



JORDAN VALLEY CHURCH

JVC Elder & Deacon Training

Congratulations on being nominated to serve as an elder or deacon at JVC! This means people already see in you some of the character and leadership skills needed to serve Christ's Church. The next several months of training will make clear whether or not you are being called to serve in this way.

Time Requirements

This training has a considerable time requirement, similar to taking a night class on top of whatever job or commitments you have during the day. We've intentionally designed this training as a kind of stress test of ability to juggle new commitments so that you are prepared to faithfully serve Christ's Church. The good news is if you make it through training you'll discover most months as an elder or deacon are much easier. But there will be times when greater commitments will be needed. Making it through this training will give you confidence that you can make it through those times as well.

This training takes priority over other commitments in the church. You may need to step back from some of these other commitments during this training. If you sense you will be unable to do this training and fulfill your other church commitments, talk to one of the pastors about how we can adjust things.

Our first front of ministry is in our homes (if you are married); this is why Paul requires that both elders and deacons manage their households well. Officers in the church minister well in their homes; we as a church recognize that and say, "We want more people to be able to experience the type of care that man provides his family." But you need to be able to care for the church without neglecting your family. Officers serve through the overflow of what's left after caring for their families, not at the expense of it. This training will give you a sense of how much extra capacity you have.

Another requirement for the elder is to be self-controlled, which includes control over how you spend your time. One of the particularly difficult tasks about serving as an officer is that you are probably doing it on top of a number of other commitments. Learning to manage and prioritize your time is vital for accomplishing the work of an elder or deacon. Two books that many have found helpful regarding time management are *What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done* by Matthew Perman and *Do More Better* by Tim Challies

Serving in the church will often mean saying no to other things. (Who of us has an extra four hours each week where we wish we had something to do?) It is naive to think there won't be sacrifices. When the sacrifices threaten things that are more important, it may mean you need to step back for a time. This is why we've instituted a sabbatical policy; after three years of service, you will take a year off to recharge, pursue other things, and hopefully come back with a new enthusiasm to serve. But in the end—provided your priorities are in order—we firmly believe the sacrifices will be worth it. The time spent studying in the evenings to be able to feed God's people on Sunday; the lunch meetings with someone exploring Christianity; the time with a young couple struggling in their marriage; those times are investments in God's eternal kingdom. You are participating in a work that will last forever. In short, you are lifting people's eyes up from where their current circumstances are so they can behold their God and grow more into the likeness of Christ. What could be worth more than that?

Absences

Your ability to attend this training is one of the ways you will know if you have the time to serve as a church officer. If you discover that your schedule doesn't allow you to make all of the training it may be an indication you aren't called to serve at this time, even if you are qualified in every other way. If you know you will miss any of the training sessions please let me know as soon as possible.

Book List

You will be provided with all necessary books.

<p>Westminster Standards (Confession, Westminster Shorter & Larger Catechisms) <i>Book of Church Order for the Presbyterian Church in America</i> <i>The Christian Life</i>, Ferguson <i>Gospel Eldership</i>, Thune <i>The Trellis and the Vine</i>, Marshall & Payne <i>Is it Abuse?</i>, Strickland</p>

Elders Only

Lead, Tripp

Church Elders, Rinne

Him We Proclaim, Johnson

Gather God's People, Croft & Adkins

How People Change, Tripp & Lane

Deacons Only

Deacons: How They Serve and Strengthen the Church, Smethurst

Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence, Fikkert & Corbett

Book Summary Papers

Many of the readings will require a book summary. Include three parts in the book summary:

1. Summarize the main point and themes in the book.
2. What is something that gave new insight or was particularly helpful in the book? Why?
3. What is something that you disagree with, or think could be stated better? Why?

Book summaries should be a minimum of two pages double spaced and a maximum of four pages.

Phase 1: Vetting (4 weeks)

We are primarily concerned that you meet the character qualifications laid out in Scripture and have a desire (a calling) to serve in this capacity. During this phase, the names of all the people in training will be kept private in order to make it easier to withdraw if you want or if you don't meet the minimum requirements to serve.

Lesson 1¹

- Intro to the training
- Understanding the character qualifications
- Provide contact info for references (wife + one other person)

Lesson 2

- Assignments due:
 - Character self-assessment
 - Start *The Christian Life*
- The job of an elder and deacon at JVC
- The calling of an elder and deacon

¹ All dates are TBD and will be set to work with the schedules of the candidates and teachers.

