

# GUIDELINES FOR ORDINATION AND LICENSURE

Quail Lakes Baptist Church

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*It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up.*

*Ephesians 4:11-12*

This paper is intended to clarify the scope, purpose and process of ordination and ministry licensure at Quail Lakes Baptist Church (QLBC).

## I. What is the value of Ministerial Credentialing?

A. The value of ministerial credentialing is:

1. To affirm God's call upon a person's life for vocational ministerial leadership.
2. To verify that this person has met the biblical qualifications and standards for ministry.
3. To verify that this person has the training and competence needed for the ministry role.
4. To approve this person for ministerial service at QLBC.
5. To provide transferable legal status in the exercise of that person's ministry.

## II. What are the types of NAB Ministerial Credentials?

A. Ordination - This credentialing designation is viewed as an act of the local church in recognition of the call of God upon a person's life, which is recognized by the association/region representing the entire NAB conference. It is designed specifically for those involved in pastoral ministry as Pastor, Associate Pastors and Vocational Directors of various ministries within QLBC.

It is conferred by the local church working in fraternal cooperation with the association/region of the Conference.

B. Licensure - This credentialing designation is an act of the QLBC church in recognition of the call of God upon a person's life. It is applied in those situations where the church leadership deems ordination as unneeded or inappropriate. Licensure allows an individual to access the IRS housing allowance advantage which also applies to ordained ministry staff.

### III. What are the Requirements for Ordination?

- A. Must be a member in good standing of QLBC.
- B. Must subscribe to the Quail Statement of Faith and Code of Ministerial Ethics.
- C. Must be one who has heard and answered the divine call, first to personal salvation, and then to the call of the Gospel ministry and be actively engaged in ministry.
- D. Must have completed theological preparation and be able to demonstrate theological reflection appropriate for their ministerial role as determined by QLBC leadership in cooperation with the association's process.
- E. Must demonstrate a cooperative spirit and a lifestyle consistent with biblical standards of Christian conduct, such as honesty, integrity, moral purity, etc.
- F. Must be committed to ongoing personal growth and development.

### IV. What is the biblical background for ordination?

(Where does ordination come from?)

The current practice of ordination is the result of the blending of biblical precedent with historical developments. No one-to-one correspondence can be assumed between the contemporary practice and any one act found in Scripture. Nevertheless, ordination does arise out of a biblical background. Scripture indicates a variety of practices of selecting, appointing, and recognizing leaders. Here are some of them:

- A. The laying on of hands apparently symbolized Moses' transference of leadership to Joshua (*Numbers 27:23*). Laying on of hands in this case was performed by the former leader (Moses) and included the transfer to Joshua of the Spirit's empowerment for this task (*Deuteronomy 34:9*).
- B. The delegation of the priestly role to the Levites, likewise, was symbolized by the laying on of hands. Here, however, the people of Israel themselves, not just one leader, were involved in this symbolic rite (*Numbers 8:10*). The Baptist emphasis on the congregation as the ordaining body is motivated in part by this Old Testament incident.
- C. Seven Spirit-filled men were selected by the Jerusalem church to assist the apostles in leadership and service (*Acts 6:6*). These were installed by the apostles through the laying on of hands.

- D. The Antioch church employed the laying on of hands in commissioning Paul and Barnabas for missionary service (Acts 13:3). Here, ministry within a local congregation was not in view. Rather, two persons who would serve as extensions of the ordaining church were set apart for ministry.
- E. Paul's assistant, Timothy, received this act at the hands of certain "elders" (1 Timothy 4:14).
- F. The appointment of the elders seems to have been Paul's standard practice (*Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5*).

## **V. What is the purpose of ordination?**

The official act of ordination has three purposes:

### **A. Acknowledgment and Confirmation of God's Call**

Through the act of ordination, the community of believers both acknowledges and confirms the fact that God has indeed called a certain individual to the Gospel ministry (1 Timothy 4:14). Although the call of God comes to an individual, it is the community that ultimately determines the legitimacy of a personal experience of calling.

### **B. Commissioning**

Through the act of ordination, QLBC commissions into service one who has been called of God (*Acts 13:3*). This commissioning entails entrusting the person with a specific task of ministry.

### **C. Declaration of Ministerial Status**

Ordination is a public declaration that a specific person has been entrusted with ministerial status. This is important today, because clergy are acknowledged in the civil and social realms as well as in the ecclesiastical. Clergy are called upon to function in certain ways in the wider society. Ordination is a declaration to society in general that this person is to be looked upon as a member of the clergy.

## **VI. Who may be ordained?**

With this understanding of the purpose of the act in mind, certain prerequisites for ordination can be cited. These constitute specific features which should be true of, or present in, the candidate before that person may be ordained.

