

A Long Obedience in the Same Direction

132 ministers have served a combined 7,776 years in the ordained ministry.

We may not have been there on the first day when those 132 ministers began their service, but we are here today for you and our desire is to encourage you on this “first day” to have the vision of ministry to God and for His Church that is a long obedience in the same direction.

Today is a day that particularly marks your transition from the seminary to the church. As seminary president, I represent the faculty, staff and board of places of training and learning communities that have prepared you for this moment –where you now face the church and particularly this body that represents and embodies the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

This is a church that loves you, that desires to pray for you and challenge you to a long obedience in the same direction. Let me just walk through that phrase – A Long Obedience in the same Direction.

A Long Obedience – We live in an age of instant gratification that has even affected the church. You will need to be intentional in cultivating a pathway for yourself and others to a view that we are on a journey that may be long, but God will provide and judge us as fruitful as we are faithful.

This journey is also to be framed by obedience - Obedience to the Lord and obedience to His Word as guided by His Spirit.

We want to note on this day your first steps of obedience. You received a call from God to go to seminary. You shared that prompting with others. Maybe when you shared that sense of calling – the people who you told were like Sara in the Bible – they laughed.

I still remember my wife, who does love me, say this question with a raised eyebrow – Are you sure?

She then followed it up with you might be sure, but I am not so sure.

You then submitted yourself to others to gain clarity and followed that prompting – in obedience – to gain training and to enter into a process that has led you to this moment of being declared a candidate as Minister of the Word.

You moved. You sold a home. You placed your children in new schools. You – in some way – made a change and sacrificed to follow this call.

Thank you for taking that step of obedience and may you continue on that journey of obedience.

A Long, Obedience In the Same Direction

Today, we pray for the beginning of your journey – but we do stand on tip toes anticipating the next step and praying for your being consistent in your life and in your witness.

We live in the world of selfies and twitter (where people follow us) that so often is self-centered and we – you are called to a life of servant hood.

Servanthood entails sacrifice. We do not know what God is calling you to or even where. As we later place hands of blessing upon you, we know that God Himself desires to uphold you, protect you, provide for you and encourage you as you are on this day – seeking to begin a Long Obedience in the Same Direction.

We love you. We will pray for you. We desire to journey with you. May God bless you and keep you – now and always!

And all God's people say – Amen!