

## COURSE OF STUDY INTRODUCTION

### **What is the “Course of Study?”**

The educational preparation required of all Nazarene ministers is called the Course of Study. A Course of Study curriculum is a curriculum designed to develop the range of abilities needed for effective ministry. A curriculum that has been approved by the General Board and Board of General Superintendents is a validated Course of Study program. Those preparing for ministry must complete a validated Course of Study program and must adhere to the specific guidelines of the region on which they hold membership in the Church of the Nazarene.

### **Who must complete the course of study?**

Every licensed minister in the Church of the Nazarene must complete a validated course of study under the supervision of his or her District Board of Ministry / Ministerial Studies Board.

Completion of the course of study does not automatically lead to ordination. Upon completing the validated course of study, all students will be examined by the District Ministerial Credentials Board and some will be recommended for ordination within the Church of the Nazarene. Recommended individuals will express a call to full-time ministry, exhibit the gifts and graces for ministry, demonstrate the requisite abilities for ministry, and exhibit a mature, Christlike spirit.

### **Why are non-degree credentialing programs offered?**

Academic degrees are offered by educational institutions authorized to give degrees by third-party or governmental accrediting agencies. The institution must complete strenuous evaluation by the authorizing agency and meet specified standards before being authorized to give academic degrees. Credentialing is a professional action of the church. While the church holds itself to strict standards for credentialing and licensing ministers, these standards are self-imposed and regulated by the denomination rather than an external agency. A district of the Church of the Nazarene is authorized by the denomination to license and credential ministers. The district is not accredited to issue academic degrees.

Many men and women whom God calls to ministry already have college/university degrees in some field of study. They only desire to complete the additional requirements of the church for the ministerial course of study. Others may have responsibilities that prohibit them from moving to a college/university to complete a degree but they still want to prepare for ministry. For these people the district offers a course of study curriculum that leads to ministry credentials but not an academic degree.

### **Who determines how and when I complete the course of study?**

The content and procedure for the course of study is described in the *Guide to Ministerial Preparation and Ordination*. *The Guide* was created from the guidelines of the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* and the *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordained Ministry*. *The Guide* is approved by the International Course of Study Advisory Committee and the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene.

The District Ministerial Studies Board implements the course of study on each district in compliance with these documents. You should register with the District Ministerial Studies Board on your district and work with the board to complete the course of study. The *Manual* specifies that you must complete the course of study within ten years of receiving your first district minister's license.

### **What is ordination?**

Ordination is the authenticating, authorizing act of the church that recognizes and confirms God's call to ministerial leadership as stewards and proclaimers of both the gospel and the church of Jesus Christ.

It is important to realize that God calls but the church ordains. The church does not claim the right to call people to the ministry. That is the work of God the Holy Spirit.

Ordination is an authorizing act of the church. By means of ordination the church officially approves you as a minister. The ordination service itself bears witness to the church universal and to the world at large that you are truly a man or woman of God, that you have the gifts and graces for public ministry, that you have a thirst

for knowledge, especially for the Word of God, and that you can clearly communicate the sound doctrine of the gospel.

Ordination is also a confirming act of the church. But before the public service of ordination the church is at work evaluating you and your potential for ministry. The local church and the District Ministerial Credentials Board will observe you closely to determine if they will recommend you to the District Assembly for ordination.

Ordination is a spiritual and theological act of the church. It is more than receiving a certification to minister. It is more than passing qualifying exams of your profession. It is the church's acknowledgment that God calls and gifts certain men and women for ministerial leadership in the church. Because scripture teaches that in Christ there is neither slave nor free, Jew nor Greek, male nor female, but all are one in Christ, the Church of the Nazarene ordains persons regardless of their economic status, their nationality or race, or their gender. The issue in ordination is the testimony of a call from God, completing minimum educational preparation for and experience in ministry, and the demonstration in the life of the church of the gifts and graces for ministerial leadership.

**Will I be ordained after completing the course of study?**

Ordination is not a right of the candidate obtained by completing the course of study, or fulfilling other requirements. Ordination is a privilege extended by the church.

The District Ministerial Credentials Board is required to examine each candidate for ordination and determine if the candidate exhibits the gifts and graces for ministry. The board will also assess the theological beliefs of the candidate to determine if he or she agrees with the beliefs of the Church of the Nazarene. The board will also assess the spiritual maturity of the candidate and determine at what time the board will recommend a candidate for ordination.

*edited contents taken from USA/Canada Region website*