

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Exploring Nazarene
History and Polity



SESSION 9

Pastoral Ministry and Relations

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Pastoral Ministry and Relations

SESSION OVERVIEW

Call to Ministry

Qualifications of the Minister

Licensing and Ordination

Interview Process

Call to the Local Church

Review Process

Discipline

Application

Exam

Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should:

- understand and explain the process of becoming a minister from the divine call to ordination
- understand and explain the expectations and responsibilities of ministry
- understand the procedure for practical relations in the local church from the call extended by the church to the pastoral review process
- understand and explain the responsibilities of the laity in the pastoral review process

The Various Meanings and a Brief History of Pluralism

INTRODUCTION

This session begins by looking at pastoral ministry from the call to ministry to the qualifications of the minister to the process of licensing and ordination in the various tracks of ministry.

The duties listed in the *Manual* for a pastor are quite extensive (twenty-six items). Most are common expectations to preach the Word, equip the saints, administer the sacraments, care for the people, and seek the conversion of sinners. Others relate to administrative responsibilities such as appointing all teachers and supervising the statistics of the church. Others are business related such as signing all legal documents. (*Manual*, paragraphs 515 - 526)

The second topic of the session is the calling of a pastor to a local church. The call of a pastor to a local church exemplifies the shared power between lay and clergy, local church and superintendency. The work of finding a pastor involves both the district superintendent and the local church board. The size of the church usually affects the actual role played by the district superintendent and the local church board. In a larger church, the church may become more involved in the selection process.

CALL TO MINISTRY



NOTES

The *Manual* (paragraph 500) states that while the Church of the Nazarene recognizes all Christians have an obligation to be involved in ministry, God calls individuals to the “more official and public work of ministry.” This call is the basis for all ministerial vocations and would be one of the first questions put to someone requesting a ministerial license or seeking ordination.

What is the basis for a call? How does a person know they have a call? Candidates for ministry are expected to share their call to ministry. This would be similar to a testimony of conversion or entire sanctification. Some religious experience has led the individual to the understanding God wants him or her to serve in full-time ministry. This ministry could be a call to preaching or to staff ministry.

It also indicates the “church discovers a divine call.” The church plays a role in all calls to the ministry. In part, this is done through the observation of gifts and graces. The church affirms God has gifted a person for special ministry. The church then becomes an instrument through which God can confirm the call to ministry.

While the minister should be professional in the care and preparation for carrying out the responsibilities of ministry, the ministry itself should not be viewed simply as a career or profession. The reason for this difference lies in the call to ministry. (Donald Messer, *Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry*, 50-52; 68-69; 76-79)

A call means the congregation should not view the minister as simply a hired hand. The source of ministry lies in the grace of God and not in the skill of the minister. The 1928 General Assembly address considered the attitudes of the layperson toward the ministry: the church must not view the pastor as a “hired man,” as a mere employee of the church, but as “God’s appointed and anointed leader.”

Messer notes one negative and erroneous conclusion some have drawn from the fact ministry comes from a call: a call means such preparation as a college and seminary education for ministry is unnecessary. Messer contends while the ministry is not merely a profession, a minister is not excluded from being professional in his or her preparation and performance of ministry. Messer concludes, while the call moves the pastor or minister beyond professionalism, it does not eliminate the need for preparation and acting professionally.

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A call to ministry may come from a specific religious experience or initiated through a church recognizing the gifts someone has and raising the issue of a call. In both situations, the individual can begin exploring whether he or she has a call and the nature of that call. The ministry differs from other vocations, in that a person just does not decide they want to be a minister. Instead, there should be a sense of mission and purpose for this particular service in the church. The *Manual* (paragraph 500) reads, “The church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the Lord’s call.”

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE MINISTER



NOTES

The section on qualifications for the ministry starts with the subject of integrity. The *Manual* quotes from 2 Cor. 6:6-7, “in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left.” (*Manual*, paragraph 502.3) The leader should be a model in Christian virtues for the church. In a December 1933, *Herald* article, “A Clean Ministry in the Church of the Nazarene,” E.O. Chalfant discusses the practical dimensions of being ethical, such as the payment of debts, relationships with the opposite sex, restitution of wrongs, and complete devotion to the ministry. He states, “The outstanding reason for a clean ministry, then is that it is the only way to effectually proclaim the truths of this great salvation.”