Lesson 3

- Assignments due:
 - Calling assignment
 - Read Westminster Standards
 - Email list of questions at least one day before the class.
 - Note any areas of potential disagreement.
- Review assignments together

Phase 2: Teaching (~10 weeks)

If you've made it this far you have the basic character and calling needed to serve as an elder or deacon at JVC. Now we want to dig deeper into understanding how the church works: its theology and the offices of elder and deacon. Initially we will all meet together; then elder and deacon candidates will break off for their separate training tracks. This phase will seem a lot like school, but it's giving you the foundations needed to succeed in phase three, where you start doing the work of an elder or deacon. In this phase we will present your names to the congregation so they can be observing, supporting and praying for you.

Officer Mentor Assignment

During this phase you will be assigned a mentor from among our current officers to meet with you, pray for you, and encourage you in this training process. They will also serve as a helpful resource to you for any questions you have about serving as an officer at JVC.

Lesson 4

- Assignments due:
 - Bible knowledge assignment
 - Review lesson 1 of *Gospel Eldership*
- Bible Overview
- Set dates for training exercises

Lesson 5

- Assignments due:
 - Book summary of *The Christian Life*
 - Review lesson 2 of *Gospel Eldership*
- Overview of Reformed Theology
- Discuss *The Christian Life*

Lesson 6

- Assignments due:
 - Read *PCA Book of Church Order* (Ch 1-26) and email a list of questions/comments at least one day before the class.
 - Review lesson 3 of *Gospel Eldership*
- PCA Church Polity & History
- Contemporary Issues in the PCA

Lesson 7

- Assignments due:
 - Review lesson 4 of *Gospel Eldership*
 - Book summary of *The Trellis and the Vine* (Chapters 1-9, pp 1-126)
- Church Leadership and Healthy Plurality

Lesson 8

- Assignments due:
 - Read *Is it Abuse?* (Chapters 1-5 and the 7 Abuse Inventories)
- Review of Lesson and Reading Material

Elder Track	Deacon Track
<p>Lesson 9e</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review lesson 5 of <i>Gospel Eldership</i> ○ Read <i>Lead</i>, ch 1-6 ○ Read <i>Church Elders</i> ● Introduction to elder ministry 	<p>Lesson 9d</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Book summary of <i>Deacons</i> by Smethurst ● Introduction to diaconal ministry at JVC
<p>Lesson 10e</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review lesson 6 of <i>Gospel Eldership</i> ○ Book summary of <i>Gather God's People</i> ● Introduction to biblical worship 	<p>Lesson 10d</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Book summary of <i>Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence</i> ● Introduction to benevolence ministry

<p>Lesson 11e</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review lesson 7 of <i>Gospel Eldership</i> ○ Book summary of <i>Him We Proclaim</i> (pp 1-271) ● Introduction to Preaching <p>Lesson 12e</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review lesson 8 of <i>Gospel Eldership</i> ○ Book summary of <i>How People Change</i> ● Introduction to Pastoral Counseling 	
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Elder & Deacon Panel

- Assignments due
 - Review lessons 9 & 10 of *Gospel Eldership*
- Panel discussion with current elders and deacons.

Phase 3: Training (~7 weeks)

This is where it gets fun! And, if it is fun, that's a great confirmation of your calling to this office. In this phase you will be doing the work of an elder or deacon, and we will be giving you feedback all along the way. This phase is also when the congregation will be able to see you in action and give you encouragement.

Elder Track

- Lead worship
- Preach
- Lead community group
- Meet with someone one on one for discipleship
- Contact prayer list
- Write newsletter
- Attend an officers' meeting
- Hospital or home visit
- Membership interview

Deacon Track

- Organize a service day at the church
- Recruit people for volunteer opportunities
- Help with benevolence cases

Final Assessment

- You will meet with one of the pastors to review your progress so far and determine if you should go forward with the examination and election.

Phase 4: Examinations & Elections

Examinations

You will be examined by the JVC Session in the areas of doctrine and life.

Elections

We will have a congregational meeting to vote on your call to this office.

Phase 5: Installation & Ordination

In a worship service before church you will be asked these questions:

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?

The congregation will be asked:

Do you, the members of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder (or deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement and obedience in the Lord to which his office, according to the Word of God and the Constitution of this Church, entitles him?

The JVC session will then lay hands on you, pray for you and the moderator of the session will say:

I now pronounce and declare that _____ has been regularly elected, ordained and installed a ruling elder (or deacon) in this church, agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America; and that as such he is entitled to all encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Congratulations, you've made it! The adventure begins now!

