

# Recognition and Commissioning of a Timothy (or Phoebe) of (Congregation)

Compiled and Adapted by The Rev. Raymond N. Dunlap  
First Christian Church, Fulton, Missouri

## Statement of Purpose

(fashioned after the Recognition, Commissioning, Ordination of Elders, page 203, Chalice Worship)

We come to this glad and solemn moment in which this congregation recognizes God's call and gift of ministerial leadership of (name) to serve the church in Christ's ministry. Ministry is a gift from God through Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone of the church, the whole people of God. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, Christ's ministry of reconciling, healing, teaching, and serving is the basis for each of our own ministries. While the whole people of God through baptism is commissioned to share in this servant ministry, the church from earliest times has set some persons apart with prayer to serve as Minister through the roles of Prophet, Priest, and Pastor.

The Apostle Paul called Timothy<sup>1</sup> as helper and co-worker (Acts 16.1b-3a; 1Timothy 1.2, 18-19; 6.20) to share...

The Apostle Paul commends and welcomes Phoebe as a deacon (minister) of the church in Cenchreae (Romans 16: 1-2) who shares...

...in the responsibilities of leadership. A Timothy (or Phoebe) serves as colleague to the minister(s) who represent the reconciling work of Christ with the whole church in the present day. (name) comes to be commissioned as Timothy (or Phoebe) as he/she has declared the intention to continue education and training for the Ordained Ministry in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at (name of institution).

When the time is appropriate, the commissioned Timothy (or Phoebe) will enter into the care and oversight of the Order of Ministry of the (Region of the church – **example: the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Mid-America**).

The responsibility of a Timothy (or Phoebe) is:

- To express the nature of the church and the spirit of Christian living in word and deed;
- To accept the wise counsel of the church's minister(s) and elders in the face of the perplexities of life;
- To develop an engaging vision of mission and ministry;
- To share in positions of church leadership in accordance with this congregations practices
- To guard in all things the purity, unity, integrity and peace of Christ's holy church.

## Presentation of Candidate

(fashioned after the Recognition, Commissioning, Ordination of Elders, page 203, Chalice Worship)

Leader: I call (name) for Presentation as Timothy (or Phoebe) of (church name):

The church has with prayer and deliberation affirmed your call as Timothy (or Phoebe). You have accepted this call as God's intention for your life. We therefore now proceed to commission you as a Timothy (or Phoebe) of (church name).

In the light of your calling, do you reaffirm your faith that Jesus is the Christ, God's liberator for this world, and do you promise to follow God's guiding Spirit, and to seek to do and to bear God's will, all the days of your life?

**Candidate: Through God's empowering presence, I do.**

Leader: Do you believe that the word of God in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, offers authoritative guidance for the faith and conduct of all God's people?

**Candidate: Through the wisdom of God, I do.**

Leader: Do you commit yourself to the well-being of God's universal church, and especially the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) there within, and through God's grace to fulfill a servant ministry of care and concern for all the church and its members?

**Candidate: I do, God being my helper.**

Leader: May God bless you and give you grace to keep these vows.

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## Commissioning Covenant

(fashioned after Covenant of Installation, Chalice Worship, p. 198)

Leader: There are different gifts,

**People: But it is the same Spirit who gives them.**

Leader: There are different ways of serving God,

**People: But it is the same God who is served.**

Leader: Each one is given a gift by the one Spirit,

**People: To use for the common good.**

Leader: Together we are the body of Christ,

**People: And individually members with one another.**

Leader: Within our common ministry some members are chosen for particular work as ministers of the Word. Therefore, we set aside this day, (name), as **Timothy (or Phoebe)** to continue **his/her** education and training for ordination as a minister charged:

- To lead in transmitting the Christian tradition from one generation to another;
- To interpret the scriptures and proclaim the gospel of Christ;
- To administer the sacraments, serving to inspire a company of Christians in continuity with the life and faith of the apostles, and through the power of God's Holy Spirit;
- To serve God's people with pastoral care and to share in the transforming of the church in its life and mission;
- And to act as pioneer and leader in the church's reconciling work in the world beyond the church's doors.

So, we commission, (name), as a **Timothy (or Phoebe)** of (church name).