The minister must have a personal relationship with God. This relationship should include being both converted and entirely sanctified. The expectations would be that we would have clear testimony of his or her religious experience with God. A holiness church would require ministers not only talk about the academic side of holiness but who provide clear testimony of the experience in their personal life. Ministers are expected to have been entirely sanctified.

The minister should also have a call to evangelism. At least he or she should feel a burden for the lost world. They should recognition that God is calling them to proclaim the gospel. One indication of a call may be a strong burden for the lost. They should be prepared to lead people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and they should provide training for their congregation to do so as well. Ministers should understand the necessity for spiritual development. As leaders, they should set an example of personal spiritual growth and take responsibility for enabling their congregation to engage in spiritual development. Further, the minister of the gospel in the Church of the Nazarene must be an “example in prayer.” The minister should also have a deep sense of the need to lead believers into the experience of entire sanctification. (*Manual*, paragraph 502.2 – 502.6)

The *Manual* sets forth a high ideal for going into the ministry:

“He or she will have a thirst for knowledge, especially of the Word of God, and must have sound judgment, good understanding, and clear views concerning the plan of redemption and salvation as revealed in the Scripture. Saints will be edified and sinners converted through his or her ministry.”

Another qualification is the preparation of future ministers. Here, the stress is on being part of the mentoring of younger ministers. (*Manual*, paragraph 502.5 – 502.6)

LICENSING AND ORDINATION



NOTES

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes two different tracks for ministry. For those called to the specific task of preaching, the church recognizes the order of elders. For those who feel called outside of preaching, the ministerial track is that of deacon. The categories recognized for ministry include pastor, evangelist, missionary, teacher, administrator, chaplain, and special service. Ministers are assigned a role on the district in which they hold their membership. (*Manual*, paragraphs 503 - 528.2)

The ministerial process for licensing and ordination begins with the local church and pastor. Any member of the Church of the Nazarene who feels called to ministry may be licensed for one year by the local church. The pastor recommends, and the church board grants the license. An examination process is required of those who seek a local license. Candidates are examined based upon testimony of religious experience, a call to ministry, and knowledge of the doctrines of the Bible and the polity of the church. A local minister is required to give a report to the church at the end of the year. They are also expected to pursue the course of study. At the end of the year, the church board may recommend them to the district for a district license. (*Manual*, paragraph, 531 - 531.7)

The district is the primary agent of licensing and regulation of ministerial relationships in the Church of the Nazarene. All ministers are required to report to the district. All ministers receive district license and ordination at the district level. An individual declares whether he or she is following either the elder or the deacon track or a district license not leading to ordination. (*Manual*, paragraph 532)

The qualifications for receiving a district license include:

- holding a local license for one year
- being recommended by their local church board
- having completed the required progress in education
- showing evidence of gifts and graces
- having been examined by the district in terms of education and call
- having any disqualifications removed
- being in a proper marriage relationship for those who have been or are married (*Manual*, paragraph 532.1)


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The district license is for one year and may be renewed following the process of obtaining a license. Licensed ministers are empowered to participate in their called form of ministry. If acting as assigned ministers they may administer the sacraments and officiate at marriages where the laws allow. (*Manual*, paragraph 532.7)

The district license is the process through which an individual pursues ordination as elder or deacon. The requirements for ordination as an elder include:

- fulfillment of the course of study
- being a district licensed minister for three years
- receiving the recommendations of the local church and the District Credentials Board
- years of service required depend on the nature of the ministerial activity:
 - three consecutive years of full-time service as a pastor or registered evangelist
 - four years as associate or assistant pastor
 - four years as a teacher in the religion department of a Nazarene institution
- the candidate's marriage relationship must be such that it is not a disqualification

Ordination is performed at the District Assembly in a special worship service. The general superintendent in charge is normally the person who performs the ordination. (*Manual*, paragraph 534.3)

It is important the one becomes ordained not simply because they have met the expectations of education and service. Ordination is the act of the church through which the act of God's grace flows. The basis of ministry being a call by God means the church has to believe God is indeed calling this particular individual to ministry. Ordination is not something to be demanded when the candidate has met the external criteria established by the church.