JVC Elder & Deacon Self Assessment

Name:

Date:

Character: Self-assessment²

Rate yourself on a scale of 0-5 for each statement or question below. A rating of 0 means, “this doesn’t describe me at all;” a rating of 5 means, “this describes me well.” While certain sins and weakness may disqualify you from serving, realize that no one will score perfectly on this. You can’t grow as a leader if you’re not honest about where you are, so assess yourself honestly and humbly.

___ *I practice consistent repentance and faith*

___ *I am aware of my own sins and heart idols, and I am seeking gospel transformation in these areas*

___ *I am aware that I have “blind spots” – places of weakness in my character that I can only see with the help of others*

___ *There are Christians in my life who know the real truth about me and are helping me grow in Christlikeness*

___ *I have a genuine and growing love for Jesus and for others*

___ *People who know me well would describe me as patient, gracious, and self-controlled in conflict – not quarrelsome or short-tempered*

___ *My spouse and/or close friends respect and respond to my spiritual leadership*

___ *I would feel comfortable telling a younger Christian to “follow me as I follow Christ”*

² Adapted from Providence Church’s “Leadership Assessment: A Development Tool”

___ *If someone spent a day alone with me, they wouldn't find anything surprising*

___ *If someone talked to my non-Christian friends or work associates, they would discover nothing that brings shame or dishonor on Christ or his church*

___ *If someone observed my marriage, they would see healthy patterns of communication, sexual intimacy, parenting, and headship/submission*

___ *I am above reproach in my sexual life, including freedom from pornography and/or fantasy*

___ *I consistently practice the spiritual disciplines (Bible reading, prayer, Sabbath, etc.)*

___ *I financially support the church in a way that is generous and free from compulsion*

Additional Questions

1. Briefly describe your approach and practice to your personal devotional life.
2. Have you any serious personal or domestic troubles that, if known, would dishonor yourself and the church?
3. Are you or your wife involved in any financial situations that, if known, would dishonor you or the church?

Character: Reflection Questions³

These questions are meant more for reflection than a test you pass or fail. Christian growth requires knowing yourself—warts and all! Serving the church is stressful and will test you in many ways. Understanding your heart and temptations is key to lasting ministry.

Humility

1. **Do you acknowledge your limitations and needs?** *Are you honest enough? Do you demonstrate a willingness to admit your limits, mistakes, sins and weaknesses? Are you defensive, guarded, hypersensitive? Are you too open? Do you wear your heart on your sleeve, indulging and wallowing in your limits, mistakes, sins and weaknesses?*

2. **Do you demonstrate a flexible spirit?** *Do you adapt faithfully, flexibly and creatively to the unexpected? Do you value and encourage the ideas and gifts of others? Do you insist on your own way, whether forcefully or through subtle manipulation? Are you too flexible? Do you blow in the wind of others' opinions and get overwhelmed by people's demands and agendas? Do you let people or circumstances control you rather than the Lord?*

³ These are adapted from Keller, Timothy and David Powlison. "Pastor's Self Evaluation Questionnaire." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* XII, No. 1 (1993). 36-43.

Love

1. **Do you have a positive approach to people?** *Do you give grace to others? Do you love and encourage people, even when under stress or in the face of an attack? Are you able to confront the failings of others in a way that breathes the invitations of God's grace? Are you too tolerant? Do you massage people's egos with praise and "unconditional positive regard"? Because of biblical love are you willing to enter into constructive conflict?*

2. **Do you show a servant's heart to people?** *Do you serve willingly? Do you truly serve the well-being of others and shepherd them under the Lord? Do you strive for personal glory either aggressively (compulsively driven "on an ego trip") or passively (preoccupied with your "low self-esteem")? Do you serve compulsively? Do you serve other people slavishly, kowtowing to their demands, expectations and whims?*

Integrity

1. **Are you responsible to God first and foremost?** *Do you follow through on convictions and commitments? Do you speak the truth firmly, confidently, faithfully? Are you overly demanding? Are you legalistic in your commitments and nit-picking in your convictions? Do you make demands of yourself and others which God does not make?*

2. **Do you demonstrate a disciplined lifestyle?** *What would people see if they could tag along with you for a week? Do you work diligently or are you lazy? Are you too disciplined, organized, "perfect" on the outside? Is your visible discipline a mask for hypocrisy, a cover for ignorance of yourself or a denial of a deviant inner life?*

