



A GUIDE FOR ORDINATION

For Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada (Atlantic Region)

[Abstract](#)

The following document outlines the process for Ordination within Fellowship Atlantic.

TABE OF CONTENTS

ITEM DESCRIPTION	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
II. PREPARATION FOR ORDINATION COUNCIL	2 - 3
III. THE ORDINATION COUNCIL.....	4 - 5
IV. ORDINATION SERVICES AND CERTIFICATE.....	6
V. AFFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS ORDINATIONS.....	7
VI. SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER (ORDINATION COUNCIL)	7
VII. SUGGESTED DOCTRINAL SUBJECTS (ORDINATION COUNCIL)....	8

I. INTRODUCTION

Definition: “Ordination is the recognition and setting part of a qualified man for vocational pastoral ministry following a satisfactory examination of his conversion, spiritual life and growth, call to ministry, and statement of beliefs.”¹

The responsibility for a call for ordination lies with the local church, and a local church within Fellowship Atlantic may ordain a candidate after he has been formally examined and recommended to vocational ministry at an Ordination Council Session called in conjunction with Fellowship Atlantic.

Male pastors, elders, staff, church planters, missionaries, and chaplains, after a satisfactory time² of consistent ministry in their local church, may be ordained.

The term, “supervising pastor” will be used frequently and applies to the senior pastor or church leader upon whom the ordination candidate is relying for mentoring and instruction during the preparatory process. When the candidate is a senior (or only) pastor, he shall designate an ordained pastor that he looks up to, to be his supervising pastor.

II. PREPARATION FOR AN ORDINATION COUNCIL

Step One: Church Leadership Approaches the Candidate

When a supervising pastor believes that one of its male staff members or church planters (who has been engaged in pastoral ministry and has served well in a ministry role for at least two years) is qualified to be ordained, the candidate must write a four-part statement (twelve to fifteen pages in length) which briefly recounts his conversion, spiritual life/growth, call to ministry, and doctrinal statement. The content of the doctrinal statement is left to the candidate and the supervising pastor (see a suggested list at the end of this document).

Before an Ordination Council is called, the supervising pastor must review the candidate’s four-part statement and determine whether the candidate is ready to be examined and recognized.

¹ http://www.febcentral.ca/downloads/sb_febcentral/OrdinationProceduresApproved2016copy.pdf

² The purpose behind this requirement is based on 1 Timothy 3:6 and 1 Timothy 4:14. Faithful service, affirmation of gifting by the local church and local church leadership, and observation and accountability in the local church are all good and vital aspects preceding ordaining a man to fulfill the calling of elder. We recommend a two year period of service (paid or unpaid) before applying for ordination, but this is at the discretion of the local requesting church and the Regional Council of Fellowship Atlantic.

Step Two: The Local Church Approves the Candidate

At a duly-called business meeting, the church membership must pass a motion to approve the candidate for ordination prior to an Ordination Council being requested. Should the motion pass, a request that an Ordination Council be held to examine the candidate and make a recommendation regarding the candidate's readiness for ordination may be made to Fellowship Atlantic. Such notice should be given to the Regional Director or the Regional Council Chair of Fellowship Atlantic.

Step Three – Invitation to the Ordination Council

The supervising pastor, in conjunction with the Regional Director, shall establish a date for the Ordination Council, preferably giving at least eight weeks' notice. Invited examiners should RSVP to the supervising pastor no later than three weeks before the Ordination Council is to be held.

All ordained pastors and/or recognized elders of the Fellowship Atlantic Region shall be invited to serve as examiners during the Ordination Council, with no more than two such pastors/elders from each church. The ordaining church and the supervising pastor may invite non-Fellowship ordained pastors/recognized elders to also serve as examiners during the Council at their discretion, with guidance and approval from the Regional Director and the Regional Council of Fellowship Atlantic.

Each Fellowship Atlantic church congregation may also select up to two delegates to attend the Ordination Council as guests. They may not participate in examining the candidate but are welcome to attend as observers. Each church is responsible to select and approve its delegates.

Step Four – Final Details before the Ordination Council

Under the guidance of the supervising pastor, and in conjunction with the Regional Director or Regional Council, the candidate has the responsibility to distribute his four-part statement at least two weeks in advance of the Ordination Council to those invited examiners who have responded.