The Church of the Nazarene contends God is the one who calls persons into the ministry. The church attempts to help in clarifying the call through pointing to certain qualifications (listed in the New Testament) for ministers. The church does have the obligation to certify the candidate as a minister. Its obligation to the community is such that the certification must be maintained and renewed throughout the ministry.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

**NOTES**

The interview process provides the opportunity for both the local church and the minister to explore the possibilities for service within a particular location. The channels of communication normally move between the district superintendent contacting the prospective candidate, or the chairperson of the church board doing the contact work and setting up the visit and interview. The call to a church is a unique endeavor incorporating both spiritual and business factors. A person desires to discover God's particular direction for his or her ministry, yet, at the same time wants to be informed as to the business condition of the church. The public records of a church provide an overview of the business condition of the church. A district journal contains basic membership and financial information. The district superintendent and former pastors can provide additional information. The local church can discover information about the candidate by contacting prior district superintendents or local churches in which the pastor has served.

The visit to a local church provides opportunity for both the candidate and the church to explore the will of God. The visit also allows the candidate to examine current church records and to make an onsite estimate of the health of the local church. The church board has the opportunity to examine the candidate's religious experience, call, and mission. One important opportunity for both is to see if they are compatible in terms of philosophy of ministry and a shared vision.

CALL TO THE LOCAL CHURCH



NOTES

When a church decides they want to call a minister as pastor, the process begins with the local church board, who must vote by two-thirds of its members to nominate a minister as pastor. The nomination must also have the approval of the district superintendent. If a difference in opinion exists between the local church and the district superintendent, the general superintendents or the Board of General Superintendents may resolve the matter. The church, after receiving the nomination from the church board, votes on the candidate in a specially called meeting. The minister must receive a two-thirds vote of the church members of voting age, present, and casting ballots. The call of the church must include:

- The amount of the proposed remuneration should be determined by the board and officially communicated
- The local church should pay for traveling and moving expenses
- The church board and pastor should communicate goals and expectations in writing
- The minister has 15 days from the date of the church vote on to accept the call
- The secretary of the church board will communicate the call to the district superintendent, who notifies the candidate. (*Manual*, paragraphs 115-120.1)

REVIEW PROCESS



NOTES

The Church of the Nazarene has a formal review process for pastoral ministry. This process has evolved throughout the years. At one time, pastors would be voted on by the local church at one- and two-year intervals. The time between votes became expanded based upon experience in a local church. Today's procedure is intended to resolve conflicts without having a congregational vote. (*Manual*, paragraphs 122 – 122.1)

One of the key principles of the present system is to develop channels of communication between pastor and church leaders as well as pastor and the congregation. The church should be a model of conflict resolution where Christians work out their differences in a spirit of love. This communication begins with the pastor and board meeting each year to renew their shared expectations and goals. (*Manual*, paragraphs 123 – 123.7)

The formal review process is conducted within 60 days of the second anniversary of a pastor and every four years after the first review has been conducted. A review meeting should be planned and coordinated by the district superintendent and the pastor. An executive meeting of the board and the district superintendent or his or her representative shall discuss the present state of pastoral relationships. The local church is to be informed of the upcoming regular meeting with the district superintendent. One result of the review process should be a joint report by the pastor and church board as to the progress toward meeting the "mission, vision, and core values of the church."

The focus of the meeting is to discover the board's consensus regarding the continuation of pastor. There is discussion about relationship between pastor and people and the effectiveness of the pastoral leadership. The church board only takes a vote if they want to recommend the issue for a congregational vote. If so, the church board must vote by a two-thirds majority of members present to send the issue to the entire church. (*Manual*, paragraphs 123.4)

If the church board votes to send the issue to the church, the church must meet within 30 days to consider the issue. The question voted on is, "Shall the present church/pastoral relationship continue?" The church must normally vote by two-thirds vote "Yes," to continue the present relationship. (*Manual*, paragraph 123.5)

The pastor may decide to resign instead of facing a church vote. If so, the present relationship will end 30 to 180 days following his or her resignation. If the pastor receives a negative vote, then he or she has the same 30 to 180 days from the vote to move. (*Manual*, paragraph 123.6)

