



## How to Speak Presbyterian . . . or What is All This Presbyterian Stuff? And Who Are All These People?

The mysterious jargon of Presbyspeak can baffle even longtime church members. And there are a good number of notable Presbyterians. Here's a quick test about some of the most-used terms and abbreviations and people:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ You're not a real Presbyterian until you've served on at least one of these. These groups are the primary way Presbyterians organize the work of the church, make decisions, and deal with difficult issues.
2. Name a Council of the Church: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. True or False:
  - a. *True/False*: Condolezza Rice, Secretary of State under President Ronald Reagan, is a Presbyterian.
  - b. *True/False*: Roy Rogers, singer and cowboy actor, was a Presbyterian.
  - c. *True/False*: Fred Rogers, host of Mr. Rogers Neighborhood, was a Presbyterian minister.
  - d. *True/False*: Katie Couric and Robin Roberts, American journalists are active Presbyterians.
  - e. *True/False*: Authors Catherine Marshall and John Grisham have Presbyterian ties.
  - f. *True/False*: The first man to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong, was a Presbyterian.
  - g. *True/False*: The writer of the famous hymn, "Jesus Loves Me," Anna Warner, was Presbyterian.
4. When Presbyterians pray the Lord's Prayer, they use the words *debts* ("forgive us our debts") and *debtors* while other Christian bodies use *trespasses* or *sins*. Presbyterians use the word *debts* because \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Name one of the six "great ends" (or chief purposes) of the church outlined in the first chapter of the PC(USA)'s *Book of Order*:  
\_\_\_\_\_.
6. The person who runs a meeting of ruling elders or deacons, or a presbytery or committee meeting is called a \_\_\_\_\_. In a secular club or other gathering, he or she would be called the chair or president.

7. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the amount of money congregations pay per church member to their presbyteries to cover the costs of church government, including funding for General Assemblies and other meetings, ecumenical participation, ordination exams for ministers, the Presbyterian Historical Society, and many other activities.
8. The \_\_\_\_\_, is the theological movement that emerged from the work of John Calvin (1509–64), John Knox (ca. 1513–72), and other reformers following the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, in contrast to Lutheran and Anabaptist theology.
9. *True/False*: The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is distinguished by a theology that emphasizes God’s initiative in salvation and usually by a representative form of government.
10. Elected by the congregation and ordained to a ministry of leadership, a - \_\_\_\_\_ serves as a voting member of the congregation’s decision-making council known as the \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the person who is elected to maintain official records of a session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ are ordained to preach and teach the faith of the church, interpret and administer the sacraments, provide for the care and mission of the people, and participate in the responsibilities of governance. First Pres has 7 of these.
13. The ministry of Deacons is one of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
14. In communion, do Presbyterians believe that the bread and wine “turn into” the body & blood of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no
15. *True/False*: Presbyterians have 3 sacraments, marriage, holy communion and baptism.

Some definitions adapted from “How to Speak Presbyterian,” by P. J. Southam (originally published by *Presbyterian Survey*), and *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, by Donald K. McKim (Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).