#### A. Called of God

Since ordination is an acknowledgement and confirmation of God's call, the call of God must be present. Specifically, the candidate for ordination must be one who has heard and answered the divine call, first to personal salvation, and then, to the Gospel ministry.

#### B. Gifted and Prepared for Ministry

An effective ministry requires both a divine endowment (ministry gifts) and personal diligence in developing certain ministry skills. For example, ministry gifts may include the ability to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; Ephesians 3:9) or to preach (1 Timothy 4:13; Ephesians 4:11-13). To these could be added skills in areas such as counseling and administration.

#### C. Sound in Doctrine

One who is ordained is looked to as a teacher. Therefore, to this end, such a person must be knowledgeable in the Christian faith, committed to truth, and able to apply the truth to concrete situations. Soundness in doctrine is a prerequisite for ordination.

#### D. Exemplary in Lifestyle

One who is ordained is looked to as a model of Christian maturity. The fruit of the Spirit should be evident in that one's personal life. Personal convictions must be evidenced in personal conduct and interpersonal relations.

#### E. Affirmation by a Body of Believers

An individual may be called to the Gospel ministry, be gifted with ministry gifts, and may be well trained and experienced, but ordination includes the affirmation by QLBC leadership.

### **VII. What is the practice in the North American Baptist Conference regarding the ordination of women?**

The North American Baptist Conference of which QLBC is a part affirms the call of both men and women to ministry. According to our understanding of Scripture, the role of the Senior Pastor and Elder is limited to men (1 Corinthians 11:2-6, 1 Timothy 2:8-14).

A 1985 study document commissioned by the Conference came to this conclusion:

*“Position on Ordination of Women*

*Since there are Scriptural examples of women being called of God to serve his people in a variety of ministries, and Scripture seems only to limit women from serving as pastor/teacher or senior pastor;*

*Since we understand ordination to be the recognition and confirmation by the church that the call of God for Gospel ministry is upon an individual;*

*Since Scripture is not explicitly clear in its teaching on ordination and our understanding of ordination is, in part, based upon historical practice;*

*Since other evangelical conferences have for years had female pastors without any apparent hindrance to the blessing of God upon them;*

*Since we have asked women to serve on the mission fields in capacities that include the role of what we traditionally have seen as a senior pastor’s role;*

*Since women have been called by our churches to serve in the Gospel ministry in positions for which we have ordained men;*

*The Task Force considers it biblical and appropriate for women to be ordained by North American Baptist Conference churches, provided that they meet the prerequisites and general principles for ordination as outlined in our Conference’s guidelines for ordination.”*

The task force, however, limited the function of ordained women to not include that of Senior or Solo Pastor.

Since that time, the Conference has not directly addressed women’s ordination and has allowed the local churches to make these decisions and there have been women ordained in church staff roles.

### **VIII. What is QLBC’s position regarding women in ministry?**

QLBC in previous studies on this topic has adopted the “Complementarian” view which understands that there is a difference in roles that is built into the creation by God between males and females and that there is reserved for the male a “headship” function that carries into ministry leadership.

This view holds that the difference is built into the design of God’s creation and that

it is seen consistently throughout His Word, the Bible.

The creation account is tied to several NT Scriptures, e.g. 1 Timothy 2:11-14 and 1 Corinthians 11:7-10. These Scriptures do not declare that because man was created first he is in any way superior to woman, for his image is no greater than that of woman as both were made in the image of God himself (1:27). What they do establish is the position of woman in the congregation and in the home in contrast with the man in those places. Man's position is one where the "buck stops."

This complimentary difference does not establish unequal value between males and females, but it does recognize difference in function with male headship designed into the structure of family and church life.

For reasons of clarity and to avoid the possibility of being perceived as aligning ourselves with authoritarian abuses, it must be stressed that males and females both are created in the image of God. A difference in role and function is not a difference in worth. An example of this can be derived from the Trinity itself, even though the roles of the persons of the Godhead are varied, each person in the Trinity is wholly God.

The most often quoted verse that points to some degree of limitation for women is 1 Timothy 2: 11-15.

### **1 Timothy 2:11-15**

*11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.*  
NIV

Comments...

Verse 12. "Teach" and "have authority" are two sides of the same coin; they are not two separate actions. Thus, the implication is "authoritative teaching" or a role where authority and teaching may go together. Here Paul is forbidding the very actions that apply to elders most obviously.

In verse 13, the appeal to the creative order makes this a timeless principle that comes from before the fall. It is vital that we are consistent in the way that we understand Scripture to comment on Scripture. We would ordinarily read the OT through the lens of the NT where the NT comments directly on an OT passage.

