

## *Candidates for the Gospel Ministry*

**18-1.** A candidate for the ministry is a member of the Church in full communion who, believing himself to be called to preach the Gospel, submits himself to the care and guidance of the Presbytery in his course of study and of practical training to prepare himself for this office.

**18-2.** Every applicant for the ministry must put himself under the care of Presbytery, which should ordinarily be the Presbytery that has jurisdiction of the church of which he is a member. The endorsement of his Session must be given to the Presbytery, consisting of testimonials regarding his Christian character and promise of usefulness in the ministry. The endorsement should also describe the activities of ministry the applicant has participated in with brief evaluation.

Every applicant for care shall be a member of the congregation whose session provides an endorsement for at least six months before filing his application, except in those cases deemed extraordinary by the Presbytery.

Every applicant must file his application with the clerk of the Presbytery at least one month before the meeting of the Presbytery. An applicant for care may not be received under care and examined for ordination at the same meeting of the Presbytery, since he must serve a period of at least one year of internship prior to ordination (see *BCO* 19-7 and 21-4). An applicant for internship is obliged to be under care and may be licensed to preach the Gospel; further, one who is not already under care may be taken under care, be licensed to preach the Gospel, and become an intern at the same meeting of Presbytery.

**18-3.** The applicant shall appear before the Presbytery in person, and shall be examined by the Presbytery on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry.

If the testimonials and the examination prove satisfactory, the Presbytery shall receive him under its care after the following manner:

The moderator shall propose to the applicant these questions:

- 1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?**
- 2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?**

If these questions be answered in the affirmative, the moderator, or someone appointed by him, shall give the candidate a brief charge; and the proceeding shall close with prayer.

The name of the applicant is then to be recorded on the Presbytery's roll of candidates for the ministry.

**18-4.** The candidate continues to be a private member of the church and subject to the jurisdiction of the Session, but as respects his preparatory training for the ministry he is under the oversight of the Presbytery. It shall be the duty of the Presbytery to show a kindly and sympathetic interest in him, and to give him counsel and guidance in regard to his studies, his practical training, and the institutions of learning he should attend. In no case may a candidate omit from his course of study any of the subjects prescribed in the Form of Government as tests for ordination without obtaining the consent of Presbytery (see *BCO* 21-4); and where such consent is given the Presbytery shall record the fact and the reasons therefore.

**18-5.** For the development of his Christian character, for the service he can render, and for his more effective training, the candidate, when entering on his theological studies, should be authorized and encouraged by the Presbytery to conduct public worship, to expound the Scriptures to the people, and to engage in other forms of Christian work. These forms of service should be rendered under the direction of Presbytery, and also with the sanction and under the guidance of the candidate's instructors during the time of his being under their instruction. A candidate should not undertake to serve a church which is without a pastor as regular supply unless he has been licensed and approved for that supply by the Presbytery having jurisdiction of the church (see *BCO* 19-1).

**18-6.** The Presbytery shall require every candidate for the ministry under its care to make a report to it at least once a year; and it shall secure from his instructors an annual report upon his deportment, diligence, and progress in study.

**18-7.** The Presbytery may, upon application of the candidate, give a certificate of dismissal to another Presbytery. The candidate may be allowed to retain membership in his home church upon the request of his Session and the approval of both Presbyteries involved. A candidate shall, at his request, be allowed to withdraw from the care of the Presbytery. The Presbytery may also, for sufficient reasons, remove the name of the candidate from its roll of candidates; but in such a case it shall report its actions and the reasons therefore to the candidate and to the Session of his church.

**18-8.** An applicant coming as a candidate from another denomination must present testimonials of his standing in that body and must become a member of a congregation in the Presbyterian Church in America. He shall then fulfill the requirements of applicants listed under *BCO* 18-2, as well as requirements placed upon those desiring to be licensed or to become an intern as set forth in *BCO* 19.