

Study Guide on the Portrayal of
Ordained Ministry
in
The Scriptures
and in
The Ordinals of the Anglican Church of Canada



The Anglican Diocese of Edmonton
The Right Reverend Jane Alexander, Bishop

The Ordinal is the document that the Anglican Church uses for the service of ordination. However, it is more than just a service. It also serves as a repository of our understanding of the theology and nature of ordained ministry. In both the BCP and the BAS, the ordination service there is an exhortation and a series of question for the person about to be ordained. As you read through both of these services, ask yourself what is the theology of ordained ministry here that is being portrayed. To assist with this as you read the version in the BCP think about the following questions:

- What images about the priesthood do you find to be important?
- What are the responsibilities of the priest?
- What does his or her life look like both publicly and privately? What is the relationship between the private and public life?

Read: BAS pages 646-649

The Ordination Service for a Priest in the BAS

Questions to discuss:

- The Examination on page 646 gives us a good understanding of the ministry of the priest. Which ministries are the same for all Christians? Which are particular to the priest?
- On page 648 what is the role of the Holy Spirit?
- At the end of the Consecration on page 649 the new priest is given a Bible and a Chalice. What is significant about those symbols for ministry?

To the Parish Discernment Committee:

Greetings from the Examining Chaplains. We want to thank you for being willing to take on this important ministry of helping someone to discern where their calling to ministry is. We believe that everyone is called by God to be a minister. Every Christian is called to imitate Christ by serving those around them in whatever situation they find themselves in. However, some Christians find that they are called to ordained ministry. The meaning of the word ordained means 'to be set apart.' In this case, it means to be set apart for a special ministry of proclaiming the Gospel, celebrating the sacraments and leadership. As a committee your work is vital in helping us and the Bishop to discern whether someone is called to this ministry.

Discernment is the process of listening to the Holy Spirit. It is a process that takes prayer, time, listening and study. With this in mind, we have assembled this little booklet to assist with this process. The study is divided into four parts. You are encouraged not to do them all at once, but to study the first two together, and then the final two together. The first two parts deal with the general question of the ministry to which all Christians are called, and it will look at some of the specific ministries to which people are called. In the third and fourth part, the study will look at the ministry of the ordained as we understand it today in the Ordinals of the Anglican Church of Canada. Our hope is that the discussions around these issues will become the background against which your deliberations will take place. We pray that this will be an interesting and enlightening process for all.

God Bless,
The Examining Chaplains

Part Four: Conclusion

There is a lot of material here, and it is important to bring together all of your discussions. The point of all of this is to come up with an understand of what ministry is and why it is important, especially in the context of our relationship with Jesus Christ. It is also important to understand why there are different ministries and why someone might be called to a particular ordained ministry. Here are some question to help tie these discussions together.

- What is the difference between the ministry of all Christians and the ministry of ordained pastors?
- What kind of people do we need? With what qualifications?
- What surprised you about this study? Did you learn that was new?

Part One: The Ministry of All Christians

Read: John 13: 1-14; 31-35

Jesus washes his disciples' feet

This is an important passage in the New Testament both for what it tells us about Jesus and for what it tells us of the nature of Christian community. As an aid to discussion please discuss the following questions.

- How is the love that Jesus exhibits here different from other kinds of love?
- What is important about the “servant” image?
- What does this tell us about God?
- What does this say about our motivation for ministry?

Part Two: Ministry within the New Testament

Introduction: The New Testament sees ministry as the task of the whole body of Christ. We are all front line ministers. If this is the case, then one of the questions this study is meant to explore is why there are specific areas of ministry to which people are called.

Read: 1 Corinthians 12

Varieties of Gifts and Service

In this passage St. Paul gives the church in Corinth a vision of all the members of the church making

up the body of Christ. The following questions will help to answer why this is such an important image.

- In verse 14, Paul says that there are many members of the body. What does this say about our community?

- In verses 4-10, why are these gifts important to the community? Why are they spread out?

- Why might Paul have needed to write verses 22-23?

Leadership Ministries in the New Testament:

Apostles: These were not local pastors by traveling missionaries, charged with passing on the teaching of Christ, making new disciples, and being the focus of unity. They were chosen by Jesus; they did not select themselves.

Read: Acts 2: 21-47

What is the role of the apostles here?

Read: Acts 6: 1-6

The priorities of the apostles are reflected in what is delegated to the deacons. What do the apostles keep? What do they delegate to the deacons?

Elders: The word elder comes from the Greek word that means both Presbyter and Priest. They were the local church leadership in a given Christian community. As can be seen in Acts 14: 21-23, after the apostles would bring the Gospel to a certain town, they would appoint leaders who were referred

to as elders. In this way early churches paralleled the leadership structure of the synagogue which were led by elders who interpreted the laws, punished offenders, and ensured qualified teachers were available.

For insight into what was important about leadership in the New Testament read:

Acts 20: 25-35

Ephesians 4: 11-16

1 Peter 5: 1-5

1 Timothy 3: 1-7

Titus 1:5-9

Part Three: Ordained Ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada

Brief Historical Background: At the end of the New Testament period, in the local church there were two levels of leadership: the elders (presbyteroi) and the deacons (diakonoi). However, another term that was used interchangeably with the term 'elder' was that of 'overseer' (episkopos). Very quickly however, this term of overseer became designated to just one of the elders who oversaw the rest. In this way, the church began the three-fold ministry that we have to this day. The term Bishop is just the Anglo-Saxon translation of overseer (episkopos).

Read: BCP pages 648-653

The Ordination Service for the Priest in the BCP