

CARLISLE DIOCESAN READERS' BOARD

READERS: DUTIES, JOB-PLAN AND REVIEW

1. It is provided in the Bishops' Regulations for Reader Ministry that 'Readers and their incumbent or minister should make a written agreement over the duties to be undertaken by the reader, taking into account:

- (a) the particular expression of the individual's ministry;
- (b) the role of the Reader in the local ministerial team and in relation to the PCC;
- (c) the arrangements for post-admission training and regular attendance at reader chapters;
- (d) the balance between their commitments in the role of a Reader and the requirements of their family, work and leisure;
- (e) the arrangements for reimbursement of expenses incurred through performance of the reader's duties.

'This agreement should be regularly reviewed.'

2. It has been agreed by the Board and approved by the Bishop that, prior to the renewal of a Readers' licence from the end of 1994 onwards, the Reader and the incumbent must first certify that such an agreement has been prepared and signed by both parties. (If there is an interregnum when the review should normally take place, however, it may be postponed until a date not later than six months from the end of the interregnum.) During the interregnum it has been suggested that to avoid over or under use of readers a temporary working agreement should be made between the reader and the Rural Dean who oversees the parish during this time. The Warden of Readers could also be involved as appropriate.

3. What goes into the agreement is a matter for the Reader and the incumbent (and other members of the ministry team if that exists). The following is offered simply as a checklist from which a selection should be made according to individual circumstances.

(In each instance times and frequencies -e.g. how many times in each month - should be specified, recognising that emergencies may sometimes arise, that the Reader may be called to duties in other parishes, and also that due notice is important: it is desirable to agree actual duties in advance on a monthly basis.)

Equipping for readership:

- Prayer
- Study
- Preparation for sermons and intercessions
- Attendance at daily and weekly public worship
- Attendance at Deanery group meetings and the Readers'
- Conference Retreats and quiet days
- Seeking spiritual advice or direction (a possibility which may emerge from discussion with the incumbent)

Assisting in public worship:

- Reading the Scriptures
- Leading intercessions
- Preaching
- Serving at the altar
- Distributing the sacrament at Holy Communion
- Leading Morning and Evening Prayer
- Leading the Holy Communion Service up to the Peace (subject to the CW rubrics) Communion by Extension

Assisting with or taking funeral services
Taking the sacrament to the sick and housebound
Assisting with hospital communion
Leading or assisting with services in hospitals and old people's homes
Involvement in the compilation of family services/all-age worship

Work with groups:

Baptismal preparation
Confirmation preparation
Marriage preparation
Parish groups for prayer, study, meditation, praise and outreach
Sunday School teaching
Other youth work

Taking part in the structures of the Church:

Attendance at staff or team meetings if they exist
(Note that this will expose Readers to information that must be treated in confidence: e.g. regarding individuals and policy matters within the pastoral unit and beyond, and concerning the strengths and weaknesses of individuals within the team, including discussions with any external consultant.)
P.C.C. and other committees
(Readers are not automatically members of their P.C.C., unless the Council has adopted a standing order to that effect)
Deanery or Diocesan Synod
Ecumenical groups

Individual pastoral work:

Visiting the sick, the lonely, the elderly and others, and reading and praying with them
Bereavement visiting

Witnessing in the workplace and the world at large:

It is difficult even to provide a check-list here, but the institutional church needs to recognise, support and allow for the fact that many Readers are active in their places of work and in secular organisations (such as local councils and charities) and that this is a proper part of their work as readers.

4. It is recommended that this check-list should be reconsidered annually, and on every change of incumbent. It is required that it be reviewed before each renewal of licences – every 5 years (next due 31.12.08).
5. Where differences arise between incumbents and Readers which cannot be resolved between them, mediation should first be sought from the Warden of Readers, and then, if necessary, through the Rural Dean.
6. Readers and clergy may find it helpful to consider the questions on the sheet that follows before they meet together to discuss the check-list.

Readers may find it helpful to fill in the following checklist in advance of their discussions with incumbents:

1. Given your family and work commitments, how many hours a week do you feel able to put at the disposal of the church?
2. Are there particular times of year when you are under pressure (e.g. school holidays, busy times at work) when you feel that you can give less?
3. Are there particular areas in ministry that you would like to take up or develop? (e.g. youth work, bible study, outreach suppers, home visiting, funerals and bereavement)
4. Do you need additional training for these tasks?
5. Are there any areas you would like to give up? Why?
6. Do you feel you have appropriate support in your liturgical tasks and your pastoral work?
7. In what ways do you feel you can support your incumbent?
8. Would you like more opportunity to work occasionally in other benefices?

Similarly, clergy may like to consider the following points in advance of discussion:

1. Are there areas of parish life that need more support?
2. What do you see as the Reader's particular gifts?
3. Are there particular services where time is tight where the Reader could relieve some of the pressure?
4. Would it be helpful for the reader to take responsibility for a regular service or services in the month, or is it more useful for the reader to fill in as needed?
5. Are there resources or publications that you receive that you would like to pass on to the Reader?
6. Are there areas of pastoral work that the Reader could help with (e.g. visiting, pram services)?

These questions cannot be exhaustive. They are offered simply as a possible framework for discussion.