


Ordination and Induction of Elders

The ordination and induction of elders should take place during Sunday worship in the local church where the elders are to serve. The worship should include the reading of Scripture and a sermon (or another form of proclamation of the Word) and normally the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Section 4 should only be used when new elders are to be ordained.

When all the elders have been previously ordained Section 4 should be omitted and the other elements of the service used to induct them for renewed service. Elders so inducted should have been re-elected by the church members, either after a period as non-serving elders or when offering to extend an initial period of service.

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1. Introduction

Through baptism, members of the Church are called to serve God in the world and to proclaim the love of Christ by the way they live.

Some are called to particular responsibilities as ministers of Word and Sacraments, and in the United Reformed Church some are called to be elders, to share with the minister in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local church.

Today, according to the decision of the church meeting, we are to ordain A (and B) to the office of elder, and to induct *her/him/them* (with C and D) to serve in this congregation.

2. Statement of Purpose

The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service. To equip them for this ministry he gives particular gifts, and calls some of his servants to exercise them in offices duly recognised within the Church. Some are called to the ministry of Word and Sacraments; some are called to be elders.

Elders share with the minister in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local church. To each is normally entrusted a group of members. In the elders' meeting they take counsel together for the whole congregation. They are responsible for making provision for Christian worship and education, for maintaining proper standards of membership, and for promoting witness and service to the community, mission at home and abroad, and the peace, unity and welfare of the Church. It is their duty to arrange for the proper maintenance of church buildings, and to ensure the oversight of church finances. Some elders represent the local church in the wider councils of the Church, and by virtue of their membership of these councils represent the whole Church to the local church.

Elders, being elected by the church meeting, are ordained to their office and inducted to serve for such period as the church which elects them determines. Their ordination and induction is an act of the Church. It is right at this time to share in the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church, and to identify ourselves with it.

3. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church

This Statement (Basis of Union, Schedule D) is read in one of the approved forms.

4. Affirmations

All stand as the presiding minister asks those/the one to be ordained and/or inducted to affirm his/her/their faith.

Do you accept this statement and confess again your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

I do.

In dependence on God's grace do you reaffirm your trust in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord and your promise to follow him and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of your life?

I do.

Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people?

I do.

Do you accept the office of elder of the United Reformed Church in this congregation and do you promise to perform its duties faithfully?

I do.

Do you promise as an elder of the United Reformed Church to seek its well-being, unity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always so far as you are able to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?

By the grace of God I do, and all these things I profess and promise in the power of the Holy Spirit.

5. Ordination

All new elders, not previously ordained, may kneel.

Thank you, God, for the various gifts
which you give to your people,
and for the varieties of ministry in the Church.

Thank you for all women and men
of faith and integrity
who have served this local church.

Thank you, now, for A (and B).

*The minister and appointed elders lay hands on each person
to be ordained, praying thus:*

Empower *him/her* with your Holy Spirit,
give *him/her* humility and grace,
so that by *his/her* faithfulness,
he/she may show your love to your people:
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In your name,
and trusting it to be your will,
we now ordain A
to be an elder.

6. Induction

*The minister asks the members of the church to accept the
ministry of all the elders named, both newly-ordained and
any previously ordained:*

Do you, the members of this local church,
accept and receive A (B, C and D)
to serve as *an elder/elders* among you?

We do

Will you encourage and support *him/her/them*, and respond to *his/her/their* ministry acknowledging that it comes to you from God?

We will

Eternal God, you have called us all to serve you in the world and to share your love with each other and our neighbours. Through the decision of this local church you have called A (B, C and D) to serve us as *an elder/elders*. Give *him/her/them* the promised blessings of your Holy Spirit and fill *him/her/them* with fresh vision and courage, to lead us in the work you have called us to do. Make *him/her/them* wise with the mind of Christ, and give *him/her/them* the gifts *he/she/they* need(s) to fulfil this service faithfully; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

7. Declaration of Ordination and/or Induction

A (B, C and D), in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the decision of the church meeting, I declare you to be (*ordained and*) inducted to serve as *an elder/elders*, and welcome you into this office, in confirmation of which I give you the right hand of fellowship.

The minister and others give the right hand of fellowship.

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit, soul and body be kept sound and blameless. The one who calls you is faithful, and will do this.

8. Renewal of Commitment

And now as elders and members
of this church and congregation,
let us confirm our commitment
to each other and to the gospel.
Let us pursue what makes for peace
and build each other up in love.

**We will grow together
in humility, gentleness and patience;
we will nurture each other in faith;
we will bear with one another in love;
we will make every effort
to maintain the unity of the Holy Spirit
in the bond of peace,
so that we may faithfully proclaim the gospel of Christ.**

The God of peace will make us complete in everything good.
To whom be glory for ever.

The Lord of peace will give us peace,
at all times and everywhere.

The peace of the Lord is with you.
And also with you.

Eternal God,
accept this commitment
made in your presence,
and give us grace to make it true,
so that we may not fail you in the end,
but give you glory and honour
by the way we live
and through everything we say and do,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Supper normally follows and the newly-inducted elders serve or are served together.

Some suggested Scripture readings:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Exodus 18:13-27, Numbers 11:16-17, 24-30, Isaiah 42:1-9,
Ezekiel 34:11-16

New Testament:

Matthew 25:14-28, Mark 10:35-45, John 21:15-17,
Acts 20:28-35, Romans 12:1-18, I Corinthians 12:4-13,
Ephesians 4:1-16, Philippians 2:1-11, I Peter 4:7-11,
I Peter 5:1-4