3. Are your family commitments a proper priority under the Lord? *Do you love your family in such a way that they willingly become committed to your ministry and really stand with and behind you? Are you over-committed to your family so that they provide an improper refuge, distraction and excuse to avoid ministry? Is family life an excuse for selfishness?*

Spirituality

1. Do you demonstrate personal piety and vigor in your relationship with God? *Is your communion with God rich and growing? Is your personal prayer life both spontaneous and disciplined or are you mostly a public pray-er? Do you escape into pious cliches and misuse the spiritual disciplines? Do you use "I'll pray about it" or "I need to study the Bible" in order to avoid problems for which you feel inadequate?*
2. Do you demonstrate faithfulness to the Bible and sound doctrine? *Are you biblically and theologically careful? Are you orthodox, faithful to the whole counsel of God? Do you have clear, definite and thought-out biblical positions on the central issues of life? Are you a theological nit-picker?*

Home Life

1. Are you the spiritual leader in your family? How?

2. At home are you quick to admit when you are wrong and seek forgiveness? *Do you quickly repent before your wife and children when you have wronged them? Is repentance a consistent part of your life? Give a recent example. Would your wife and children agree with this answer?*

Mission

1. Do you evangelize those outside of Jesus Christ? *Do you believe with all your heart that people without Christ remain under the wrath of God? Do you neglect evangelism out of ignorance, love of comfort, fear, prejudice, bad experiences? Do you overemphasize evangelism or one evangelistic technique to the detriment of the church's overall ministry? Do you create ministry activists instead of encouraging people to be godly?*

2. Do you show concern for the many needs of people? *Do you care for the whole person? Are you skilled in applying the resources of the church to the social and material needs of mankind? Do you value diaconal work and the mercy gifts? Are you overly involved in social needs? Do you overemphasize social concerns and drift towards a "social gospel"?*

Summary

Hopefully you've gotten a more God-centered view of your life. You probably feel humbled and realize there is more to work on than you realized! But take heart! God's grace is sufficient for you. Jesus Christ is your faithful high priest and shepherd. "Come with confidence to the throne of His grace that you may receive mercy and grace to help you in your time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

JVC Elder & Deacon Spouse's Assessment

Name:

The home is the first front of ministry for any elder or deacon. Serving the church comes out of the excess of what a man has left after caring for his family, not at the expense of it. We greatly value your responses as we consider your husband for serving in the church leadership. All your answers will be kept confidential.

Rate your husband on a scale of 0-5 for each statement or question below. A rating of 0 means, "this doesn't describe him at all;" a rating of 5 means, "this describes him well."

___ *He is physically and emotionally faithful to me*

___ *He is the spiritual leader in our home*

___ *He is humble*

___ *He is not addicted to alcohol*

___ *He has biblical view of money*

___ *He is even-headed, not overly controlled by emotions or whims*

___ *He is self-disciplined*

___ *Not violent or abusive (verbally, physically, or spiritually)*

___ *Not quarrelsome*

For elder candidates only:

___ *He is hospitable, welcomes others, invites people into our home and lives.*

___ *Able to teach*

___ *Others think well of him*

Additional Questions

1. Do you have any reservations about him serving as an elder or deacon?
2. We expect church officers to be able to give four hours a week on average to the work of the church. There will be times when more time is required, including during this training. Do you have any reservations about your husband's ability to give this additional time to the church?
3. If your husband cared for the church like he cares for you and the family, would it make JVC a better place? How so?
4. Do you have any concerns or additional comments?

JVC Elder & Deacon Peer Assessment

www.jordanvalleychurch.org

Name:

Relationship to person you are assessing:

Thanks for your willingness to complete this short assessment. While you may have different religious beliefs than the person you are assessing, the essential qualifications for leadership in a Christian Church are things that can be assessed by anyone. Your honest feedback is helpful as we consider this person for leadership in our church. All your answers will be kept confidential.

Rate this person on a scale of 0-5 for each statement or question below. A rating of 0 means, "this doesn't describe him at all;" a rating of 5 means, "this describes him well." A rating of N/A means you haven't observed this.

___ *He is devoted to his wife and children*

___ *He is humble*

___ *He is respectable*

___ *He is even-headed, not overly controlled by emotions or whims*

___ *Not violent or abusive (verbally or physically)*

___ *He is self-disciplined*

___ *He shows care for others*

If you learned this person was a leader in his church, would that have a positive or negative impact on your view of that church? Why?

Thank you for your input!