

Amendments to the Form of Government

Approved by the 76th General Assembly and the Presbyteries, to take effect on January 1, 2011

That the statement on the warrant and nature of the office of minister in the present DPW VI.A.2. be inserted into FG XXIII.8 with necessary changes as follows; and that the statements on the warrant and nature of the offices of ruling elder and deacon be inserted into FG XXV.6.a. and XXV.7.a. with necessary changes as follows:

Adopted additions are underlined.
 Adopted deletions are in ~~strikethrough~~.
 Adopted material to be inserted without change from the current DPW is in *Arial italicized font*.

F.G. XXIII.8. At the time for ordination and installation the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall preside over the meeting of the presbytery, with the congregation present. A minister previously appointed shall preach a sermon appropriate to the occasion. Afterwards the moderator shall briefly inform the congregation of the proceedings of the presbytery preparatory to this occasion; he shall also instruct the congregation, in the following or similar language, concerning the warrant and nature of the office of minister of the Word of God and the duties of a pastor toward a congregation:

The Word of God clearly teaches that the office of minister was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul declares that our Lord “gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ.”

The duties of the minister of Christ may briefly be set forth under the following heads: the faithful exposition of the Word of God and its application to the needs of the hearers, in order that the unconverted may be reconciled to God and that the saints may be built up in their most holy faith; the offering of prayer to the Lord on behalf of the congregation; the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and the exercise, in conjunction with the ruling elders, of the government and discipline of the church.

~~The office of the minister is first in the church for dignity and usefulness.~~ The office of the minister is first in the church for dignity and usefulness, for by our God’s sovereign design, the ministry of the Word is the primary instrument in our Lord’s gathering and perfecting of his church. *The person who fills this office is designated in Scripture by different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor and teacher. As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house of God, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. As he is commanded to warn the house of Israel against the enemies of God and his Word, he is termed watchman. And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.*

~~He shall instruct them concerning the duties of a congregation toward a pastor, and He shall instruct them concerning the duties of a congregation toward a pastor, and shall endeavor to give to the congregation people a proper sense of the solemnity of both ordination to the office and installation in the field of service.~~

55 F.G. XXIII.14. At the time for ordination and installation the moderator of the presbytery, or
 56 another appointed in his place, shall preside over the meeting of the presbytery with the
 57 congregation present. A minister previously appointed shall preach a sermon appropriate to the
 58 occasion. Afterwards the moderator shall briefly inform those assembled, in the following or
 59 similar language, concerning the warrant and nature of the office of minister of the Word of God
 60 and concerning the duties which the minister's service will place upon him:

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 62 *The Word of God clearly teaches that the office of minister was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. The*
 63 *apostle Paul declares that our Lord "gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some,*
 64 *evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of*
 65 *ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ."*

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 68 *exposition of the Word of God and its application to the needs of the hearers, in order that the*
 69 *unconverted may be reconciled to God and that the saints may be built up in their most holy faith; the*
 70 *offering of prayer to the Lord on behalf of the congregation; the administration of the sacraments of*
 71 *baptism and the Lord's Supper; and the exercise, in conjunction with the ruling elders, of the*
 72 *government and discipline of the church.*

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 76 *Word is the primary instrument in our Lord's gathering and perfecting of his church. The person who*
 77 *fills this office is designated in Scripture by different names expressive of his various duties. As he has*
 78 *the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is*
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 80 *be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house of God, he is*
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 82 *reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. As he is commanded to warn the house of*
 83 *Israel against the enemies of God and his Word, he is termed watchman. And, as he dispenses the*
 84 *manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of*
 85 *God.*

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 87 He shall endeavor to give the people ~~them~~ a proper sense of the solemnity of both ordination
 88 to the office and installation in his field of service.

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 90 F.G. XXV.6. The person elected shall be ordained and installed, in the presence of the congregation, in the
 91 following manner:

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 93 a. The minister, in the following or similar language, shall state the warrant and nature of the office of
 94 ruling elder or deacon, the character to be sustained by the officer, and duties to be fulfilled.

