

**ORDERS FOR
THE ORDINATION OF DEACONS/DEACONESSSES
THE ORDINATION OF PRESBYTERS
THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS**

PREFACE

The Church of South India believes that the ministry is a gift of God through Christ to his Church, which he has given for the perfecting of the life and service of all its members (Constitution II.7). The Church as a whole is a priestly body, since it is the body of Christ the great High Priest. Christ shares in its priestly nature. Yet from the beginning God has entrusted particular ministries to particular persons within it, and these have, through the Church, received the commission of Christ. The ordained ministry of the Church of South India consists of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons/Deaconesses. In accepting this ministry, the Church of South India desires to maintain continuity with the historic ministry of the Church as it has come down to us from early times through the uniting Churches.

An ordination service is the rite by which one of these ministries is conferred. It is an act of God in his Church. The Church of South India believes that in all ordinations and consecrations, the true Ordainer and Consecrator is God, who, in response to the prayers of his Church, and through the words and acts of its representatives, commissions and empowers for the office and work, to which they are called the persons whom it has selected (Constitution 11.1 1; see also II.7).

In the earliest ordination of which we have record; that described in Acts 6:1-6, the following parts appear: election by the people, prayer, and the laying on of apostolic hands. In accordance with this pattern, which is the scriptural authority for what is said in the Constitution (IV.25 and V.5) of the essential elements in ordination services, the same three parts form the basis of the services in this book:

1. The presentation of the candidates to the presiding Bishop, this being the last step in the process of choice of them by the Church;
2. Prayer for those about to be ordained or consecrated, that they may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for their ministry; and
3. The laying on of hands of at least three Bishops (in an Episcopal consecration), of the Bishop and Presbyters (in an ordination of Presbyters), or of the Bishop (in an ordination of Deacons/ Deaconesses).

To these have been added an examination of the candidates concerning their beliefs and duties, the delivery to them of the instruments of their office (Bible, pastoral staff), and the giving of the right hand of fellowship. These ceremonies, however valuable for their symbolism, are not essential elements in the rites of ordination.

**THE ORDINATION OF DEACONS /
DEACONESSSES**

*The Service begins with the first part of the order for the Lord's Supper, called **the preparation**.*

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

The people are seated. A person, duly appointed, presents the candidates and says to the Bishop seated in his chair:

Reverend Bishop in God, we present to you these persons to be ordained Deacons/Deaconesses.

Bishop: Let the authority for their ordination be read.

The authorisation of the Diocese for the ordaining of the candidates is read. This shall include a statement of the work to which each candidate has been called.

The Bishop says to the people:

Beloved, these are they whom we intend, God willing, to ordain *Deacons/Deaconesses*. You have heard that those appointed to inquire about them and examine them believe them to be persons of sound learning and godly life, and believe them to be duly called to serve God in this ministry. We therefore ask you to declare your assent.

The people stand, and the Bishop says:

We are not sufficient of ourselves; our sufficiency is from God.
Do you trust that these persons are, by God's grace, worthy to be ordained?

People: **We trust that they are worthy. To God be the glory.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Lord be with you:
and also with you.

Let us pray.

The people kneel.

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who by your one Spirit have appointed a diversity of ministries *in* your Church: mercifully behold these your servants now called to the office of Deacon/Deaconess; and so replenish them with

the truth of your Gospel, adorn them with innocence of life, and fill them with the power of your Holy Spirit, that both by word and good example, they may faithfully and joyfully serve you, to the glory of your name and the building up of your Church; through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, world without end. **AMEN**

THE LESSONS

Old Testament: Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalms 84 or a hymn or a lyric

Epistle: I, Timothy 3:8-13

Gospel: Luke 12:35-38

(or any other suitable texts may be used)

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed

Hymn

THE EXAMINATION

The candidates stand. The people are seated. The Bishop is seated in his chair and says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, we are assembled here to ordain you as Deacons/Deaconesses by prayer and the laying on of hands. In this act of ordination we believe that it is God who gives you grace and authority for the office and work to which you are called. We trust that he does so in answer to the prayers of his Church and through the actions and words of his appointed ministers. We act and speak as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church and as holding the faith, which we have now declared in the words of the creed.

The essential ministry of Deacons/Deaconesses is one of service. In the congregation where they shall be appointed to serve, they assist the Presbyters in leading the worship of the people, and especially in the ministration of the Lord's Supper. Deacons/Deaconesses shall also help the Presbyters in the ministration of baptism and in preaching the Word of God. Further, it is the duty of Deacons/Deaconesses to care for the poor, the needy, the sick and those who are in trouble; and to instruct children and candidates for baptism and confirmation in the faith; to strengthen the faithful

and those who falter. Deacons/Deaconess shall give such general assistance in pastoral, social and evangelistic work as the Bishop and Presbyters shall require of them.

A Deacon/Deaconess is called to equip the people of God in mission; to educate and call the Church to participate in the transforming and liberating mission of God in Christ, and to challenge the people of God to be a sign and sacrament of the reign of God with justice, peace and integrity of the whole creation.

