

# Grace Community Church

## Licensing and Ordination

July 11, 2002

We believe that each believer is a priest,<sup>1</sup> and does not have to be licensed or ordained in order to carry out the functions of the church, i.e., communion, preaching of the gospel, etc. It is true, however, that in certain cases the church set apart certain men for a specific work.

*Acts 13:2-3 (NASB)* While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

*1 Tim. 4:14 (NASB)* Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

*Eph. 4:11-12 (NASB)* And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

This "laying on of hands" implies a special endorsement by the church for a position in ministry. In Barnabas and Saul's case, it was for missions work. In Timothy's case, it was as pastor of the church at Ephesus. With the church leaders designated in Ephesians 4, it was to "equip the saints." Therefore, we see that on occasion, it is biblical and desirable to designate men for specific service. In the Old Testament, ordination was a precursor to serving as a priest in certain situations.<sup>2</sup>

It has become customary in evangelical churches to designate this endorsement as "licensing" and/or "ordination." Licensing usually conveys the privilege of preaching and leading in the sacerdotal functions of the church, such as baptism, communion, weddings and funerals.

Ordination also grants these privileges, but with the additional scope of pastoral leadership within local churches. Ordination usually requires a detailed theological interview.

Licensing is more commonly used to refer to privileges within a particular church body, while ordination implies privileges exercised in a broader context such as within a denomination.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 2:9

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 28:41

It is with these thoughts in mind, that we, the elders of Grace Community Church, set forward the following qualifications for licensing and ordination.

**Each candidate for ordination and licensing must meet the following requirements:**

- Be in complete agreement with the Doctrinal Statement of Grace Community Church
- Be a member of Grace Community Church in good standing
- Demonstrate leadership in a ministry that warrants credentials based on Ephesians 4:12
- Be of good moral character and reputation in the church and community<sup>3</sup>
- Meet the biblical qualifications for elders<sup>4</sup>
- Have two years practical ministry experience for licensing<sup>5</sup>
- Have four years practical ministry experience for ordination
- Have three individuals positively respond to a reference questionnaire
- Submit a personal doctrinal statement in writing to the Elder Council
- Grant an oral interview before the Elder Council in defense of your doctrinal statement\*
- Prepare an annual ministry report, delivered to the Elder Council.<sup>6</sup> If the ordained or licensed person is no longer performing the sacerdotal functions, it is left to the discretion of the elders to withdraw or maintain their endorsement.

**Additionally, the license and/or ordination is immediately revoked upon:**

- Immoral or sinful conduct, activities that bring reproach upon the Christian ministry or Grace Community Church, or living in a state of transgression of the Bible as interpreted by the Elder Council of Grace Community Church<sup>7</sup>
- Holding or teaching doctrines that are contrary to the word of God or are in opposition to the Doctrinal Statement of Grace Community Church<sup>8</sup>

\*The oral interview will be more stringent for ordination than for licensing. However, each person desiring licensing should be able to give a personal testimony of their relationship with Jesus Christ and a reasonable defense of the Christian faith.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Timothy 3:7, Titus 1:7-9

<sup>4</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 14-15, Titus 1:5-9, etc.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Timothy 3:6, 10, 5:22

<sup>6</sup> Acts 15:4. An annual report is only required of those whose ministry is not at Grace Community Church, since we do not see the everyday activities of their ministries.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21

<sup>8</sup> Romans 16:17-18, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15, Titus 3:10-11, 2 John 9-11

<sup>9</sup> Titus 1:9

**Definition of Terms:**

**Endorsement** – endorsement as used in this document refers to the license, ordination, commission, appointment, setting aside, etc.

**Qualifications for Elders** – included in but not limited to those found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

**Annual Report** – annual written report will be for non-residents of Grace Community and will consist of a letter of explanation of current ministry status that required endorsement and any required response by the Elder Council and/or Senior Pastor.