

The Methodist Church of New Zealand

Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa

Administration Division

P O Box 931

CHRISTCHURCH

Information Leaflet No. 12

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DEACONS' CRITERIA FOR ORDINATION

A decision to ordain a man or woman to the Diaconate is of major significance to the life of the individual and of the whole Church. The criteria set out herein are intended to assist the Church in assessing whether, and at what point, a person has the gifts and graces to fulfil a ministry of service, leadership and pastoral care.

The criteria are part of a much broader Training/Skills document covering the various stages of selection, training and preparation for ordination. They were prepared in 2001 and encompass the Church's understanding of the place of the Mission Statement, and its commitment to the bi-cultural journey and issues of inclusiveness. A candidate for ordination will be expected to meet most of the listed criteria.

Information regarding the assessment process towards ordination is set out in Information Leaflet No. 11.

CRITERIA FOR ORDINATION AS DEACON

1. PERSONAL

✧ Personal Faith

- Demonstrate a personal faith in Jesus Christ which.
- Be able to articulate a clear call to ordained ministry and give a clear statement of the meaning of ordination.
- Give evidence of *dwelling within* the scriptures in his/her personal life.
- Demonstrate the ability to relate Biblical faith to his/her personal life.
- Show a relationship between theology and personal life.

✧ Personal Development

- Demonstrate ongoing personal growth and a developing and deepening prayer and devotional life.
- Show commitment to ongoing ministry/study supervision and spiritual direction.
- Have a clear job description.
- Demonstrate emotional maturity and stability.
- Give evidence of personal self-direction and balance.

✧ Personal Relationships

- Demonstrate an ability to devote appropriate amounts of time to personal relationships and personal needs.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to persons.
- Demonstrate an ability to form healthy and inclusive relationships with persons different from him/herself.

2. THE TRADITION

✧ **The Scriptures**

- Articulate the centrality of the Scriptures in the Church and the structure of Christian life.
- Be familiar and comfortable with the tools and methods of Biblical criticism.
- Demonstrate a *wholistic* rather than a *selective* approach to Scripture.
- Display an openness to the possibility of God's breaking through the words of the Scriptures with a new word for the present generation.
- Show ability to make the Biblical story and tradition accessible to others.
- Demonstrate the ability to relate Biblical faith to the life of the Faith Community.

✧ **Theology**

- Demonstrate ability to think theologically, both in systematic and contextual terms.
- Understand and respect theological positions other than his/her own.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of and ability to work constructively and sensitively with other denominations, especially those within the Act of Commitment.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and sensitivity towards other religious faiths present within New Zealand.
- Display an openness to further growth and wrestling with theological issues.

✧ **Methodist Church Ethos and Polity**

- Explain his/her reasons for selecting the Methodist Church in preference to another denomination.
- Be willing to act under the discipline of the Methodist Church in relation to:
 - its Connexional system
 - its stationing procedures
 - its forms and practices of administering the sacraments.
- Show knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the Church's Mission Statement.
- Give evidence of having read, understood and assented to Methodist Law.
- Give evidence of having read and understood six of John Wesley's Sermons.

3. MINISTRY

✧ **Ministry Skills**

- Be comfortable with presenting the call to discipleship and the claim of God on people's lives.
- Give evidence of skills needed in community service, counselling, group work, administration.
- Show willingness and ability to facilitate the building of an effective ministry team and to maintain healthy team relationships.
- Understand the relationship to and act professionally with ordained colleagues, laity, parish and congregational leaders, District Superintendent and other officials.
- Demonstrate a ministry style which is mutual and inclusive.
- Demonstrate concern for social justice and human rights and be able to talk intelligently and knowledgeably about the relationship between church and society.

✧ **Bicultural Journey**

- Give evidence of an adequate understanding of and ability to be an advocate for our Church's bi-cultural journey and demonstrate ongoing personal growth on the journey.
- Give evidence of, knowledge of and understanding of Te Tiriti O Waitangi and its implications for church and society.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of te reo Maori and tikanga Maori.

✧ **Relationship with Assessors**

- Exhibit an open, rather than adversarial relationship with committees and other assessors.
- Give genuine and authentic responses to interview questions, rather than trying to find out *what the committee/assessor wants*.
- Meet deadlines and appointments in a responsible manner.
- Respond with maturity to decisions of the Church