

Ministry in the Church of the Nazarene

The Church of the Nazarene expects all lay people to be actively involved in God's ministry through the church to the world. God has given all believers, including you, spiritual gifts, which enable you to be actively, and fruitfully involved in evangelism and ministry. All Christians are called to be involved in God's ministry to the world through the church. All people are not gifted in the same way or for the same kind of ministry activity, but God calls all to the work of the ministry. **You don't need special permission or credentials of any type, to use your spiritual gifts to minister through the church to the community.**

The Church grows stronger when you and other believers work together to serve God using your spiritual gifts. First, new believers are added to the congregation and, second, you and the believers around you are strengthened spiritually, becoming more mature in your faith and more like Christ in your attitudes and behavior. God's purpose, to purify the Church and make it a Holy Temple of the Lord, can only be fulfilled by your active involvement together with all lay people using the gifts of the Spirit.

Lay people normally serve God in submission and accountability to a local congregation, using their gifts under the leadership of a pastor or pastors. Since lay people do most ministries in the church, you do not have to prepare for ordination or get a special license to serve in ministry as a Godly lay person. The Church functions best when all lay people are active in ministry under the leadership of the pastor or pastoral team.

God calls and gifts a few people, through the Holy Spirit, specifically to life long ministry as clergy leaders for the church. Within the Church of the Nazarene these clergy leaders are expected to be ordained as an elder or deacon in order to fill a lifetime role. If you are called and gifted to be a life long clergy leader in ministry you have a two-fold obligation to God, the Church, and yourself.

First, you have an obligation to demonstrate that special calling through fruitful action in local ministry. Before you can claim to be called to be a leader in ministry, your first step is to prove yourself to be competent and fruitful in ministry. Talk with your pastor and seek his/her help to become active in a place of ministry. You should submit in humility with a commitment to serve in any role the congregation and pastor give you. Your pastor will help you explore your gifts and abilities, and give you an assignment, which is appropriate to your spiritual development and current skill level. Your assignments will usually be in a ministry role under the care and supervision of one of the existing ministries of the local church in the community.

Second, you have an obligation to prepare yourself to be a leader by getting the tools needed for ministry and learning the skills of leadership in ministry. This means a lifetime commitment to practicing and refining ministry and leadership skills. The Church of the Nazarene expects those who serve as elders to follow a holy and ethical lifestyle. To help us keep those standards and develop skill, we have a Sourcebook for ministerial preparation. People who are called of God and active in local lay ministry can begin to follow the guidelines given in the Sourcebook. A person called to be an ordained clergy must have a minimum of one year as a **local licensed minister** before expecting to move to the next stage of preparation for ordination. You will need the help of your pastor to proceed to the next section of Sourcebook for ministerial preparation.

If your local church is not able to provide you with a ministry opportunity when you approach them in humility, submission and with a commitment to serve in any role they give you, you should contact the District Superintendent of your District for advice on how to proceed.

Here is a brief summary of the licensed roles that the Church of the Nazarene uses. There are two kinds, a Lay minister who serves in a specific ministry role for a year at a time and an Ordained Clergy who serves in various roles for their whole life.

The Lay Minister

The Lay minister - is a Christian who is willing to serve the church and be recognized as a lay minister for a specific ministry for a year at a time. (Manual 503 and following). Because they are serving in a specific ministry they should study a part of the course in Continuing Lay Training to gain skill for that ministry.

Here is the lay ministry license process.

A pastor sees someone who could serve in a specific way. The pastor recommends that person to the local church board who talks with them carefully to make sure they have a personal experience of salvation, effective involvement in church ministries, and knowledge of the work of the church. When the board is satisfied, it may issue to each lay minister candidate, a certificate signed by the pastor and the secretary of the church board. The pastor might recommend the lay minister each year and the church board may renew that certificate of lay ministry. To qualify for renewal, the lay minister must complete at least two subjects in the lay ministry educational program as outlined by the Continuing Lay Training program available at the local church. The lay minister shall report annually to the church board. A lay minister shall not be eligible to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper and shall not officiate at marriages.

The Clergy

Clergy - The Church of the Nazarene recognizes two equal but different kinds of Ordained Clergy.

1. Deacon – Whose focus is service, ministry to poor, sick, in prison and needy in various ways, and other works of teaching, helping, and guiding etc. A deacon does not feel a call to the preaching ministry, (though they will preach from time to time). (Manual 533)
2. Elder – Whose focus is preaching - proclaiming the good news and public church leadership equipping the saints for ministry. (Manual 534)

These two kinds of Clergy fill any of these roles.

Administrator - Chaplain - Deaconess - Educator - Evangelist - Minister of Christian Education - Minister of Music - Missionary - Pastor (several types) - Song Evangelist - Special Service

There are three steps in the Ordination process in the Church of the Nazarene. When you receive a local license you have started down the road to Ordination in the Church of the Nazarene. The steps are, Local License, District License, and Ordination. You can stop at any point before ordination and return to being a lay person. Once you are ordained you will be held to a very high standard. If you sin you can be restored through a process that will help you recover spiritually and recover the trust of the church.

1. First step - **Local License**
 - a. Local supervision
 - b. Local ministry (normally through the local church).
 - c. Study at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of a validated Course of Study for ordination.
 - d. A validated course is one that has been through the Nazarene process to make sure that a minister who takes it has basic preparation for ordination.
2. Second step - **District License**
 - a. District supervision
 - i. By the District Studies board for the Course of Study
 - ii. By the District Credentials board for the person's character and ministry gifts
 - b. Local or District ministry
 - i. A called person will constantly engage in ministry.
 - ii. The district monitors this for 3 years.
 - c. The candidate finishes the course of study.
 - i. The course of study might be offered,
 1. Locally
 2. District classes
 3. A Nazarene school, college or university
 - ii. The student is responsible to make sure they finish the course of study in ten years.
3. Third step – **Ordination**
 - a. Done by a General Superintendent
 - b. It is a life time Global recognition
 - c. It must be maintained by active ministry and reporting.