions on the Worship True/False Quiz. After you have had a few minutes to answer these questions, we will discuss them and see what the *Book of Order* says about some of these.

Spend about 10 minutes answering the questions and 15 minutes discussing them.

Worship True/False Quiz

- ___ 1. There can be no worship without mission and outreach.
- ___ 2. As church leaders, we are responsible to the church for our prayer life.
- ___ 3. Presbyterians celebrate four sacraments: the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion), Baptism, Marriage, and Funerals.
- ___ 4. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ.
- ___ 5. All children are eligible for baptism.
- ___ 6. A child being baptized in the Presbyterian Church must have parents who are members of a Presbyterian Church.
- ___ 7. No one can be excluded from the Lord's Table.
- ___ 8. Children are not allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper until they are confirmed.
- ___ 9. Artistic expressions (architecture, furnishings, music, drama, etc.) should evoke, edify, and enhance the worshiper's need for comfort and reassurance of grace.
- ___ 10. Those responsible for worship are to be guided by the reformed tradition, the tradition of the local congregation, and openness to diversity and inclusive language.
- ___ 11. The session has the responsibility and authority to choose Scriptures, lessons to be read, to oversee the prayers offered on behalf of the people, and to choose the music to be sung.
- ___ 12. The sermon is the heart of worship.
- ___ 13. It is possible to be re-baptized if someone has a conversion experience and requests it.
- ___ 14. Baptism is authorized by the minister and can be celebrated in private or public worship.

Book of Confessions Overview (C=Century)

<u>Confession</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Historical Context/Themes</u>
Nicene Creed	4 th C	Constantinople	Personhood of Jesus Reality of Holy Spirit
Apostles' Creed	2 nd -8 th C	Rome, North Africa, Gaul	One God in Three Persons God as Creator
Scots Confession	Mid-16 th C	Scotland	"Election" and the Church
Heidelberg Confession	Mid-16 th C	Germany	Stewardship and the Lord's Supper
Second Helvetic Confession	Mid-16 th C	Switzerland	Covenant and Baptism
Westminster Confession	Mid-17 th C	England	Sovereignty of God, Authority and Interpretation of Scripture
Shorter Catechism	Mid-17 th C	England	What Christians Should Believe Duties of Christian Life
Larger Catechism	Mid-17 th C	England	Guidance for Preachers on Confession's Doctrines
Theological Decl. of Barmen	Early 20 th C	Germany	Sin of Idolatry Lordship of Christ
Confession of 1967	Mid 20 th C	USA	Reconciliation in Church and Society
Brief Statement Of Faith	Late 20 th C	USA	Jesus Christ's Life and Ministry Human Equality
Confession Of Belhar	Late 20 th C	South Africa	Unity in the Church Reconciliation and Justice

Case Study: Maintaining the Purity of the Church

Joan feared this day would come. The church newsletter she held in her hands had become almost too heavy to hold so she laid in on the breakfast table. The church nominating committee had published the list of nominees for church leadership. Under the ruling elder nominees was the name Cameron Southerland, who had served on the session in the past as a ruling elder. "What am I going to do now?" she thought to herself.

One morning eight months ago, her schedule had been hectic and she hadn't stopped for lunch until after 2:00 pm. Joan had heard about a little out-of-the-way bistro and decided to try it. She had been seated for only a few minutes when a couple was seated behind her. She saw Cameron Southerland, a well-known member of her church, who was too interested in his companion to notice her. While their conversation was muted, Joan couldn't help but overhear enough to quickly confirm that Cameron was having an affair. The content of the couple's conversation left no room for doubt. Much of the talk centered on how to keep his wife from finding out about their relationship. Joan lost her appetite and left without eating her lunch.

Sara Southerland was an acquaintance of Joan's, but they had never been close. Still, the knowledge that Cameron was cheating on his wife made Joan ill.

For weeks Joan struggled with this knowledge. She argued with herself over whether to say anything to Sara. Eventually she concluded that she just couldn't. She would just keep things to herself. It didn't help that, since Cameron was one of the regular adult class teachers, Joan saw him every Sunday in church, meeting and greeting people. His rather high profile in the community as a real estate developer made him a popular man, and he was well known in the church for what most people assumed was his substantial financial support of the church. But Joan saw something different from the public persona.

Having served previously as a church leader in ordered ministry, Joan knew her church avoided making waves, especially when it was hard to get leaders. She understood the practical reality of it, but she was still troubled.

She continued to hear gossip from her non-church friends suggesting the affair was still active. Now seeing his name on the list of nominations for church office created a whole new dilemma. She knew she couldn't vote for him, but should she take a more active role and oppose his election? If she did, it would most certainly disrupt the church and make her a lightning rod for criticism. If she didn't, how could she continue to participate with integrity in a church with leaders like Cameron? Did she have an obligation to tell what she knew? Who

would she tell? Maybe it was better to do nothing and assume the church knew what it was doing. But apparently the nominating committee did not know about Cameron's affair.

