

A Shared Ministry Team: what can it offer our church?

Introduction

A Shared Ministry Team is made up of lay and ordained people, working in partnership to co-ordinate and to develop the ministry and mission of the whole church. The Team will work hard at and will seek to model collaborative ministry and will encourage and enable *all* church members to discover and use their God-given gifts and talents. The goal is to strengthen the life of the Body of Christ for the good of the wider community. This is a ministry authorised by the Bishop, through a commissioning service. So the offer is:

- A committed Team of lay and ordained people asked by the congregation to focus together on ministry and mission locally and in the wider community.
- A Team that actively inspires, supports and encourages the congregation in the work of ministry and mission in the parish
- The ability to be in touch with, relate to and encourage many more people than is possible by clergy and Readers alone.
- A Team that, always in consultation with the Church Council, regularly discusses needs, possibilities and policy in ministry and mission framed around an Agreed Statement which is reviewed annually.
- A team that has shown willingness to train together and meet together for prayer as well as planning and operates with a shared understanding of mission, shared leadership and inclusive decision making.

What Shared Ministry Teams do

A Shared Ministry Team agrees its responsibilities with the PCC in the form of an Agreed Statement at the start of its five year commissioning and underwrites the Statement with an Annual Review. However, while the specific tasks may vary all Teams meet regularly for prayer and discussion and their responsibilities might include some or all of the following:

- Vision & Leadership - seeking God's vision for the whole, identifying gaps and enabling them to be filled, promoting good communication within the local church, etc.
- Worship – reviewing and planning (rather than leading), making sure the needs of all ages and groups are met, looking for new opportunities, etc.

- Prayer & Spirituality – finding ways to encourage all church members to express their faith in daily living and to grow in faith and understanding, etc.
- Mission & Outreach - finding ways of “crossing boundaries” both inside and outside the church, making contacts, proclaiming our faith to the community of which we are part, looking for opportunities to serve our community, etc.
- Pastoral Work - encouraging and supporting all church members in the use of their God-given gifts, giving direction and support to the work of pastoral visiting, see that those who approach the church for occasional offices are properly helped, etc.

And what they don't do!

An SMT will not concern itself with areas or matters already addressed by the PCC or its committees, such as fabric or finance. The PCC is, of course, free to ask the SMT to consider these or any other issues, and may from time to time delegate specific tasks or projects to it, but the authority remains always with the PCC. The SMT is not a ruling body, it has no power or authority other than that which the PCC share with it. The work of the Team is accountable to the PCC. The Team is not and must not become some kind of elite or special status group but nor is it there ‘just to help the clergy’.

The Team should be the means by which a church is able to do so much more than it might otherwise, because the vision and the capacity to implement it is increased. It encourages many more people to be involved in thinking about and doing the work that, in years gone by, was often exercised by the clergy alone.

A shared ministry team in your church?

You can be confident of a tried and tested process and the willingness of our Shared Ministry Officers to discuss how best to work with your church and put you in contact with other churches if you wish. See www.liverpool.anglican.org/the-SMT-process on starting a team.

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