

## **D. The Elder**

**532.** An elder is a minister whose call of God to preach, gifts, and usefulness have been demonstrated and enhanced by proper training and experience, and who has been separated to the service of Christ through His church by the vote of a district assembly and by the solemn act of ordination, and thus has been fully invested to perform all functions of the Christian ministry.

**532.1.** We recognize but one order of preaching ministry—that of elder. This is a permanent order in the church. The elder is to rule well in the church, to preach the Word, to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to solemnize matrimony, all in the name of, and in subjection to, Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church. (30-30.4, 32, 513-514.3, 514.9-514.10, 536.12)

**532.2.** The church expects that one called to this official ministry should be a steward of the Word and give full energy through a lifetime to its proclamation.

**532.3.** An elder candidate professes a call of God to this ministry. The candidate currently holds a district license, and has at one time held a license for not less than three consecutive years. In addition, the candidate has been recommended for renewal of district license by the church board of the local church in which he or she holds membership or by the District Advisory Board. Further the candidate:

1. has fulfilled all the requirements of the church for the same,
  2. has successfully completed a validated course of study prescribed for licensed ministers and candidates for ordination as elder, and
  3. has been carefully considered and favorably reported by the Ministerial Credentials Board of the district assembly.
- The candidate may be elected to the order of elder by two-thirds vote of the district assembly. To be eligible for election,

the candidate must have been an assigned minister for not less than three consecutive years, and the candidate must currently be serving in an assigned ministry. In the case of part-time assignment, it should be understood that there should be an extension of the consecutive years of in-service time, depending on their level of involvement in local church ministry, and that their testimony and service demonstrate that their call to ministry is primary to all other pursuits. Further, any disqualification that may have been imposed by a district assembly must be removed in writing by the district superintendent and the District Advisory Board of the district where the disqualification was imposed before the minister is eligible for election to elder's orders. In addition, the candidate's marriage relationship must be such as not to render him or her ineligible for ordination. (30-30.4, 203.6, 320, 527)