



Order of Elders:

Do you feel called to be a pastor? Are you called to be a spiritual leader of the church? Elders are persons “set apart” to preach, teach, offer the sacraments, to nurture, to heal, to gather the community in worship, and to send them forth as a witness (Book of Discipline par. 301-303). The ordained elder helps equip others to be in ministry for God and to the world. Elders often become senior pastors, associate pastors, and serve in extension ministries outside the local congregation. (See “Extension Ministries” for more detail.)

Order of Deacons:

Do you feel called to work in the church but not as a senior pastor? The order of deacons is a servant ministry in which one “assists” elders in the word, sacrament and order. Deacons give leadership to the life of the church. Deacons are called and set apart for the ministry of love, justice, and service. They help connect the church with the most needy, neglected and hurting persons among the children of God (The United Methodist Book of Discipline par. 319-320). Deacons serve as Assistant pastors, Christian educators, youth and music ministers, Missionaries and countless other professions working in and for the church.

Youth Ministry:

Do you feel called to be a youth minister? Do you sense God asking you to relate to teenagers, to encourage them in their relationship with Jesus Christ, and to run programs which inspire them to live for God? Youth ministers, also known as youth pastors or directors, play a vital role in the growth of the church (Book of Discipline par. 258). Since most people give their lives to Christ during their teenage years, having people committed to helping youth grow is essential.

Worship/Music Ministry:

Do you feel called to lead worship and conduct music in the church? The Ministry of music and worship is rapidly expanding. We are witnessing a shift from pipe organs to guitars and from hymnals to laptops and video projectors. Yet all styles of worship remain. You may feel called to sustain the traditional role of leading congregational singing, conducting choirs, or music education. Or you may sense a call to more contemporary styles, involving a band, guitars, multi-sensory worship, and informal settings. Regardless of your musical bent, is God asking you to help shape the future for church music for the twenty-first century (Book of Dis par. 629.4b-d)?

Missions/Evangelism:

Do you feel called to be a missionary or an evangelist? A Missionary is one who takes the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not heard it before. Many missionaries go overseas but not all. Many work within the confines of our own nation. An Evangelist is one who exercises certain gifts in speaking, teaching and prophecy, in order to tell others of the message of Jesus Christ. Missionaries can be ordained as an elder or a deacon in the United Methodist Church, although this is not necessary. Those who want to be missionaries feel a calling to “go beyond” their comfort zone to reach a people for God (Book of Discipline par. 1312.6).

Christian Education:

Do you feel called to be an educator within the church? Christian Education directors are the “teachers” in our local churches. They work with children, youth, and adults to convey the whole truth of the Bible and the traditions of the faith necessary for discipleship. Christian Educators foster family ministries, community out-reach, vacation bible school, lay development, spiritual formation, and other age-level opportunities (Book of Discipline par. 629).

Extension Ministries:

Do you feel called to serve in ministry beyond the local church? Elders in the United Methodist Church can be appointed to ministry settings outside a local congregation as a witness of Christ’s love and justice (Book of Discipline par. 334). These persons remain in connection to the Bishop, the Annual Conference, and the itinerancy. Elders may assume a number of roles such as: chaplain, counselor, campus minister, professor, editor, communications specialist, journalist, retreat director, and so forth.

A Final Note:

These are seven of the major categories in which one who senses a “call” might choose to serve in the United Methodist Church. God also calls people to serve in the secular work force, public schools, or other areas of professional concern. Whatever “call” God has on your life will be affirmed through continued prayer, bible study, serving others, discussions with your pastor and family and the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life.

We recommend reading the following book *The Christian as Minister: Revised Edition* by Robert Kohler, which can be ordered at www.cokesbury.com. This book is required by the Board of Ordained Ministry and will help you explore your call to ministry.