

Deacon Exams (Adapted from several PCA church in Washington D.C. & Winston Salem, NC)

Introduction & Procedures

I. REQUIREMENTS. According to the Book of Church Order (BCO 24-1), candidates for the office of Deacon “shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall then be examined in:

- a. his Christian experience, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:8-13),
- b. his knowledge of Bible content,
- c. his knowledge of the system of doctrine, government, discipline contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America
- d. the duties of the office to which he has been nominated, and
- e. his willingness to give assent to the questions required for ordination (BCO 24-5).”

*Candidates for the role of Deaconess at Redeemer, Lincoln will undergo the same process of instruction and examination (BCO 9-7; 1 Tim. 3:11).

II. INSTRUCTION & EXAMS. To fulfill these requirements, you have already been asked to fill out a personal qualifications Questionnaire, be interviewed by members of the Diaconate and Session, and attend the training class. Additionally, *you will need to take the following three written exams contained in this packet:*

- 1. Bible (Knowledge of Bible Content)**
- 2. Theology (System of Doctrine in the Westminster Standards)**
- 3. Government & Discipline (Book of Church Order)**

*These exams are open book—i.e., you should feel free to use any books or outside sources when you take them. There is no time limit for these exams, but *they should take you approximately 2-4 hours to complete.*

III. VOWS. Furthermore, candidates for the office of Deacon should reflect upon the following vows which they will be asked to take if/when ordained (BCO 24-6).

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
3. Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?
4. Do you accept the office of ruling elder (or deacon, as the case may be) in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the Church of which God has made you an officer?
5. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?
6. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?

Candidates for the role of Deaconesses should reflect upon the following vows which they will be asked to take if/when commissioned:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
2. Do you accept the role of deaconess in this church, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof, and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your life, and to set a worthy example before the Church of which God has made you a servant?
3. Do you promise subjection to your brothers and sisters in the Lord?
4. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?

I. BIBLE EXAM

Knowledge of Bible Content

General Instructions: This exam is open book. You should feel free to use any books or sources (including a reference Bible) when you take this examination. There is no time limit to this exam, but please try to make your answers succinct, yet as clear as possible.

I. OVERVIEW

1. Are you prepared to affirm, with a clear conscience before God and the church, the following vow, which you will be asked to affirm if/when you are ordained (men) or commissioned (women): “Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?” (BCO 24-6)

II. PARTICULAR CHAPTERS & BOOKS. For each of the following, describe (1) the key theme(s) or argument of the chapter or book, (2) the way in which the message is organized (basic structure or outline), and (3) ways one or two themes of the book could be helpful for diaconal ministry. Please do this in only a few sentences.

1. Leviticus 19
2. Deuteronomy 15
3. Amos
4. 2 Corinthians
5. James

III. TEACHING ON PARTICULAR TOPICS. Cite one biblical passage that addresses the issues/topics listed below, and give a 1-2 sentence explanation of how the passage addresses the question.

1. “Wasn’t Jesus just a human being like the rest of us?”
2. “Christians need to do evangelism but not mercy ministry.”
3. “What did Jesus come to do?”
4. “Why would God allow my family to suffer so much?”
5. “Does God really tell us to give our money to the church?”
6. “Why should I give to the poor? They don’t deserve our help.”
7. “My life is crazy right now. It doesn’t feel like God is in control of this world or my life.”

II. THEOLOGY EXAM

System of Doctrine Contained in the Constitution of the PCA

General Instructions: This exam is *open book*. You should feel free to use any copy of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter and Larger Catechisms, in addition to any other books or sources, when you take this examination. There is no time limit to this exam, but please try to make your answers succinct yet as clear as possible. Try to respond to each question in your own words, but feel free to quote from the actual language of the Standards if it clarifies your meaning. You can find electronic copies of the Westminster Standards at the following locations on the web:

- Westminster Confession of Faith: www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs
- Westminster Shorter Catechism: www.reformed.org/documents/wsc
- Westminster Larger Catechism: www.reformed.org/documents/wlc_w_proofs

I. GENERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

1. Are you prepared to affirm, with a clear conscience before God and the church, the following vow, which you will be asked to affirm if/when you are ordained (male candidates only): “Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture; and do you further promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine, you will, on your own initiative, make known to your Session the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?” (BCO 24-6)
2. Are you doubtful about, or in disagreement with, the biblical fidelity of any of the doctrines, concepts, phrases or wording of these doctrinal standards? In each case, state in detail your views.
3. In your own words, what is the relation of these doctrinal standards to (a) Scripture, and (b) your own conscience? (see BCO Preface-III, WCF XX.1)

II. THE SHORTER CATECHISM. Answer each question in your own words, in such a way as to evidence your familiarity with the Shorter Catechism.

1. What is the chief end of man? (Q. 1.)
2. How did God create man? (Q. 10.)
3. What are God’s works of providence? (Q. 11.)
4. What is sin? (Q. 14.)
5. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? (Q. 20.)
6. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man? (Q. 22.)
7. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet? of a priest? of a king? (Q. 24-26.)
8. What is justification? (Q. 33.)
9. What is sanctification? (Q. 35.)
10. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous? (Q. 83.)
11. What is faith in Jesus Christ? (Q. 86.)
12. What is repentance unto life? (Q. 87.)

III. THE CONFESSION OF FAITH. Answer each question in your own words, in such a way as to evidence your familiarity with the Confession.

1. What is the difference between what can be known about God from nature and what can be known of Him from Scripture alone (1.1)
2. What is the extent of the effect of sin upon a person? (6.2)
3. Describe the union of the two natures of the incarnate Son of God. (8.2)
4. What did the obedient life and sacrificial death of Christ achieve? (8.5)
5. What always accompanies the faith that justifies? (11.2)
6. What are the motives and purposes of good works in the life of the believer? (16.2)
7. How can one be assured of his or her salvation? (18.2-4)
8. What is the purpose of the Church’s ministry? (25.3)
9. What are the duties of Christian fellowship? (26.2)
10. What happens to people upon their death (32.1)?

III. GOVERNMENT & DISCIPLINE EXAM **The Book of Church Order (BCO)**

General Instructions: This exam is open book. You should feel free to use the PCA Book of Church Order, including any other books or sources, when you take this examination. There is no time limit to this exam, but please try to make your answers succinct yet as clear as possible. Try to respond to each question in your own words, but feel free to quote from the actual language of the BCO if it clarifies your meaning. You can find an electronic copy of the BCO at www.pcanet.org/BCO.

I. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Are you prepared to affirm, with a clear conscience before God and the church, the following vow, which you will be asked to affirm if/when you are ordained (male candidates only): “Do you approve of the form of government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in America, in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity?” (BCO 24-6)
2. Are there any matters contained in the BCO with which you differ? If so, please specify.

II. PREFACE

1. What is the relationship between Christ and the Church (I)?
2. What is the nature of church authority (II-7, II-8; cf. 3-2, 3-4)?
3. What is the Constitution of the PCA (III)?

III. GOVERNMENT

1. What is the purpose of the Church? (1-2)
2. Who are the officers of the Church? (1-4, 7-2)
3. What are communing members of the church? Non-communing? (6-1, 6-2)
4. What are the duties of elders? (8-3, 7-2) Of deacons? (9-2, 7-2; please read all of Ch. 9)
5. How does the BCO allow for unordained, female members of the diaconate (9-7)?
6. What is the length of service for an elder or deacon, and how may one be released from office or service? (24-6, 24-8, 24-9)
7. What is the relationship between the elders and the deacons? (9-2)
8. What are the courts of the church and what are their respective jurisdictions? (10-2, 11-4)