

The Role of the Supervising Elder

Mentoring or “eldering,” as it was called by early Brethren, is the practice of experienced Brethren elders giving counsel to beginning or less experienced pastors. This long-time practice has helped younger pastors and elders grow in their faith and the practice of their duties as elders in the Brethren Church.¹

One aspect of this “eldering” is needed in the process of ordination in The Brethren Church. As candidates go through the process of ordination, each region provides their candidates with an experienced elder, or Supervising Elder, to guide candidates through the multi-year process. Below you will find the qualifications and responsibilities of a Supervising Elder for the ordination process. Please consider this important role in the life of the church and lend your experience to your Regional Leadership Team (RLT) in this very important ministry.

Qualifications of a Supervising Elder

1. An Elder in good standing in their region
2. Gifted and/or trained in mentoring or coaching others through a process
3. Have a working understanding of the ordination process and/or a commitment to learning and implementing the process

Responsibilities of a Supervising Elder

1. Work with individual ordination candidates through the ordination process
2. Provide connection to relevant resources when needed
3. Advise the RLT on the progress of individual ordination candidates
4. Meet regularly with candidate to discuss ordination process
 - a. The frequency of the meetings to be determined in collaboration with the RLT, candidate, and supervising elder
5. In the case of the reading program:
 - a. The supervising elder must be able to read, review, and approve the completion of each module
 - b. The will certify the satisfactory completion of each unit of the reading program, reporting the completion to the RLT
 - c. The reading program and guidelines are found in the ordination manual

Expectations of Supervising Elder

1. Serve as a connection between the RLT and candidate, advocating for the candidate when appropriate
2. Attend RLT meetings with candidate when able
3. Encourage candidate in the completion of the work, but allow candidate to drive the completion of the ordination process
4. Help candidate with the planning of ordination service

¹ Donald F. Durnbaugh and Dale V. Ulrich, eds., *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 2005), 2221.