Do you believe, so far as you know your own heart, that God has called you to the office and work of a deacon/deaconess in his Church?

I believe that God has called me.

Are zeal for the glory of God, love for our Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of all people, so far as you know your own heart, your chief motives for accepting this call?

So far as I know my own heart, they are.

Do you accept the holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary for salvation, and as the supreme and decisive standard of faith?

I do so accept them.

Do you accept the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as witnessing to, and safeguarding the faith that is set forth in the Scriptures?

I do so accept them.

Will you be diligent in prayer, in reading the holy Scriptures, and in all studies that will deepen your faith and fit you to uphold the truth of the Gospel?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you endeavour to lead a prayerful and disciplined life according to the way of Christ and so to guide your family, that both you and your family may be wholesome examples to the flock of Christ?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you then, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, continually stir up the gift of God that is in you, to make Christ known to all people?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you educate and empower the congregation in *diakonia*, mission in Christ's way, and exhort the people of God to seek to engage themselves in the service of the people with love and compassion?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you continually stir up the people of God to an active involvement through participation in the work of the kingdom of God in order to seek a just, reconciling society in Christ?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you strive to create awareness among the people of God that Christian faith demands commitment to environmental issues and ecological concerns, and thereby care for God's creation and the practice of responsible stewardship?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

Will you promote unity, peace, and love among all people of God, and especially among those whom you serve?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

You believe that you are called to exercise this ministry within the Church of South India; will you accept its discipline and submit yourselves as children in the Gospel to those whom this Church shall appoint to have the rule over you?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

All kneel, those to be ordained kneel before the Bishop, who stands and says:

The almighty God, our heavenly Father, who has given you the will to do all these things, grant you also grace to perform them. Faithful is he that has called you, who also will do it. **AMEN**

THE ORDINATION

The Bishop calls the people to silent prayer.

The hymn inviting the presence of the Holy Spirit such as 'Come, Holy Ghost' is sung kneeling.

The Bishop stands Throughout the Ordination Prayer.

He faces those to be ordained Deacon/Deaconess, who are kneeling, and the Bishop says over them.

We praise and glorify you, most merciful God, because in your great love for humankind you sent your only Son Jesus Christ to bear among us the form of a servant; for our sake he humbled himself, and in obedience accepted death, even death on a cross; and therefore you have highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name.

We thank you for sending him, not to be served but to serve, and to give up his life as a ransom for many; and by him we are taught that whoever among us wishes to be great must make himself the servant of all.

We thank you that you have graciously called these your servants to be Deacons/ Deaconesses in your Church; and we humbly ask you O merciful Lord,

(here the Bishop remains standing, lays his hand upon the head of each to be ordained in turn, and repeats the following words:)

SEND DOWN YOUR HOLY SPIRIT UPON YOUR SERVANT... WHOM WE, IN YOUR NAME, AND IN OBEDIENCE TO YOUR MOST BLESSED WILL, DO NOW ORDAIN DEACON/DEACONESS IN YOUR CHURCH.

The people each time repeat: **AMEN**

And the Bishop continues, praying for all those ordained:

Give them grace, we ask you, to be faithful to their promises, diligent in serving and caring for others, skilled in teaching and bold to proclaim your Gospel. Grant them always to have the full assurance of faith, to overflow with hope and to be rooted and grounded in love. May they ever abide in union with your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you Father, and the Holy Spirit belong glory and honour, worship and praise, now and for ever. **AMEN**

THE GIVING OF THE BIBLE

The Bishop delivers to each one, still kneeling, a Bible, saying:

Take this, a token of the authority, which you have received to preach the Word of God and to serve his people.

WELCOME INTO THE DIACONATE

The Bishop then gives to each one the right hand of fellowship and says: We give you the right hand of fellowship, and receive you to take part with us in this ministry.

All stand.

The Bishop says:

We declare thatare Deacons/Deaconesses in the Church of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

A doxology is sung by all

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

*The order for the Lord's Supper continues at the **Intercession**. The Second litany may be used, with the addition of the following petitions after that for our bishops and all other ministers:*

INTERCESSION

For your servants who through the ages have served humanity in your name, and for those who have now been ordained deacons/deaconesses in your Church, and for all ministers, that they may show forth Christ in their life and service; that they and all your people may come to fullness of life in Christ; that they may be instruments of your love and peace.

Let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have now been ordained deacons/deaconesses in your Church, and for all ministers, that they may discern your work and purpose; that they may stand up for what is just and true; that they may not fear to lead where others falter.

Let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have now been ordained deacons/deaconesses in your Church, and for all ministers, that they may receive the spirit of wisdom, understanding and faith and all the gifts of your Spirit; that they will strengthen and uphold them even in times of weakness; and despair.

Let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have now been ordained deacons/deaconesses in your Church, and for all ministers, that their life be directed by your Word and Spirit; that their homes be blessed with your presence and that they may be kept faithful to the end.

Let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.