## Prayer of Commissioning

(For Those who intend to enter Christian service, p. 218 Chalice Worship)

Let us pray: God, you showed yourself most fully in one who took basin and towel to wash his friends' feet. In all times you call leaders to serve your people. We pray that you strengthen, (name), in **her/his** resolve to follow Jesus in ministry and service. Give **him/her** discernment to hear your call. Quicken **her/his** imagination to find ways of communicating the wonders of your abiding presence to us all. Fill our hearts with love for **him/her**. Let our caring actions be a source of strength and assurance for **her/him**. This we pray amidst the presence of God who we know intimately as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Amen.

## Induction of Candidate as **Timothy (or Phoebe)**

(fashioned after the Recognition, Commissioning, Ordination of Elders, page 204, Chalice Worship)

Leader: I now ask the congregation to join in a covenant affirmation with (name):

**ALL: Reaffirming our faith in Jesus as Christ, God's bestower of redemption in this world, we gladly receive (name) as a **Timothy (or Phoebe)** in our life together. We covenant to support (name) with our prayers, encouragement, and respect. We celebrate with thanksgiving the shared responsibilities of Christ's ministry which is ours, together, as the church. Praise be to God.**

## Declaration

Leader: In the name of Jesus Christ, foundational cornerstone of the church, and in accordance with the actions of this congregation, I declare (name) to be **Timothy (or Phoebe)** of (church name).

## Blessing

Leader: May grace and peace be yours in abundance, and may you continue growth in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Savior.

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### <sup>i</sup> Scripture References...

1. Timothy      see "1" below – (ti-mo'-theos) a young man of Lystra, son of Eunice a Jewess, by a Greek father; Paul circumcised him, took him as his companion in travel, and addressed two Epistles to him
2. Lydia        see "2" below – (lu-di'-a) a devout woman of Thyatira, converted by Paul's preaching in Philippi

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3. Priscilla see "3" below – (pri's-kil-la) a female believer in Ephesus to whom Paul sends a salutation; the wife of Aquila of Pontus, who had been driven from Rome by Claudius, accompanied Paul a little, and afterwards instructed Apollos of Alexandria
  4. Phoebe see "4" below – (phoi'-be) a female minister(deacon) in Corinth or Cenchera, who had helped Paul, and going to Rome, was recommended by Paul
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1. Acts 16.1b-3a; 17.14,15; 18.5; 19.22; 20.4  
Romans 16.21a  
Philippians 1.1; 2.19  
Colossians 1.1  
1 Thessalonians 1.1; 3.2, 6  
2 Thessalonians 1.1  
1 Timothy 1.2, 18-19; 6.20  
2 Timothy 1.2  
Philemon 1  
Hebrews 13.23
  2. Acts 16.14-15b, 40
  3. Acts 18.2, 18, 26  
Romans 16.3  
1 Corinthians 16.19  
2 Timothy 4.19
  4. Romans 16.1-2

After reading the references, I marked in red those which appear most appropriate to a Commissioning Service for one declaring the intention to enter the vocation of Christian ministry, and the care of the Order of Ministry leading toward Ordination. Furthermore, I think the most appropriate Biblical persons to name the Commissioning Service after are Timothy and/or Phoebe.

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### ***A note about the author of this service of recognition and commissioning--***

*The Rev. Raymond N. Dunlap was the pastor of First Christian Church in Fulton, Missouri between January, 2000 and April, 2008. Ray wisely sought to empower a renewed culture of call to Christian ministry within our denomination. To this end, he maintained a priority for cultivating, calling forth, and nurturing church members, especially young people, to respond to God's gracious love by dedicating their lives for ministry. Ray wrote this commissioning liturgy in late May, 2007, while in Fulton, and it reflects the important ministry of care that Ray challenged all Christians to lift up. Upon creating this document, he immediately sought to make this commissioning liturgy available to all congregations, by sharing it with Disciples Home Missions, and gave permission for it's use in early June, 2007. At the beginning of 2008, Ray grew ill, but was able to be present and witness the use of this service during the commissioning of a Timothy of First Christian Church, Fulton, Missouri on April 13, 2008. One week later, the Rev. Raymond N. Dunlap died peacefully in his sleep on Sunday, April 20, 2008.*