

Pastoral Letter 59 2.6.21

Dear Friends,

One of the newer aspects of ministry we are now engaged with is that of Supervision – it came out of the Methodist Church's 'Past Cases Review' and a perceived need for greater support, accountability and resourcing of ministers, particularly as many of us work fairly independently, even though we are part of a Circuit staff team and the teams in our local churches. [You might like to have a look at the PCR report – 'Courage, Cost & Hope' – on the following link: [Courage, Cost and Hope - Past Cases Review \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/safeguarding/courage-cost-and-hope-past-cases-review/)

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It could sound a bit like 'Big Brother' but many of us have found it to be a great help as we seek to navigate some of the knotty problems of ministry. Having the chance to spend time (roughly every other month) with a trusted and trained colleague, is a precious gift and gives us a safe place to ponder, wonder, get another perspective and sometimes, have someone dry our tears and convince us we can do this thing called ministry – really!

One of the delights for me has been, not only receiving Supervision to help me but being able to offer Supervision to other colleagues. Now, as part of my role as Assistant Chair in the Western bit of our District, I have the great privilege of working with a number of other colleagues and helping them to reflect carefully on their roles in their churches, circuits and beyond, their wider lives and interests, and who they are in the midst of all that and before God.

It is a greatly rewarding area of my ministry and fits in rather nicely with my keen interest in how we encourage, support, enable all of us to reach our fullest potential in our life of faith and continue to hold onto a sense of God's love and direction for us – no matter who we are; dog collar or not, we all need good people around us to help us on!

The name of Supervision – has that sense of insight that spans across a whole host of aspects of life, faith, ministry, discipleship – 'Super' Vision, 'extravision' – the gift that another can give us as an objective outsider, to help us see that which we could not on our own.

Sometimes we call it – 'watching over one another in love' – which gives it a rather lovely pastoral edge, which I've always held to be at the very heart of Supervision, and for that matter, the whole of ministry.

So, if you hear me or your own minister talking about 'Supervision', that might help you know a little bit about what it's for and what it involves. It also occurs to me that, at the moment, with all that's going on in our world and all the uncertainties we continue to face, a little bit of 'Super' Vision, an extra focus on 'watching over each other in love', might be a really good thing for us all to do!

Take care, stay safe and look after one another!

Sam