

## **B5 READER MINISTRY**

A reader is a lay person who is called to a ministry in the church which is normally voluntary, nationally accredited, episcopally licensed and governed by Canon Law. Readers are primarily called to exercise a preaching and teaching ministry in the church and to be a theological resource. Readers are licensed to lead the ministry of the word in worship and may be involved in educational and pastoral work, evangelism and other areas of lay ministry.

Canons E4 – E6 set out the requirements for readers

### **Authority**

The Order of Readers is recognised throughout the Church of England. Readers, like ordained clergy, are accredited ministers of the Church. A reader is licensed by the bishop to a particular benefice and is a member of the benefice ministry team. The licence also authorises the reader to assist in any parish in the diocese, provided he has the permission of the incumbent.

### **Vocation**

(see B8)

### **Duties**

The primary duties of a reader are to preach and teach, and to conduct or assist in conducting public worship. A reader may take Morning and Evening Prayer (omitting the absolution), read the scriptures, preach, and receive and present the offerings of the people, and undertake pastoral and educational work.

Readers are permitted to undertake the following pastoral duties: to visit the sick and read and pray with them; to teach in Sunday School; to catechise; to assist the minister in undertaking pastoral and educational work as the bishop directs.

Readers do not usually conduct baptisms. Occasionally they may be asked to perform the service. Prior written permission of the diocesan bishop is required.

The licence authorises a reader to share in the administration of Holy Communion in church, and to take the sacrament to the sick in their own homes. Extended Communion is not the same as Communion of the Sick: the regulations for Extended Communion (D8) should be consulted separately.

Readers are authorised to conduct funerals.

Readers may accept an invitation to take part in a service in a church of another denomination recognised by the Church of England, provided they do nothing which they would not be permitted to do in an Anglican service. Before accepting such an invitation, the reader must obtain the approval of the incumbent of the parish in which the service will take place. If the reader intends to participate in such services regularly, permission must be obtained from the bishop of the diocese and the PCC of the parish in which the services take place.

### **Dress**

The usual dress of readers for their liturgical duties is cassock, surplice, hood (where appropriate), and blue scarf.

### **Training**

Enquiries concerning training for reader ministry should be made in the first instance (and with the incumbent's knowledge) to the Diocesan Ministry Course. The Warden of Readers is happy to discuss reader ministry with potential candidates, and advise about selection for training. Normally no person may be admitted and licensed to reader ministry after the age of 70.

Readers are trained for ministry on the Diocesan Ministry Course. On admission and licensing readers receive the Church of England Readers' Certificate, and a year later a Diploma in Ministry Studies.

Readers are expected to undertake further training through Continuing Ministerial Education (CME).

### **Licence**

Readers under the age of 70 must hold a bishop's licence, which is subject to renewal every five years. Readers over the age of 70 who wish to continue in active ministry are given permission to officiate subject to renewal.

### **Membership of the PCC**

Readers are not automatically members of a PCC in the benefice to which they are licensed. A reader may be elected, co-opted, or given a place on the Council ex officio by decision of the PCC.