

## B1 AN INTRODUCTION TO MINISTRY

### **Working as one body – collaborative ministry in the diocese.**

The parishes of the diocese, as the people of God, under the leadership and oversight of the bishop, are committed to God's mission in the world. The people of God, the *laos*, are members, through baptism, of one body, the Church. Baptismal vocation provides the theological under-girding and inspiration for the Church's ministry. From the action of God in our human lives, the recognised, accredited, and acknowledged lay and ordained ministries are discerned and affirmed by the whole church. The working together of the members of the body for the unity of the church and for the good of the world is therefore both essentially and theologically a collaborative ministry. Orders of ministry, distinctive roles and functions, and different gifts, are subsequent to the baptismal vocation of all the people of God.

Being called to work as one body is a dynamic process of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and the world. This is the basis for our unity in ministry within the Church of England and, increasingly, ecumenically. The mutual recognition of each other's ministries in the Church of God is a consequence of the call to work as one body. Collaborative ministry, originating in the threefold activity of God the Holy Trinity, will involve prayer and worship together, as well as mutually reflective practice. These originating principles are key elements not only in all training for ministry but throughout public ministry. Collaborative ministry works towards the unity that is Christ's will for humanity through the church.

Ministry teams may be formalised e.g. team ministries that have been set up under the Pastoral Measure. Other more informal teams, locally recognised, with the leadership of the stipendiary priest, may also flourish. Both informal and formal ministry teams are characterised by a combination of gifts in their members which accord with national criteria, and also with diocesan needs and priorities. There is not a hierarchy of ministries, but a partnership of responsibility within a framework of leadership.

Collaborative working thrives on shared vision, human loyalty and collegiality, and openness to God's new work. Mutual prayer, frequent and purposeful meetings, and appropriate affirmative leadership make effective ministerial teams. Collaborative working happens when ministers, lay and ordained, address with the people of God the common task of God's mission in the world and community. Through its advisers and ministry officers the diocese is committed to providing a professional level of training, support and development for both lay and ordained people **working together as one body**.

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