

Ordination, Your Story?

by Ka'thy Gore Chappell, CBFNC Leadership Development Coordinator

When I want to know the meaning of a word, I go to the dictionary or, these days, Wikipedia. *Ordination* is the word I researched today and the definition is as follows: "Ordination is the process by which individuals are *consecrated*, that is set apart as *clergy* to perform various religious rites and ceremonies." The definition, however, is not complete or specific as to ordination policies and procedures, and the reality is that the process of ordination can be confusing.

In an attempt to provide clarity to the word, the sacrament, or process of ordination, the Leadership Development Ministry Council's Sub-Committee on Ordination is inviting you to share your ordination experience. In order to initiate the story-telling, several brief ordination stories are included in this article. You are invited to write about your personal ordination experience; once you write your story, please send it to me at kchappell@cbfnc.org. After stories are collected, the sub-committee will share these experiences with you via follow-up dialogue, ordination resources and worship ideas.

Ordination Sub-Committee: Shane Nixon, Chair;
Dennis Atwood; Sarah Boberg; Layne Rogerson

The Cary, NC, church that ordained me had been ordaining women as deacons for years; however, the church had never ordained a woman to "the Gospel Ministry." I believe that the key to my positive experience was that ordination came one year after my arrival on the church staff as Minister to Youth. I knew and loved the people, and they knew and loved me. It was not an issue of ordaining a woman; the church was ordaining Ka'thy.

On the day of my ordination, I received cards, flowers, words of encouragement, a packed house at the worship and the beautiful singing by the Sanctuary Choir of Jesus, My Lord, My Life, My All (Burroughs).

Ka'thy Gore Chappell,
Leadership Development
Coordinator, CBFNC



I was ordained as a Minister of the Gospel by Oakmont Baptist Church in Greenville, NC. It has been a decade since that beautiful spring day when my family, biological and ecclesiastical, gathered for the sacred ritual of affirmation, blessing and commissioning. My home church in South Carolina was a place where I was nurtured and loved, taught biblical truths, baptized, married and experienced that mystical call to ministry.

Oakmont is the church of my adulthood, where my beliefs in God matured to faith. It is also the church where my call to ministry was fostered and I was called to serve in 1996 as Minister of Students and Missions.

Through the years, my ordination has inspired me to be passionate in service toward God, and on occasion it has been the tether that kept me from fleeing the ministry when things got too hard. Because my role in ministry today is chaplaincy, ordination has developed a new meaning as it validates and legitimizes my ministry in a secular work environment.

Layne Rogerson,
Spiritual Care Manager & Hospice Chaplain,
Home, Health & Hospice Care, Greenville

While the process of my own ordination felt more like inquisition than affirmation, I will never forget what it did to me. There were times in the process when folks deemed it necessary to ask if I was "just in it for the housing allowance," which might have cheapened the entire thing.



Even so, the Holy Spirit descended in a real and concrete way, and my life has not been the same since.

Shane Nixon, Pastor,
First Baptist Church, Mocksville