

The Why of Ordination



I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim 6:13-14).

God graciously gifts the church all things essential to bring God's People to maturity and conformity with Christ. This includes the **gifting and calling of individuals to ministerial leadership**.

Ordination is the church's way of formally recognizing an individual's gifting and calling to ministry. Through **ordination**, the local church declares to the world that a person has been duly tested and found worthy of the church's endorsement.

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task (1 Tim 3:1).

Because we believe in the **autonomy** of the **local church**, each church sets its own standards for ordination. These standards vary widely, but because our churches cooperate in ministry, we have established **region-wide standards for ordination**. **ABC-MI recognition of ordination** declares to the world that a person has met regional standards and is worthy of the region's endorsement. Regional recognition entails reciprocal recognition of ordination throughout **ABC-USA**.



The How of Ordination

Regional recognition of your ordination begins in the local church. We believe that God gifts his people with discernment, so that ordination is not of any one person's decision. If after much prayer and consideration, your church leaders also sense God's calling on your life, and can vouch for your faith in Christ, your good reputation, emotional stability,

leadership, and ability to communicate the word of God, and if you are an active member in the church, the church is to issue you a **pre-ordination license** (renewable yearly) and provide counseling for Christian ministry and opportunities to preach and lead worship. The church is to notify ABC-MI of all licensing so that your name may be recorded in the **Registry of Professional Church Leaders** of ABC-MI and a watch-care program initiated.

ABC-MI Ordination Standards

Regional standards for recognition of your ordination are vigorous, requiring a level of competency appropriate for professional ministry in our churches. As such, regional recognition of your ordination will project our confidence in you as a minister competent to serve in our churches.

ABC-MI recognition of ordination requires the Bachelor's degree and the **M.Div.** The M.Div. reflects three years of full-time graduate level academic preparation for ministry; there are possible equivalency considerations.

The process requires you to write an **ordination paper** (3000 words or less) addressing significant issues of theology and ministry, and to present it to the Commission on Ordination and Standing for **examination**. You will also undergo **vocational and psychological assessment** of your aptitude for ministry through MMDS. (This 2-day assessment has been deemed most helpful for ministry candidates; cost for ABC-MI has been discounted heavily.) Once the Commission concludes that you have met Region standards, an **ordination council** will convene for your examination. If the ordination council recommends ordination, your church will then arrange a **service of ordination**.



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