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 96 i. In the case of a ruling elder:

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 98 *The office of ruling elder is based upon the kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ, who provided for*
 99 *his church officers who should rule in his name. Paul and Barnabas "appointed . . . elders in*
 100 *every church"; and Paul commanded that those who "rule well be counted worthy of double*
 101 *honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching." In this passage the Scriptures*
 102 *distinguish between elders who labor particularly in the Word and in doctrine—usually called*
 103 *ministers or pastors—and elders who join with the minister in the government and discipline of*
 104 *the church—generally called ruling elders.*

105
 106 *It is the duty and privilege of ruling elders, in the name and by the authority of our ascended king,*
 107 *to rule over particular churches, and, as servants of our great shepherd, to care for his flock. Holy*
 108 *Scripture enjoins them: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit*
 109 *hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." As a*
 110 *consequence, ruling elders must be zealous in maintaining the purity of the ministration of the*
 111 *Word and sacraments. They must conscientiously exercise discipline and uphold the good order*

and peace of the church. With love and humility they should promote faithfulness on the part of both elders and deacons in the discharge of their duties. Moreover, they should have particular regard to the doctrine and conduct of the minister of the Word, in order that the church may be edified, and may manifest itself as the pillar and ground of the truth.

If they are to fill worthily so sacred an office, ruling elders must adorn sound doctrine by holy living, setting an example of godliness in all their relations with men. Let them walk with exemplary piety and diligently discharge the obligations of their office; and “when the chief shepherd shall be manifested,” they “shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

ii. In the case of a deacon:

The office of deacon is based upon the solicitude and love of Christ for his own people. So tender is our Lord’s interest in their temporal needs that he considers what is done unto one of the least of his brethren as done unto him. For he will say to those who have ministered to his little ones: “I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

In the beginning the apostles themselves ministered to the poor; but subsequently, in order that they might be able to devote themselves wholly to prayer and the ministry of the Word, they committed that responsibility to others, having directed the people to choose men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. Since the days of the apostles the church has recognized the care of the poor as a distinct ministry of the church committed to deacons.

The duties of deacons consist of encouraging members of the church to provide for those who are in want, seeking to prevent poverty, making discreet and cheerful distribution to the needy, praying with the distressed and reminding them of the consolations of Holy Scripture.

If they are to fill worthily so sacred an office, deacons must adorn sound doctrine by holy living, setting an example of godliness in all their relations with men. Let them walk with exemplary piety and diligently discharge the obligations of their office; and “when the chief shepherd shall be manifested,” they “shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

F.G. XXV.7. A ruling elder or deacon who has been installed for a limited term of service may be elected to additional terms of service in the same or another congregation in accordance with the provisions of Section 2 of this chapter. When such a person is elected to further service he shall be publicly installed in the following manner:

- a. The minister shall review before the congregation, in the following or similar language, the warrant and nature of the office of ruling elder or deacon, the character to be sustained by the officer, and the duties to be fulfilled:

i. In the case of a ruling elder:

The office of ruling elder is based upon the kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ, who provided for his church officers who should rule in his name. Paul and Barnabas “appointed . . . elders in every church”; and Paul commanded that those who “rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching.” In this passage the Scriptures distinguish between elders who labor particularly in the Word and in doctrine—usually called ministers or pastors—and elders who join with the minister in the government and discipline of the church—generally called ruling elders.

It is the duty and privilege of ruling elders, in the name and by the authority of our ascended king, to rule over particular churches, and, as servants of our great shepherd, to care for his flock. Holy

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Scripture enjoins them: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." As a consequence, ruling elders must be zealous in maintaining the purity of the ministration of the Word and sacraments. They must conscientiously exercise discipline and uphold the good order and peace of the church. With love and humility they should promote faithfulness on the part of both elders and deacons in the discharge of their duties. Moreover, they should have particular regard to the doctrine and conduct of the minister of the Word, in order that the church may be edified, and may manifest itself as the pillar and ground of the truth.

If they are to fill worthily so sacred an office, ruling elders must adorn sound doctrine by holy living, setting an example of godliness in all their relations with men. Let them walk with exemplary piety and diligently discharge the obligations of their office; and "when the chief shepherd shall be manifested," they "shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away."

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