**Ordination Process**

 Congratulations on your call to gospel ministry. Your ordination is an important milestone in your preparation. Our church elders will arrange a date to hold an ordination council, and we will invite pastors and elders from our church and other likeminded churches to examine your fitness for gospel ministry. During this council, you will be expected to explain your doctrinal positions and be prepared to give a defense for them.

 [YOUR CHURCH NAME] practices ordination because we believe it is important to do the best job we can to ensure that the men we set aside for the gospel ministry are spirit-filled, well-studied, and faithful shepherds. During your ordination council, a group of experienced pastors and elders will:

* Examine your fitness to the office by examining your doctrinal positions, your philosophy of ministry, and your positions concerning marriage and family.
* Questions you on general areas of concern.
* Warn you against potential pitfalls and blind spots that could render your ministry less effective.
* Recommend to our church whether they believe we should proceed with the planned ordination.
* Commend resources and practices to you that they believe will help strengthen areas of weakness.
* Pray for you as you begin a life of vocational services to Christ.

**Preparing for Your Ordination**

1. **Prepare an Opening Statement**

 You need to be prepared to give a 5-minute explanation of your call to gospel ministry. This explanation should also be submitted in written form. Please include your future plans and aspirations as well. This is also a good opportunity to point out why you feel compelled to dedicate yourself to gospel work. The council should know the answers to the following questions after this speech:

* Why you want to go into ministry?
* What (if any) Scripture did the Holy Spirit use to convince you of your calling?
* What evidence is there that you have dedicated yourself to this task?
* Why are you so confident that God has called you into ministry?
* What have you already done to prepare yourself for a lifetime of ministry?

Be prepared to defend what you say in your opening statement.

1. **Prepare a Theological Position Paper**

 Your theological position paper will be the heart of your ordination. Give great time and attention to preparing it. You will provide a written theological statement about each of the following areas of theology: God, Man, Salvation, Scripture, Missions, the Church, and end times. Your statement should be as concise as possible, while still being thoughtful and thorough. You are not expected to write or speak like a seasoned theologian, but you are expected to have a clear understanding of each of these major areas of theology and be able to provide a sensible and biblically sound defense of your positions. Two or more paragraphs are expected for each area, but no one doctrine should be more than one page in length. At the beginning of each section, you will read your positions (in the order listed above), and then there will be an opportunity for questions and comments from the council after each section. Each statement should be written in your own words and not “copied and pasted” from any other source. You will be asked to defend your statements against those with opposing viewpoints, and the council members will be testing you to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the theological matter at hand. This discussion will continue for each of the six areas. Make sure you have 20 copies of this position paper ready for distribution on the day of your council.

**Tip:** You are strongly encouraged to submit your paper to trusted theological advisors beforehand in order to receive feedback and correction. The council will be looking for your ability to articulate and defend important doctrinal positions. Areas where you seem uncertain will be explored in greater detail.

1. **Prepare a Philosophy of Ministry**

You will write a statement expressing your ministry philosophy. Be as brief as possible while still covering all areas you consider important. You may put this section in bullet points, outlining the general principles you will follow as a minister of the Gospel. Here is an example.

I am to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12)

* This means I am to focus on ministering to those who minister.
* This means that teaching is my primary responsibility.

I am to shepherd the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2)

* This means I am to spiritually protect those under my care.
* This means that I am to lead them and know them.
* This means that my primary ministry is to those within the Kingdom of God.

**The council should know the answer to the following questions after this speech:**

* What principles/beliefs will drive you as a minister of the Gospel?
* What will stop you from being “driven about by every wind of doctrine?” (Ephesians 4:14)
* What will your focus be as a minister of the Gospel?

Again, the council will interact with you about your philosophy of ministry. They will affirm statements you make that they have seen as true in your life, and they will challenge areas where they question your philosophy. Be prepared to defend what you say about your philosophy of ministry.

1. **Prepare a Statement on Marriage and Family**

Briefly write your views about the role of a husband and father who is serving in full

time ministry. Again, be prepared to defend your statements. Include some commentary about how you expect your family to participate in the ministry that you will lead and ways that you will shepherd them along with the church.

**Dismissal:**

 When you have finished all your statements, you will be asked to leave the room while the council deliberates about what they have heard. The moderator will call for a recommendation from the council concerning whether to proceed with the ordination plans. When a decision is reached, you will be invited back into the room, and the moderator will summarize the council’s recommendation.

**Open Floor for Council**

After the recommendation is read, the council will give you some closing comments, advice, instructions, or warnings about what they have heard. Each council member will have an opportunity to speak. When all are finished, the men will gather around you for prayer.