

Supporting inquirers and candidates

The pastor, session and congregation communicate with and support inquirers and candidates throughout the entire period of preparation. It is important to express concern and support by contacting the individual and his or her family at important times, such as formal consultations with the presbytery's committee, appearances before presbytery, academic and standard ordination exam periods, at the time of a candidate's "final assessment," when a call is being negotiated, on holidays, anniversaries, etc.

Providing financial support is a very tangible expression of support. Some presbytery policies will require the congregation to contribute to some expenses related to the preparation process, such as fees related to psychological assessment.

Although inquirers and candidates are "subject to the oversight of the presbytery within the context of their covenant relationship" for preparing for ordered ministry (G-2.0605), a session may act as an advocate to call the presbytery's committee to accountability in fulfilling its responsibilities.

The session participates with inquirers/candidates and the presbytery's committee as a covenant partner evaluating growth and progress throughout the full preparation for ministry process. It may be required to provide a formal recommendation regarding whether the presbytery should transition an inquirer to the candidacy phase. Such recommendations should be based on personal interviews with the inquirer and a review of consultation reports so as to make an informed decision about her or his "suitability for ordered ministry" as a teaching elder (G-2.0603).

- If the presbytery acts to move the inquirer to candidacy, the new candidate and her or his session may request that a commission of presbytery conduct a service of reception in the congregation's worship service.
- If the inquirer is not received by presbytery as a candidate, the session continues to support, counsel and guide the individual as she or he seeks to discover an appropriate expression of her or his Christian vocation.

Upon notice that a candidate has been ordained as teaching elder (G-2.0704), the session will remove him or her from the congregation's members roll.

Follow Through:

- ✓ Does your presbytery require the designation of a "session liaison" for each inquirer and candidate?
- ✓ If so, what are the requirements and responsibilities of these liaisons?