The candidate will have the prerogative of choosing a Chairman and Secretary for the Ordination Council, with guidance from the supervising pastor. The supervising pastor will notify the Regional Director or the Regional Council Chair of Fellowship Atlantic at least one week ahead of the Ordination Council.

The Regional Director and/or the supervising pastor will do all they can to encourage Fellowship pastors to attend the Council as examiners. The ordaining church will also do all they can to encourage a good attendance at the Council.

No relatives of the candidate shall serve as examiners at the Ordination Council.

III. THE ORDINATION COUNCIL

Preliminaries:

- 1) The supervising pastor or Regional Director for Fellowship Atlantic will welcome the candidate, the examiners, and other guests, and then open in prayer. He will then introduce the Chairman for the Ordination Council. He will also introduce the Secretary of the Council. The ordaining church's Moderator and the Church Clerk may serve in these roles if that will be advantageous. The Regional Director and the Regional Council Secretary may also serve in these roles. The men who will take these positions must be pre-arranged, as per Step 4, under Preparation for an Ordination Council Session. The supervising pastor or Regional Director will then call for a motion for approval of the Chairman and Secretary.
- 2) The Secretary will then read the church's Motion of Approval of the candidate and the request to call for an Ordination Council.
- 3) The Chairman will then identify the attending churches along with their examiners; these will be listed carefully, as they will eventually sign the Ordination Certificate, along with church leaders. Additional guests, outside of the Ordination Council may be enumerated as well, but not as examiners. There will be a motion to accept the official examiners for this event.
- 4) Other housekeeping items may be dealt with at this time (schedule, bathrooms, breaks, etc.). Questioning of the candidate and voting shall be limited to the examiners. Examiners will not be seated among the other guests but should be seated at the front.

The Ordination Council:

1. The examination process will be done in good order. The examiners must be advised that their purpose is to ask questions for clarification but not to be argumentative or to instruct and change the candidate's point of view on doctrine.

2. The candidate will read his documents of conversion, spiritual growth, and call to ministry. The examiners may then ask any questions for clarification in these matters at the end of the reading.
3. The Candidate will then work through his doctrinal statement, section by section. Each section will be followed by questions from the examiners.
4. The primary goal of the examination is to ensure the candidate's competency in the Scriptures, his call to ministry, and demonstrations of shepherding in the lives of people.
5. Given that the doctrinal statement was sent out ahead of time the candidate will introduce each section with a brief overview statement then the Chairman will allow questions. This process should be determined before the Ordination Council begins.
6. At the end of the examination of the doctrinal section, time should be given for additional questions from the examiners on areas not addressed in the written statement. Any remaining questions about any item in the specific list could also be asked at this time.
7. Recognizing the end of the doctrinal section, the Chairman must ask for a formal vote to end the examination. The candidate and guests will be asked to leave while the examiners deliberate and review the four-part statement of the candidate. Only those who are official examiners, plus observers approved by the Chairman (such as future candidates for ordination) may attend the examiners' discussions and recommendation after the candidate is excused. The Chair will ensure this is clarified before dismissal.
8. As a benchmark during the discussion of the examiners, the Fellowship Statement of Faith may be used as the reference point.
9. Pertinent comments and/or recommendations to be passed along to the Candidate shall be recorded in written form by the Secretary.
10. After some discussion, the Chairman will ask for a motion to ordain the candidate to the ministry of the gospel, based on his four-part statement and examination. The vote would be "yes" or to "delay/postpone the decision."

11. If the motion passes with a “yes,” the Chairman must ask for a further motion recommending to the church to proceed with ordination.
12. The Chairman will re-convene the examiners and the candidate to inform him of the motion as well as any pertinent comments or advice regarding the candidate. Such comments or advice will be with the examiners and the candidate in private.
13. The Secretary must inform the ordaining church in writing of the examiners’ recommendation. This may be done immediately, or no later than one week hence.
14. The Council is adjourned, with prayer.

IV. THE ORDINATION SERVICE & CERTIFICATE:

Some churches seeking ordination of a pastor will plan the Ordination Service to follow the Ordination Council, often in the early evening and after a special meal for the council and the church. Fellowship Atlantic leaves this up to the discretion of the local church. The church should consider the situation carefully as they determine the time for their Ordination Service, since the examiners may vote to post-pone the decision regarding the candidate, and we wish to avoid any embarrassment.

