

Why Ministry Accompaniers?

All authorised ministry in the church has its challenges and full time parochial ministry has particular demands given the major shifts in ministry patterns which are taking place.

As part of the diocese's encouragement and support for healthy and sustainable ministry, the network of Ministry Accompaniers exists to act as a critical friend and external reference. They are there to help think through the issues you face in your role as priest or minister, all within a confidential relationship.

Such issues could include vision setting, conflict resolution, small or major change, how you exercise your leadership, building and developing collaborative ministry, dependency problems, as well as more personal work issues such as changing jobs, time management, or achieving a better balance in your life.

Oxford Diocese recognises the value of Ministry Accompaniers and believes all clergy would benefit from making use of this support whether your ministry is going well or you are experiencing major challenges.

A Ministry Accompanier can be particularly helpful in working with you at times of transition, e.g. taking up a new role, becoming an Area Dean or planning for retirement. Another key opportunity would be working on the ministry priorities identified at your Ministerial Development Review.

How is it different to other support I have?

Friends, family, colleagues, college cell groups are all vital sources of support. Many clergy have a spiritual director whose role focuses on their vocational journey and journey with God.

A Ministry Accompanier focusses on you in your role as priest or minister in the context of your benefice/parish/team, etc. They can offer an impartial perspective from outside that context.

Who are Ministry Accompaniers?

Ministry Accompaniers come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are ordained and have extensive experience in parish ministry, some are freelance and lay, but they are all trained and highly skilled in enabling people to think through individual and organizational issues and challenges. Some have areas of specialism, for example, in conflict resolution, working with teams, or change management.

How does it work?

A Ministry Accompanier is there to work with your 'stuff' in a totally confidential environment.

Their aim, through attentive listening and challenging questions, is to enable you to seek clarity, identify possible ways forward and to move on.

They may utilize a number of different skills or approaches, as appropriate, to help you in this process, e.g. coaching, consultancy or mentoring, but they won't tell you what to do. Some clergy have engaged with a Ministry Accompanier for just a few sessions to work on something very specific and others have met four or five times a year over a period of two or three years or longer.

Where do we meet?

Most Ministry Accompaniers offer a choice of online, telephone or in-person meetings, or a mixture. For in-person meetings you may travel to meet your Ministry Accompanier at their place of work or at a neutral venue, so in this case we try to find you someone who is within a reasonable travelling distance.

"I've been very blessed and enriched to have worked with Ministry Accompaniers and work consultants in every major role as a vicar and theological educator, missionary and bishop. I have learned a huge amount through simply being listened to and asked thoughtful questions as a regular part of ministry. I warmly commend the practice of ministry accompaniment to all clergy in the Diocese of Oxford"

Bishop Steven

Will there be a cost?

Some of the network are freelance and need to charge, and some are free. The rate of charge is very reasonable (£40 per hour) and you could use your annual CMD grant of £250 to fund this cost.

How do I find a Ministry Accompanier?

First of all, please talk to your Archdeaconry Parish Development Adviser (PDA). They will discuss with you what it is you are looking for from the relationship, e.g. is there a specific focus or need, or is it more general at this stage? There may also be some practical questions, such as how far you are prepared to travel and how often you want to meet.

Your PDA will then suggest a couple of names from the network and will provide you with their contact details. You make contact, have an initial meeting to see if you are a good 'match' and that you are confident the Ministry Accompanier can help you with what you want to work on and you go from there.

oxford.anglican.org/ministry-accompaniers

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"Calling in a Ministry Accompanier can feel threatening; it could look like I cannot do things myself. Having used three accompaniers over the last 11 years, I can only say they have been very positive, empowering experiences, facilitating real change in practice and consciousness."

Team Rector, Berkshire Area



Ministry Accompaniers



**Supporting healthy
ministry in the
Diocese of Oxford**