

4. Priesthood and Ordination

A. The Nature of Priesthood

Priesthood ministry within the church is thoroughly discussed in *The Priesthood Manual* (Herald House, 2004). It is a valuable reference for study of the history, theology, and functioning of priesthood. Certain procedural matters are refined from time to time. This edition of the *Church Administrator's Handbook* has precedence over previous editions and other previously published guidelines.

B. Calls to the Priesthood

Calls to the priesthood are initiated by jurisdictional officers in response to the spirit of discernment, wisdom, and divine direction and are authorized by a vote of the members in a conference of the appropriate church jurisdiction.

1. Calls to the office of high priest may be initiated by the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, and mission center presidents holding the office of high priest. All such calls must have the approval of the field apostle, the director of Field Ministries, the Council of Twelve, and the First Presidency before being submitted to the individual and the conference. Calls to the office of bishop are initiated by the First Presidency and are approved by the World Church Leadership Council. Calls to the office of evangelist are initiated through the Council of Twelve and approved by the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve. Seventies are called through the Council of Presidents of Seventy and approved by the First Presidency and World Church Leadership Council.
2. Procedures for processing calls to the priesthood in congregations are outlined on page 91.
3. Forms for recommending ordinations to the office of elder, priest, teacher, and deacon are available from mission center offices (see appendix). This form, or a photocopy of it, should be used in the processing of all priesthood calls. Older forms are now obsolete and should be discarded. Mission centers may also use additional forms to supplement those distributed by the World Church.
4. Those responsible for calling persons to priesthood office are encouraged to engage in prayerful reflection on the needs of the church for ministry, the movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of potential candidates, and the ministerial gifts, talents, and commitment those potential candidates express in their lives. Calling officers are also encouraged to consult with other experienced ministers who can be trusted with the confidentiality required by such discussions.

C. Preordination Expectations

1. Calling and Ordination:

A significant distinction exists between calling and ordination. Calling reflects the personal relationship between God and the person. Ordination is provided for when that calling is perceived by an appropriate administrative officer, is approved through designated channels, and is symbolized by the laying on of hands. Ordination provides formal authority to function within a specific priesthood office in the church. Acceptance of ordination implies a willingness to minister within a framework of expectations and standards developed by the church as a way of enriching priesthood ministry.

2. Financial Stewardship of Ordinands:

Church officers responsible for initiating priesthood calls are urged to give earnest consideration to each candidate's attitude toward financial stewardship principles along with other aspects of the gospel. Ideally, a candidate for ordination would contribute mission tithes in a balanced way, both local and to World Church purposes. Additionally, calling officers should carefully consider indications of poor personal financial

management, such as apparent misuse of credit or indications of spending beyond one's means.

3. Legislative Approval:

All priesthood calls are to be submitted to a legislative conference, at the appropriate jurisdictional level, for approval (D. and C. 17:16). The purpose of this legislative approval is to allow the members of the church to express their willingness to accept the ministry to be offered by the candidate. Calls to the Aaronic priesthood and to the office of elder are approved by a congregational conference or by a mission center conference. Calls to the offices of seventy and high priest as well as to any of the specialized ministries which are part of the ministry of high priest (i.e., evangelist, bishop, etc.) are approved by a mission center conference or by the World Conference.

4. Training:

Before ordination, a candidate is expected to complete the Temple School courses SL 101 Introduction to Caring Ministries, SS 101 Introduction to Understanding Scripture or equivalent, and the course designed for the specific priesthood office. After the first call to priesthood, SL 101 Introduction to Caring Ministries need not be repeated for subsequent calls, but a scripture course and an office-centered course should be taken each time. Where appropriate, an administrative officer may certify course equivalency for individuals who have met the basic requirements in other ways. (*see Ordination Preparation Check List for updated expectations*)

5. Designation and Candidacy:

A period of preparation exists between the time of administrative approval authorizing a call and when ordination takes place. This category of designation and candidacy for priesthood should not last more than one year; approval after that time is no longer valid unless extenuating circumstances are present. During this time a person is seen as having been called to service but not yet fully authorized by the church. This time will serve as a period of personal preparation, testimony, and guided practical experience.

D. Ordination

The sacrament of ordination is normally performed by two or more members of the priesthood authorized to ordain people to a specific office. Local circumstances may dictate that an ordination be performed by a single officiant, especially in areas where the church is still developing. The ordaining priesthood are chosen in consultation between the ordinand and the administrative officers.

High priests, elders, or priests may officiate in the ordination of Aaronic priesthood, and high priests and elders for the ordination of elders. High priests may be ordained by other high priests, including bishops and evangelists. Evangelists are normally ordained by members of the First Presidency or Council of Twelve, and bishops are ordained by members of the First Presidency or their designee, with any high priest eligible to assist in the ordination of either. Seventies are normally ordained by a member of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve, or presidents of Seventy, with any other high priest or seventy assisting.

Priesthood Licenses:

When ordinations have been performed they should immediately be reported to the Office of Membership Records by the congregational or mission center recorder. Once the ordination has been recorded, the World Church secretary will issue a priesthood license, which certifies the individual as an ordained minister. (In parts of the world where this procedure is impractical, the field apostle will establish an appropriate procedure to document the ordination of ministers.) This license should be surrendered when a priesthood member is silenced or released. Whether surrendered or not, the license is valid only when the priesthood member is

authorized by the church to function. Licenses which have been lost or damaged, may be replaced by sending a written request to the World Church secretary.

E. Priesthood Accountability

Priesthood is of a continuing nature. Priesthood authority is granted by the church as a privilege, with continuing expectations. One is called to enlarge and expand personal gifts in the process of ministry—in brief, to magnify one's calling. In recognition of these factors, continuing education and accountability for one's ministry are accepted by each ordinand as essential to fulfilling the call of God.

1. Personal Review:

Each member of the priesthood should review his or her own ministry and calling on a periodic basis. Such a review might include questions relating to areas of particular ministerial interest, needs for further development, and the degree of satisfaction in one's office and calling. Members of the priesthood have a right to discuss the issues involved in such a review with the pastor or the pastor's designee.

2. Administrative Review:

A pastor, or other administrative officer who supervises members of the priesthood, may initiate a similar discussion with a priesthood member as circumstances may suggest.

3. Change of Status:

If a personal or administrative review of a member of the priesthood suggests that a change of status is in order, the change of status should be reported in accordance with established procedures. (See below.)

4. Continuing Education:

Following ordination, individuals holding priesthood office are expected to be involved in the process of continuing education. At least two continuing education units (CEU—equivalent to two ten-hour Temple School courses, or two full-weekend workshops, or one four-day seminar or workshop) are considered normal expectations for each year. Temple School coordinators are available for consultation in regard to educational concerns and needs.