

growing ministry together: AFFIRMING

How does your church affirm and support one another's ministry?

Bible texts

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Ephesians 4.4-7

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Colossians 3.12-15

Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the friends, even though they are strangers to you; they have testified to your love before the church. Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become co-workers with the truth. 3 John 1.5,8

Comment

An African saying is that it takes a village to raise a child; likewise it takes a church to nurture and support a disciple. Our church's culture of support to people in ministry can be enriching or impoverishing. If people feel supported they will experience feedback that helps them develop. If people are given time to genuinely review what they do and are given a stake in how that ministry develops they will invest themselves more deeply and are more likely to flourish. If people are affirmed they are also more likely to move on to other tasks or roles that develop their calling, their community or the church further.

Story

Hannah was a young mother of two who engaged warmly with her suburban church after the baptism of her second child. Even though she was very new to the area, she was eager to do something worthwhile and to share some of the things she had learned in the church she grew up in. So when she became a welcomer for people visiting the church during the week she assumed people would appreciate the way she rearranged the back of church to make it more tidy and attractive, only to find things got moved back to their original position every week! People were not speaking to her as much, and getting cross with the children's noisy play. She began to wonder if she was really welcome and this affected the way she welcomed others.

Going deeper

- Recall an experience where someone's affirmation of something you had done was important to your future life?
- What ways do people get feedback for what they are doing in ministry that helps them know they are doing a good enough job and why?

- Do individuals or teams have reviews during the year to evaluate what they have done and how their ministry could develop?
- Do people know when to stop a ministry and how is this decided or communicated?
- How are people energised by well-directed affirmation?
- How does your church express thanks to anyone who shares in ministry? Publicly? Personally? Who makes sure that this is done or does it happen naturally?
- Are ministries to the community, paid work or home included in your affirmation of ministries?

Prioritising

How important is supporting and affirming people in ministry in your church?

Action planning options

- As appropriate set up review sessions with individuals or team leaders to review what they do and how the church might give and receive feedback from them better.
- List ways to purposely thank and value the significance of those whose ministry serves the purposes of the kingdom of God.
- Glorifying God is at the heart of worship. How can your church express thanks to him more fully for the ministry you receive?

Resources for action planning options

- Setting up review sessions for people in ministry
- Ways to purposely thank and value people's ministries
- Use the materials from Vocations Sunday or Education Sunday for ideas- a way of showing support for people in ministry or particular roles within the community
- Public ways for your church to express thanks to God for ministry

For further resources see: www.canterburydiocese.org/growingministrytogether