DISCIPLINE

**NOTES**

If a crisis develops, then action may be taken to maintain the health of the local church. In the interim between regular review sessions, the church board and the district superintendent may call a special meeting. In an emergency, the district superintendent, with the support of the District Advisory Board, may take action. In certain cases, the approval of the general superintendent is required. Procedure is provided for the resignation or removal from ministry of pastors who face problems of integrity. A pastor may resign from the ministry for any reason and may be viewed as resigning in good standing if problems do not exist. Disciplinary action may be taken against clergy who are not in good standing. (*Manual*, paragraphs 126-126.2)

The Church of the Nazarene also has a policy to restore ministers to good standing. However, recognition is made that while some actions may receive forgiveness, they are of such a nature that a person cannot be placed again in a ministerial role, such as “their marriage relationship” renders them ineligible or “sexual misconduct involving minors” renders them ineligible. (*Manual*, paragraph 532.1 and 540.9)

APPLICATION



NOTES

1. Read *Manual* paragraphs:

- 115–121.1
- 122–123.7
- 124–126.2
- 159–159.8
- 500–502.6
- 503–503.9
- 504–528.2

See: http://whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/book/EN_manual_2013-17.pdf

What questions do you feel should be asked of a prospective minister in the interview process? What information needs to be conveyed to the minister? What information needs to be obtained?

See: http://whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/other/EN_united_%2520%2520family_%2520god_0.pdf

2. What qualities would you like to see in those who minister in your church?

EXAM



NOTES

1. Which of the following is an accurate position of the church on ministry _____.
 - A. God calls individuals to the more official and public work of ministry
 - B. God does not select anyone for special ministry
 - C. recognizes not all Christians have an obligation to be involved in ministry
 - D. all of the above
2. The church plays a role in all calls to the ministry through observation of gifts and graces and by affirming that God has gifted a person for special ministry.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. Important aspects of the call to ministry include _____.
 - A. the minister should be professional in the care and preparation of carrying out of the responsibilities of ministry
 - B. the ministry should not be viewed simply as a career or profession
 - C. the minister should have a sense of mission and purpose for this particular service in the church
 - D. all of the above
4. According to the *Manual*, which of the following is **not** a qualification of a minister?
 - A. integrity
 - B. a personal relationship with God
 - C. a burden and call to evangelism
 - D. the physical strength to be the primary servant in the church who leads by doing the most important ministry in the church
5. The Church of the Nazarene recognizes two tracks of ministry: deacon and elder.
 - A. True
 - B. False
6. The ministerial process for licensing and ordination begins with the _____.
 - A. local Sunday School superintendent and church secretary
 - B. church board and the candidate for ministry
 - C. local church and pastor
 - D. district superintendent and the pastor

**NOTES**

7. The _____ is the primary agent of licensing and regulation of ministerial relationships in the Church of the Nazarene.
 - A. the pastor
 - B. the Board of General Superintendents
 - C. the district
 - D. the local church board

8. The district license is held for _____.
 - A. one year
 - B. two years
 - C. three years
 - D. permanently

9. The qualifications for ordination as an elder include _____.
 - A. fulfillment of the course of study
 - B. holding district license for at least three years
 - C. receiving the proper recommendations of the local church and District Credentials Board
 - D. A, B, C
 - E. none of the above

10. Which of the following begins the process for calling a minister as pastor?
 - A. the local church board must vote by two-thirds of its members to nominate a candidate
 - B. the nomination must have the approval of the district superintendent
 - C. the district superintendent or the Board of General Superintendents must approve the nomination
 - D. the church votes on the candidate in a specially called meeting

11. The following are requirements for the pastoral review process _____.
 - A. a meeting is conducted within 60 days of the second anniversary of a pastor and every four years after the first review
 - B. the meeting should be planned by the district superintendent and the pastor
 - C. an executive meeting is to be held to examine the pastoral
 - D. the local church is to be informed of the meeting with the district superintendent
 - E. all of the above

12. The church board only takes a vote if they want to recommend the issue (pastoral review) for a congregational vote.
 - A. True
 - B. False

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT



NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. How can a layperson in a local church foster his or her call to ministry?
2. What structures can be put into place to maintain integrity in ministry by both lay and pastoral ministers?
3. What are some important guidelines that would improve problem solving and interpersonal relationships in the church?
4. Explain the annual review process of a minister.
5. What part does a layperson play in the call of the pastor and the review process?