

Litanies of Sending and Blessing For Clergy

Rite I

Before the general acts of dismissal with blessing, the departing pastor is joined by a representative lay leader (and by family if desired) at the front of the gathered congregation. The pastor is invited to speak briefly regarding future plans, and, if desired, regarding his or her relationship with the church community up to the present. The lay leader then begins one of the following litanies:

Leader: For *(length of service)* *(name)* has served as our pastor. *(He/she)* has offered *(his/her)* gifts and has worked diligently for the upbuilding of the church in this place. By the grace of God, *(he/she)* has served us well.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: We have contributed to *(name)*'s ministry, supporting and encouraging *(him/her)*, responding to *(his/her)* leadership and helping *(him/her)* to develop and strengthen *(his/her)* skills as a pastor. By the grace of God, we have blessed *(name)* in *(his/her)* ministry among us.

Pastor: I am grateful for your care and encouragement, and for your partnership in the Gospel.

Leader: For everything there is a season, a time for every matter under heaven; a time to be born and a time to die; a time to pluck up what has been planted; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to seek and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to let go.

People: So too there is a time for coming together and a time for parting. While we continue as the church of Jesus Christ in this place, you, *(name)*, will go to a new place of ministry. May God go with you.

Pastor: While I go to a new church *(or other setting)* and a new community, you, my brothers and sisters will continue to share life and ministry in this community. May God be with you.

All: For our time of ministry together, we give thanks to you, O God. In the hour of parting, we ask the comfort of your Holy Spirit. And in looking toward tomorrow, we trust that your hand will guide us to new strength, new hope, and new joy in the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in whose name we work and pray. Amen.

A hymn may follow, and the dismissal with blessing.

Rite II

An order of farewell to a pastor

One or more persons may recall with thanksgiving the pastor's ministry. a gift or symbol may be given with appropriate words of thanks. The pastor and congregation release one another with these similar words;

Pastor: I thank you, the members and friends of *(name of church)*, for the love and support you have shown me while I have ministered among you. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

People: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere *(or retire)*. We express gratitude for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

Pastor: I forgive and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.