



How to ...

Nurture Ordained Vocations

8 Ideas for growing ordained vocations in your church

To serve the royal priesthood of believers, God has given Priests who are ordained to lead God's people in offering praise and proclaiming the gospel. Priests share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church and set the example of the Good Shepherd always before the people as the pattern of their calling. With the Bishop and their fellow ministers, Priests are to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God. The Church promotes a wide variety of priestly ministry beyond the traditional stipendiary parish vicar, and actively encourages the greatest diversity of people to pursue this calling. Here are 8 ways that the Church can play its part in nurturing these vocations:

1. Pray

All vocation is the gracious call of God and as such, we need to intercede for God to renew and increase all vocations among the body of Christ. This can be done in services and small groups, as individuals and through cycles of prayer. Various resources for this can be found on our website. Keep asking: **When did we last pray about vocations?**

2. Be Intentional About Language

Create a culture where everybody begins to use the language of vocation to describe a sense of call from God, whether that be to: business or teaching, parenting or entrepreneurial ventures, the creative arts or the world of sport. God has a vocation for every person and we need to give people the confidence to articulate it and to value the diversity of calls without a sense of hierarchy. Keep asking: **What is God calling you to do/be?**

3. Tell Stories

One of the ways that people discern their call is by hearing the vocational journeys of other people. Encourage people from various spheres to share testimonies, in services and small groups, about their sense of call. Include vocational stories on your website or in parish publications. Keep asking: **How has God led you to this place?**

4. Share Ministry

Give people opportunities to preach, lead worship, lead small groups or pioneer new mission opportunities within the parish. This will allow people to test their skills in those areas and see what develops. Be sure to give constructive feedback that encourages growth and development. Keep asking: **What are your gifts/passions and do you feel you are using them?**

5. Run a Vocations Explorations Group

When people get serious about finding out what God might be calling them to, they often like to discuss this with other people. As a diocese, we run 'Am I Called to be Ordained?' as a course twice a year which enables people to explore the questions they might have. Similar models can be employed in the parish, which include: worship, a talk from someone exercising a certain call, discussion and prayer. Keep asking: **What do you think God might be saying?**

6. Familiarise Yourself with Resources

There are many books and websites discussing vocations. Why not read some for yourself and update your knowledge of what is available, rather than simply recommending the books which you were told to read. An extensive reading list can be found at: <http://vocation.churchofengland.org/reading-list/>. Keep asking: **What resources might further encourage this person?**

7. Invite a Variety of Preachers

Even though the vicar may know that priests come in all shapes and sizes, the average congregation member only knows one or two priests. Therefore, they may not be able to see themselves in the role because they do not conform to the model they have. Inviting lots of different people to preach is one way to model the diversity of ordained vocations. Keep asking: **What different models of ministry are we not currently celebrating?**

8. Constantly Review your own sense of Call

One of the most powerful ways in which explorers are inspired to pursue their call is when they encounter a person who is confident in their call and joyfully living it out. Keep asking: **What is God calling me to do and be?** And then seek to be faithful and obedient to it.

The Diocesan Advisor for Ministerial Vocation holds responsibility for overseeing the vocations discernment process. Hopefully by implementing some of these simple initiatives, people will begin to emerge within your church who feel a sense of call to an ordained vocation. When this happens, encourage them to make contact with the Ministry Development Team to explore this further.

