

## Officer Nominations and Training Redeemer Presbyterian Church

**Jesus** gives gifts to His church for the fulfillment of its mission. *Everything* Redeemer needs to fulfill its calling God will amply supply! All believers have spiritual gifts; the body remains healthy only as each member uses his or her gifts in the power of the Holy Spirit.

*"But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...But now God has placed the members, each of them, in the body, just as he desired."*  
(1 Cor.12:7,18)

The Lord gifts men and women in the church for leadership in various areas of ministry. They have charge over specific needs, resources, or administrations of the church. In addition to these facets of leadership, God gives to the church men who are to be ordained to the offices of elder and deacon. The elders care for the shepherding and spiritual nurture of the flock and the deacons have responsibility for the mercy, financial and physical needs of the body. These are separate offices with different gifting qualifications yet identical character qualifications.

*"It is a trustworthy statement; if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do."* (1 Timothy 3:1)  
*"For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."* (1 Timothy 3:13)

These offices are never to be judged as the varsity and the "JV"; they are equally noble positions of service in the church, Jesus Himself coming to earth as both a servant and a shepherd.

**How** does God raise up ordained leaders? He gives to the people of the church the ability to identify those men. In the Presbyterian system, members of the local church elect men into positions of leadership. That means those men whom God has called to office ought to be evident to the flock by the way they live and serve. God's people see their gifts in action (in the elder a shepherd's heart and in the deacon a servant's heart), benefit from them, and vote them into ordained leadership. This is an act of spiritual responsibility *not* a popularity contest. Holding office is *never* a function of a man's stature in the community, financial means or intellectual prowess. No one should be in office for any other reason than they have the calling and gifting for that office (internal calling), and the people of God recognize it by the moving of the Holy Spirit (external calling).

### **Who** nominates potential officer candidates?

Those who are members of Redeemer, in the following manner:

Nomination period: second Sunday in October until November 22.

Nominations are confidential. You may not inform anyone regarding the person(s) you nominate, including the nominee.

You should have seen clear evidence your nominee has the gifting to the particular office and the commensurate character traits (as explained below). To this end, the nominee must have been a member of Redeemer for at least one year prior to being nominated.

You may not nominate a relative.

A nominee must receive nominations from two family units to go forward.

Nominations should be made using the form provided at the end of this brochure.

Nominations close November 22.

### **What** happens next?

The elders invite those men who have been properly nominated to attend officer training with the pastor from December-May 2010. The training prepares men to be examined by the session for their suitability to the office in four areas (per BOCO 24-1): Christian experience; knowledge of the English Bible, the system of doctrine, government and discipline of the PCA; the duties commensurate with the office; his willingness to give assent to the ordination questions. Reading from the Westminster Confession of Faith and catechisms, Watching Over the Heart, and the PCA Book of Church Order is required. After testing, those found qualified by the elders will be eligible to be elected by the congregation and then installed and ordained.

### **What** are the responsibilities of the office of elder? The PCA Book of Church Order explains: (8-3)

It belongs to the office of elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the church generally when called thereunto. They should visit people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the church. They should set a worthy example to the flock entrusted to their care by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted and make disciples. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.

### **What** are the responsibilities of the office of deacon? The PCA Book of Church Order explains: (9-2)

It is the duty of the deacons to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress. It is their duty also to develop the grace of liberality in the members of the church, to devise effective methods of collecting the gifts of the people, and to distribute these gifts among the objects to which they are contributed. They shall have the care of the property of the congregation, both real and personal, and shall keep in proper repair the church edifice and other buildings belonging to the congregation. In matters of special importance affecting the property of the church, they cannot take final action without the approval of the session and consent of the congregation. In the discharge of their duties the deacons are under the supervision and authority of the session. In a church in which it is

impossible for any reason to secure deacons, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the ruling elders.

**What are the qualifications for ordained officers?**

In general terms, these men have a godly character, assent to the doctrines of the PCA, the gifts commensurate with their calling, and the time available to serve faithfully.

The key passages in scripture describing qualifications are Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-13. The following is a summary of those qualifications:

**Reputable** (*He is blameless*) (1 Tim.3:8; Titus 1:6,10)

Reputable in his marriage: The husband of one wife. (1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:6)

Reputable in the church: Above reproach. (1 Tim.3:2)

Reputable in the community: Well thought of by outsiders. (1 Tim. 3:7)

**Godly** (*He loves all things that are good*) (1 Tim.3:9; Titus 1:8)

Humble: Not self-willed or arrogant. (Titus 1:7)

Gentle: Equitable, fair, moderate. (1 Tim.3:3)

Hospitable: His home is open, even to strangers. (1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:8)

Upright: A righteous and just man. (Titus 1:8)

Holy: A devout man, pleasing to God. (Titus 1:8)

Dignified: Modest, well-ordered, inner life shown in outward behavior. (1 Tim.3:2)

c. **Controlled** (*He is a master of himself*) (Titus 1:8; 1 Tim.3:2)

Family under control. (1 Tim.3:6,12; Titus 1:6)

Emotions under control. (1 Tim.3:3; Titus 1:7)

Tongue under control. (1 Tim.3:3; Titus 1:7)

Appetites under control. (1 Tim.3:3; Titus 1:7)

Money and possessions under control. (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:8)

d. **Skilled\*** (*He has a firm grasp on the truth and can communicate it.*)  
(Elders need to be gifted primarily as shepherds and deacons as servants.)

Skilled to teach. (1 Tim.3:2)

Skilled to exhort. (Titus 1:9)

Skilled to refute. (Titus 1:9)

\* Although beneficial to deacons, these are not required for that office.

What are the vows taken at ordination to office? Both elders and deacons publicly affirm the following: (Book of Church Order 24-5)

Do you believe in the scriptures of the Old and New testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms* of this church,\* as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?

Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?

Do you accept the office of ruling elder (or deacon, as the case may be) in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the church of which God has made you an officer?

Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity, and edification of the church?

Subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith as that system of doctrine taught in the scriptures, including infant baptism and the covenantal nature of the biblical revelation (versus dispensational). Through this we hope to establish an appropriate and historic common doctrinal foundation for all our teaching, preaching and outreach. There will no doubt be some men who are very gifted in shepherding and diaconal capacities who do not agree with these doctrinal distinctives. Though they cannot be ordained, we enthusiastically welcome their participation in many areas of ministry in the church, and highly value their wisdom and service.

**REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICER NOMINATING FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a member in good standing of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, have read the Officer Nominating and Training Brochure and understand the differences between the office of deacon and elder, and the qualifications and commensurate gifts and character traits required for each. I have prayed over this nomination. I therefore nominate, confidentially, for:  
(You may nominate more than one man for each office)

The office of elder:

(Please specify by each name the visible places you have seen these gifts demonstrated at Redeemer)

The office of deacon:

(Please specify by each name the visible places you have seen these gifts demonstrated at Redeemer)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Forms should be given to any church officer no later than November 22.