



**Ordination or
Installation of
Elders &
Deacons**

RCNZ

Ordination or installation of elders and deacons

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is our privilege to witness the ordination/installation of our brother _____ *name* to the office of elder and _____ *name* to the office of deacon.

Elders

The Scriptures direct that elders be appointed in every church.¹ The Word of God distinguishes between elders who labour particularly in preaching and teaching as ministers of the Word, and elders who are charged with the supervision of the church.²

The elders of the church are called to rule over the church as representatives of the Lord Jesus who, as the Chief Shepherd, has appointed overseers and shepherds to keep watch over all the flock. The elders are to love the church of Christ and encourage the members to attend faithfully to the means of grace, the proclamation of the Word and participation in the sacraments. They are faithfully to administer Christian discipline, admonishing those who do not live in obedience to the Lord and, lovingly and patiently, calling the stubborn and rebellious to repentance.

Elders are called to maintain public worship for the glory of God, and to build up the church in the knowledge and love of Christ. They are to provide for biblical preaching and teaching, carefully overseeing the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. They are to safeguard the church against false teaching. Those who serve well are assured that “when the Chief Shepherd appears, [they] will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”³

Deacons

The office of deacon was instituted in the days of the apostles, who appointed suitable men to provide relief for the needy, leaving the apostles free to devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.⁴

The Scriptures clearly teach that the Lord has regard for the afflicted who cry out with no one to help them. He takes pity on the weak and needy.⁵ Christ himself has compassion on the hungry and the thirsty, the stranger and the poor, the sick and those suffering for their faith. Believers who come to their aid are seen as doing this work for Christ.⁶ Through the ministry of mercy, therefore, deacons express the love of Christ. Their work ought to be governed by a spirit of compassion and kindness, love and cheerfulness. They should encourage believers to “do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”⁷

To this end deacons should urge the congregation to take an active part in the ministry of mercy and support the diaconate with generous giving and prayer. In the collection and disbursement of gifts required for their ministry, deacons should act with integrity, discretion and wisdom, comforting those whom they help with the Word of God and with prayer.

In their ministry of compassion, deacons should encourage God’s people in the hope of things to come, and remind them that “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”⁸ “Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.”⁹

Elders and deacons

Office bearers are set apart by God to fulfil their spiritual calling in the church. They cannot do it faithfully in their own strength so must look to their faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ, who is able to equip his servants for the holy work to which he has called them. We rejoice that in his faithful love the Lord Jesus has provided these men to serve in our

church. With thankfulness, we receive these servants of the Lord from the hand of the Chief Shepherd.

Vows

Brothers _____ *names*, so that the church may hear that you are willing to take up your office, please stand, and in the presence of God and his church answer the following questions:

1. Do you believe that, in the call of this congregation, you are called by God himself to serve in this holy office?
2. Do you believe that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and do you reject every doctrine in conflict with them?
3. Do you believe that the whole system of doctrine as taught in the creeds and confessions of this church fully agrees with the Word of God?
4. Do you promise to carry out the work of your office faithfully, to love the church and all its members, to live a life worthy of your calling, and to submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church?

Answer (to be given by each individually): I do, God helping me.

In the case of ordination, other office bearers present may be invited to come forward for the laying on of hands.

The officiating minister shall then say:

May God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, guide you by his Word, equip you with his Holy Spirit, and so bless your ministry that his church may increase, his kingdom be extended, and his name be praised. Amen.

Charges

To the elders:

I charge you, dear brothers and fellow-servants in Christ: be diligent in the leadership of the church which is committed to you jointly with the other elders. Be shepherds of God's flock which is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.¹⁰ Do not lord it over those entrusted to your care, but be an example to them.¹¹ Pray continually for the church. Be faithful watchmen over the house of God, ensuring that pure doctrine and godly living are maintained.¹² Be diligent in these matters; watch your life and doctrine closely; persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.¹³

To the congregation:

And I charge you, people of God: respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard because of their work. Live in peace with each other.¹⁴ Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.¹⁵ Pray for them, encourage them in their calling, and faithfully work with them to glorify God, to build up his church, and to draw the lost to Christ.

To the deacons:

I charge you, brothers and fellow-servants in Christ: do your work with the same compassion as the Lord showed to those in need.¹⁶ When showing mercy, do it cheerfully.¹⁷ Help the needy and afflicted, and have pity on the weak.¹⁸ Comfort and encourage, with material support and the Word of God, with prayer and good advice. Encourage God's people to carry each other's burdens and in this way fulfil the law of Christ.¹⁹ Pray continually for the church.

To the congregation:

And I charge you, people of God: acknowledge the deacons as ministers of God's mercy and provide them with generous contributions.²⁰ Excel in this grace of giving, showing thereby the

sincerity of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.²¹ Pray for them and encourage them as servants of the Lord.

Prayer

Our merciful Father in heaven,

We thank you for providing faithful and gifted servants to build up the body of Christ. As these brothers assume the responsibilities of their offices, we pray that you will fill them with the Holy Spirit. May we, your people, receive them as having been sent by you.

We ask that you will equip them with wisdom and give them strength for their tasks. May they be faithful workers in your vineyard. Under their guidance let your church grow in every spiritual grace, in faith which is open and unashamed, and in the committed service that promotes the reign of Jesus Christ in the world.

Deliver them from an attitude toward their offices that is casual or self-assured. In their work grant them a humble dependence upon your grace that they may come to you with all their needs.

Through their ministry preserve your church in peace and may she grow in number and in holiness. Give them courage to fulfil their callings against every difficulty, and grant them power through your Spirit to be steadfast to the end.

We pray all this in Jesus' name, Amen.

¹ Titus 1:5.

² 1 Timothy 5:17.

³ 1 Peter 5:4.

⁴ Acts 6:1–6.

⁵ Psalm 72:12–13.

⁶ Matthew 25:31ff.

⁷ Galatians 6:10.

⁸ Romans 8:18ff.

⁹ 1 Timothy 3:13.

- 10 1 Peter 5:2.
- 11 1 Peter 5:3.
- 12 Acts 20:28.
- 13 1 Timothy 4:16.
- 14 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13.
- 15 Hebrews 13:17.
- 16 Matthew 14:14.
- 17 Romans 12:8.
- 18 Psalm 72:12–13.
- 19 Galatians 6:2.
- 20 Romans 12:8.
- 21 2 Corinthians 8:7–9.