

# THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

## (Part 20 – series on Baptist Distinctives)

**TEXT:** Titus 1:5-9  
1 Timothy 3:1-13  
Acts 6:3,4

**INTRODUCTION:** We have labored the point that Baptists – together with all true Protestants – believe in the priesthood of all believers. This view is also known as “equal brotherhood.” Unlike most Protestant denominations, however, most Baptists consistently apply this cherished doctrine in its congregational form of government. They believe that it is the responsibility of the local congregation to call its own pastor, govern itself, and enforce church discipline. They reject any idea of an elite class of the “clergy” ruling over the “laity.”

This cherished Baptist distinctive of the priesthood of all believers does not undermine the important leadership role of the pastor, however. Neither does it downplay the role of deacons chosen by the congregation to assist the pastor and lead in the biblical task of serving the congregation. This process of choosing the pastor and deacons culminates in the official ceremony of laying on of hands known today as “ordination.” Baptists believe that ordination of pastors and deacons is scriptural and does not violate the principle of equal brotherhood.

**OUTLINE:** The biblical view of ordination involves at least three important considerations.

1. The need for **qualified men** (Tit. 1:6-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-13)
2. The need for **order** in the local church (Tit. 1:5)
3. The need for **portability**

**CONCLUSION:** The idea of a “church council” or “ordination council” does not supersede the prerogative of the local congregation to appoint its own leaders. These councils serve to **assist** the local church in such decisions by examining the candidates’ character and giftedness, and making a **recommendation** to the local body. It is God who **calls** men and gives them to the church, but the church must **recognize** those who are called and gifted.

The principle of Acts 15:28 applies here, *“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us...”* By the ceremony of ordination, men whom God has called to the office of pastor or deacon are certified as being scripturally qualified, and then they are “set apart” for that function. What a high and holy calling to serve the body of Christ!