

## WHY SHOULD I GET CREDENTIALLED?

Cheri Walters

You can buy an ordination online for \$32, add a laminated card for \$15 more, or get the deluxe “Clergy #1 Package” for only \$85. So why go to all the trouble of actually earning one? Here are some of the biblical, cultural, and personal reasons for preparing for and holding credentials with the Assemblies of God:

### 1. **Authority.**

A credential is a means of evaluating, endorsing, and blessing a person’s call to ministry. God is the one who calls, but he uses people of faith and spiritual maturity to prayerfully examine a person’s preparation and fitness for ministry, to lay hands on those whom he has called, to set them apart and to send them out in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. (*Acts 6:6; 13:1-3; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6; Hebrews 6:1-3*)

### 2. **Accountability.**

An Assemblies of God credential provides a structure and safety net of accountability. It ties us to a community of elders who have authority to hold us to standards of conduct and faith in order to remain credentialed. It acknowledges our interdependence and mutual submission to hold us accountable. (*1 Peter 5:1-6*)

### 3. **Credibility.**

An Assemblies of God credential means that we have studied, prepared for, and met a standard of educational, faith and lifestyle requirements in order to qualify. This gives us a degree of credibility in a culture where “ordinations” can be bought online. (*2 Timothy 2:15*)

### 4. **Commitment.**

Much like a marriage license, a credential is a public commitment and vow; it speaks of intent to stay with this thing called vocational ministry. It vows that this is our life’s work and calling, rather than a side-job or hobby.

### 5. **Network.**

An Assemblies of God credential means we’re part of a worldwide network of ministers and missionaries, chaplains, musicians, teachers, and more. Connecting and interacting with our peers encourages and inspires us, (*particularly minorities like female and ethnic ministers*), provides role models and enhances mentoring opportunities. Besides challenging and enriching us, this network can translate into open doors and greater favor when opportunity knocks.

### 6. **Community.**

The Assemblies of God was formed nearly 100 years ago largely for the benefits that come from connection and community: a better equipped and funded missions force, a means of holding each other accountable, the strength, support system, and resources that come from joining others who share the same values and faith, and the potential with large numbers and assets to be a more powerful force for change in our world.

### 7. **Legacy.**

As credentialed ministers, we can participate in the life of the Assemblies of God by contributing to the formulation of policies, refining doctrine and holding office. As the saying goes, “Decisions are made by those who show up.” We can choose to actively engage in, and make a mark on, a global movement.