The phone rang, startling her out of her moody reflection. Unbelievably, it was the church's pastor, calling to check on a task Joan had assumed some time ago. She tried to find her voice and began to speak...

For Discussion

1. What are some of the issues at stake here in terms of Presbyterian polity? Presbyterian theology?
2. How does this case study relate to one of the examination questions you are asked at ordination/installation: g – Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
3. Do you believe the church should uphold certain standards for church leaders in ordered ministry differently from that required of regular church members and why?
4. What would you do in this situation?
5. If disciplinary action is taken, which council (session, presbytery, synod, GA) has original jurisdiction to address this? D-3.0101

When Things Go Wrong – W-4.4003 e

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline?
Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them,
subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church? g

What happens when things do go wrong and church discipline is needed? That dreaded section of the *Book of Order* – The Rules of Discipline – is there to help guide us as we discern the will of God. This section begins: "Church discipline is the church's exercise of authority given by Christ, both in the direction of guidance, control, and nurture of its members and in the direction of constructive criticism of offenders." "The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings." "The power that Jesus Christ has vested in his church, a power manifested in the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing. It should be exercised as a dispensation of mercy and not wrath so that the great ends of the Church may be achieved, that all children of God may be presented faultless in the day of Christ."

Let's look at a case study for a few minutes and talk about it.

BREAK

The Work of Ministry - W-4.0404 (i)

Will you be a faithful ruling elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry, will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

Now the rubber hits the road. You have been called into ordered ministry by the voice of the congregation upon presentation by the nominating committee. As ruling elders, you need to be conversant with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th Edition*, know how your church functions (Manual of Operation, committees and description of what they do, vision/mission statement, church by-laws, membership list, and who and how to contact for questions), learn of any unwritten traditions, know how to serve Communion in whatever manner your church chooses (intinction, passing the elements, coming forward to receive elements, etc.), how to request reimbursement for purchases approved by the session and/or the budget. Keep in mind that nurturing the congregation is your job as well as the pastor's. You may be asked to make contacts with congregants and even to preach on occasion. As Jesus said many times, "Don't be afraid!" Honestly, most congregations are an "easy crowd" and glad you will fill the pulpit if needed.

We often get duties of ordered ministries mixed up – and there is some overlap at times – so I have prepared a worksheet entitled Duties of Ordered Ministries. By each duty indicate if this is a duty for the teaching elder (pastor) or the ruling elder OR both! I am throwing in the duties of deacons as well just to keep us covered in all these ministries. Then we will talk about it.

Duties of Ordered Ministries (P=Pastor, RE= Ruling Elder, D=Deacon)

- ___1. Be responsible for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships.
- ___2. Equip the saints for the work of ministry.
- ___3. Exercises compassion, witness, and service
- ___4. Exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline
- ___5. Help those burdened by unjust policies or structures
- ___6. Preach the faith of the church
- ___7. Serve as faithful members of the session
- ___8. Serve as pastors to support the people in the disciplines of the faith amid the struggles of daily life
- ___9. Serve as preachers of the Word
- ___10. Share in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, or anyone in distress
- ___11. Serve as presbyters participating in the responsibilities of governance, seeking always to discern the mind of Christ and to build up Christ's body through devotion, debate, and decision
- ___12. Administer font and table to interpret the mysteries of grace and lift the people's vision toward the hope of God's new creation
- ___13. Distribute the bread and wine at Communion
- ___14. Provide for nurturing the faith among members
- ___15. Stand for election as commissioners to higher councils

Conclusion – The Prayer of Examen (Play soft music)

The Prayer of Examen is an ancient discipline of prayer that heightens a sense of God's presence in our lives. After a long day of learning and sharing, our bodies and our minds are weary. **STAND UP FOR JUST A MINUTE AND STRETCH AND THEN WE WILL ENTER THIS TIME OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION.**

If you have every hoped to know God's leading as you wrestle with difficult questions or circumstances, this practice of prayer can open your heart and mind to God.

1. Adopt a prayerful posture, however that feels comfortable to you. Maybe hands folded or hands open, head bowed or looking up, whatever makes allows you to be more aware of God's love surrounding you.
2. Breathe deeply and slowly as if inhaling God's steadfast love.
3. As best you can, quiet your body and your mind/
4. Take about five minutes to reflect on two questions:
 - a. What has happened today for which I am most grateful?
 - b. Where and how did I experience love today?
5. Remember those things for which you are grateful and offer a silent prayer of thanks.

Offer a time for anyone to share prayer requests and to indicate how we can support each other. Let us pray together the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us to pray saying, Our Father...

I thank you for being here today and hope this has been helpful to you. Many books and resources went into this preparation, but none more than Holy Scripture. Please hear these words from Exodus 18:14-18, "When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, 'What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?' Moses replied, 'Because the people come

to me to get a ruling from God. When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and given them His instructions.' 'This is not good!' Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. You're going to wear yourself out – and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself.'”

You all are gifted of God to serve His people. As Paul commended to his “son in the faith,’ so I commend to us all: “Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive His approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

Now go in peace to love and serve the Lord. God bless you all.

References:

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