If we apply the reading of Genesis 1-2 through the lens of 1 Timothy 2: 11-15, where Paul refers to the creation narrative, it appears the order of creation does indeed

signify a difference in the function between males and females. Thus, we see Paul understands headship to be in the very least inferred by the creation order. To dismiss Paul's thoughts here is not to simply dismiss his application (that may be a cultural element) but his interpretation he puts forth while writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, the modern reader must see that the Holy Spirit has cohesively inspired the texts of Scripture. In so doing the Spirit gives us a trans-cultural principle. That principle is male headship hinted at by God in the creation accounts, and confirmed by Paul here in Timothy – all under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To fail to follow the principle of Scripture authoritatively, commenting on Scripture here, is to call into question the Holy Spirit's overarching superintending of the process of inspiration and to call into question the veracity of all the passages where the NT comments on OT passages.

Verse 14 is a subset of verse 13 and not a second rationale point for Paul's restriction. It is as if in verse 13-14 he is simply referring the reader to the earliest records and saying this principle is for all time. It was part of Satan's method of temptation that as he came to the woman he was making an "end run" around the leadership that God had invested in the man.

Verse 15 takes us away from our topic and is admittedly unclear. It seems to be saying that as a woman fulfills the roles for which she is created she is blessed and using the most obvious example of the male female distinction (childbearing) as a prime example of that fact.

While Paul is not explicit here about which role he has in mind, it is notable that in the very next verse he moves on to discuss elder/overseer.

Having reviewed the issue before us in these ways it is prudent that we consider three questions:

1. Does the Bible teach a hierarchical structure of male and female relationships? (Answer - yes, as it pertains to the home and church, but always in an ethic of self-sacrificial love and mutual submission.)
2. Do we find women in leadership positions in the Bible? (Answer - yes, with the exception of one position retained for male headship in each era of biblical history.)
3. Does the Bible limit women from filling some leadership roles? (Answer - yes, there is a limitation.)

In the modern context the church staff is under the managerial authority of the Senior Pastor and Elder Board. Therefore, we find that the limitation that Paul establishes is to be applied to the Senior Pastor and Elder Board.

Regarding ordination of women, therefore we agree with the NAB ordination practice of allowing women in ministry to be ordained as endorsed by the Board of Elders, but with the limitation that this ordination not be one that would allow ministry function as a Senior or Solo Pastor.

This position is derived from our reading of the Bible and our understanding of the evidence of God's giftedness to women, not from a desire to fit into a "politically correct" manner of thinking.

## **IX. Process of Ordination**

### **A. Process for Ordination Credentialing**

1. In the case of ordination credentialing, the individual seeking ordination shall submit an ordination paper to the appropriate board/committee within the association leadership structure. This paper shall explain items including but not limited to:
  - a) The individual's Christian experience
  - b) The individual's call to ministry
    - 1) Education
    - 2) Previous Christian service
    - 3) Doctorial statement
    - 4) Current ministry position and duties
    - 5) Signed copy of NAB Pastoral Code of Ethics

The paper should be submitted in such a manner as to allow the committee the needed time for review.

2. Upon review, the committee shall either vote to recommend the church call an ordination council, refer the paper back to the individual for further development, or decline to proceed with ordination credentialing.
3. Upon a favorable recommendation from the committee, the church shall call an ordination council. The council shall examine the individual concluding it's deliberation with a vote either to recommend that the local church proceed with ordination, recommend that the individual undertake further study, or recommend the individual not be ordained.
4. Upon the favorable recommendation of the council, the church shall conduct an ordination service and inform the International Office of NAB of the minister's new status.



5. Forward the signed copy of NAB Pastoral Code of Ethics to Association's Executive and International offices.

#### **X. Procedure for Ordination Council**

1. The local church representative or the chair of the ordination credentials committee or the regional minister shall chair the meeting until a moderator and secretary of the council are elected.
2. The delegate list is determined.
3. A moderator and secretary are selected to lead the council and record Minutes.
4. The candidate shall present statements on Christian conversion, call to the ministry, preparation for the ministry, Christian service, relationship to the North American Baptist Conference and doctrinal beliefs.
5. After the candidate's statement has been presented, the members of the council shall have opportunity for cross-examination.
6. After cross-examination and the vote by the council to conclude the public examination, the council shall withdraw into executive session for voting delegates only.
7. The council shall vote to recommend to the church that it proceed with the ordination service, or to proceed with qualifications (listing options) or to not proceed with ordination at that point in time.
8. The candidate is brought back in to hear the decision/recommendation of the council.
9. The moderator of the council and/or Regional Minister will confer with the candidate and delegate of the ordaining church to make plans for the ordination service.
10. The moderator and secretary of the council shall be responsible to provide the minutes of the meeting. A copy of these minutes is to be given to the candidate, the local church, the Regional Minister, and the North American Baptist Conference International Office.
11. A certificate of ordination shall be properly signed and prepared for presentation to the candidate at the public service.
12. The council shall vote to dissolve and adjourn.

\*Portions of this document are excerpts from previous QLBC and NAB policy documents.