

PREPARING FOR THE POLITY EXAM

We orderly Presbyterians go about our ministries believing that one evidence of faithfulness to God is an ordered life together rooted in our sense of discipleship.

Polity is a relational expression of the Church's theological commitments (foundation). The Church Polity examination provides an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate an understanding of polity as a tool for ministry in the context of church life.

The examination is open-book and assesses how the candidate interprets, communicates and utilizes the *Book of Order* in his or her practice of ministry.

WHAT CANDIDATES OUGHT TO KNOW

- That the purpose of the Section I question, grounded in chapters I, II, III, and IV of the *Book of Order*, is to test the candidate's understanding of constitutional order as founded on basic theological principles that have been passed down to us over the years.
- That the purpose of the Section II and Section III questions is to test the candidate's ability to apply constitutional provisions to life in the church.
- That the Section II question addresses concerns that repeat themselves regularly in the practice of ministry .
- That many essay questions are based on actual contemporary situations in the church, and that they tend to have a preferable direction or resolution or range of responses rather than cut-and-dried correct answers: e.g, there is the general expectation that a satisfactory resolution of a situation is reconciliation rather than victory.
- That one should appreciate what "Pastoral" means out in the church -- not mushy or permissive, but caringly constructive.
- That one should read and follow directions, carefully; that "list" does not mean "evaluate," and that sometimes one is asked to respond to an individual and sometimes one is not.
- That one should keep track of time.
- That at least two of the three sections must be passed.
- That at least two people will be reading and evaluating the paper – and eventually the candidate's CPM will read it, too; as well as a calling Presbytery Committee.
- That, repeatedly, new readers and seminarians who attend the reading group process comment on the fairness and care of this system.

Prepared by Polity Task Group, Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee