

Hi, I'm Phil I'm 30 and I am currently going into my final year of training for ordination. The last five years have been unexpected, exciting and, eventful as I have felt a calling, explored it and began my degree at Trinity Theological college in Bristol. I first felt that God was calling me to ordained ministry late one night as I walked home from my shift at the pub I worked in. Having done ministry in the past with Youth With A Mission (YWAM), a charismatic missions charity that works across denominations, this felt both natural and unexpected. I have felt drawn to work with churches for years but a calling to priesthood was a new idea to me. The language of the *discernment* period, exploring this sense of calling with someone in the church, often felt strange and coded to me. However, the person assigned to guide me through it was patient and insightful. She helped me to articulate my sense of calling, my understanding of mission and think through what becoming a vicar, and indeed a priest, would look like for me personally. The most helpful part of the process was to do a 9 month placement (Ministry Experience Scheme) with a local church getting hands on experience of this type of work as I understood more of the particular ways the Church of England operates. I am immensely grateful to the many people who have believed in me when I didn't and confirmed a calling when I couldn't see one. For any of you feeling like you might be led down this route my advise is: talk to people. See what they think, watch how they react. Then be patient and follow your path either way!