Following a positive recommendation from the examiners, the church should establish a date for the Ordination Service and notify the Regional Director. It is not the responsibility of Fellowship Atlantic to make arrangements for the Ordination Service but is available as a helpful resource.

Several elements of an Ordination Service may include: report of acceptance by the examiners at the Ordination Council; an address to the candidate; an address to the Church (or single address to the candidate and church); laying on of hands by the church leadership and other ordained pastors present; presentation of the Ordination Certificate; opportunity for the newly ordained pastor to respond and/or close the service in prayer; refreshments and fellowship.

Fellowship Atlantic also does not take responsibility to supply an Ordination Certificate or to arrange for the signees. However, this should be available at the Ordination Council in order that the signatures can be obtained, in the case that the candidate is approved.

V. AFFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS ORDINATIONS:

Pastors and/or churches in our Region may approach the Regional Council or Regional Director for affirmation of a previous ordination in another denomination. This may only be entertained when coming from an evangelical denomination and after close examination as follows:

- 1) The Regional Council will constitute a special Affirmation of Ordination Council to determine whether to recognize the candidate's Ordination.
(see FA Document: "**Affirmation of Ordination**" – for council process and procedure)
- 2) The candidate must present his written (four-part) document which states his conversion, spiritual life/growth, call to ministry and philosophy of ministry, and doctrinal statement. Following the interview, the Regional Council will inform the church leadership and the Regional Director of its recommendation.

In the case that the Candidate was ordained in a non-evangelical denomination (determined by the Council, and such determination is final), the process will revert to a full Ordination Council.

VI. SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER TO AN ORDINATION COUNCIL:

Church Letterhead

Date

Name of Invited Church

Address of Invited Church

Dear Friends,

You are invited to send your pastor, one other recognized elder, and up to two delegates to serve as part of an Ordination Council to advise us on the wisdom of setting apart Mr. _____ for the work of the gospel ministry within the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.

This Council is called to meet on _____ at _____.

If it is agreed to proceed with the Ordination of _____ we will then advise you of the date on which an Ordination Service will be hosted by our church family.

We do hope that you will be with us on this occasion and would appreciate an early indication of your availability.

Sincerely,
(Church Clerk)

VII. SUGGESTED SUBJECTS FOR AN ORDINATION COUNCIL:

The following is a “suggested” list of doctrinal subjects for the ordination council. The candidate, after consultation with his supervising pastor, may choose to add more subjects or make the list shorter. Written material on each subject will usually be less than a page and may be as brief as two or three subjects on a page. It is not a matter of the Candidate writing down everything he knows, but to prepare in such a way that the Council will UNDERSTAND what the candidate believes in a succinct statement.

Suggested Doctrinal Subjects: see also Appendix “Suggested Ordination Council Questions”

- ❖ The Scriptures
- ❖ God the Father*
- ❖ God the Son*
- ❖ God the Holy Spirit* } A candidate may choose to make these a study and discussion entitled “The Trinity.”
- ❖ Creation
- ❖ Sin
- ❖ Man, and The Fall of Man
- ❖ Atonement, Salvation, and the Grace of God (as one study or individually)
- ❖ Justification
- ❖ Security of the Believer
- ❖ Sanctification (Separation of the believer, or other title the candidate is comfortable with)
- ❖ The Church
- ❖ The Ordinances
- ❖ Angelic Beings and fallen Angels, Satan (as one article or as three)
- ❖ Last Things, Second Coming, Eschatology (other combination of subjects that apply)
- ❖ Theology of Ministry or Mission

Suggested Other Subjects:

Clarify their understanding of these documents regarding the Mission and Values of Fellowship Atlantic

Abuse Protection Policy

By-laws + Affirmation of Faith

Introduction to Fellowship Atlantic

Pastoral Code of Ethics

Value and Expectation of Association

Other questions will be asked regarding anything in the candidate’s past that may harm his ministry. (i.e., “Is there anything in your past, particularly of a sexual or criminal nature, that if revealed, might disqualify or greatly hinder you for the ministry?”)