Shared responsibilities for care
The process of inquiry and candidacy is built upon the biblical concept of covenant relationship. That is, it is both a response to God's faithfulness and an expression of the concern people have for one another. The process further affirms that all aspects of the church’s life are based upon God’s gracious promises and on the belief that God's self-giving love undergirds all that the church is and does. Throughout the entire process, all who are involved in the covenant relationship need to approach their tasks with seriousness and diligence, communicating openly and intentionally with each other.

The three partners in this covenant are the person under care, the session of the congregation where that person is a member, and the presbytery of which that congregation is a part. Presbyteries will usually assign most of the particular responsibilities for its relationship with the person to a committee or ministry team. That committee may work exclusively with those in the preparation for ministry process, or complete these tasks along with other areas of responsibility. There are some actions that may be taken with regard to the preparation for ministry process, however, that will require formal action of the presbytery itself (for example, the granting of any exceptions to the usual requirements; G-2.0610).

The *Book of Order* is clear that the final responsibility for the preparation process resides with the presbytery. The session will make recommendations about whether the person should be enrolled as an inquirer, and may be asked to share what it is discerning about the individual’s sense of call and developing ministry gifts during the process. It will continue to provide pastoral care and support to the person as it does to all its congregational members. But it is the presbytery that has the responsibilities for oversight of the person’s preparation, to make a decision about suitability for ministry, and finally to assess readiness to seek a call to ministry that would require ordination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament.

*Beyond granting its endorsement to the presbytery, what other supports should a session consider providing to members who are under care in the preparation for ministry process?*