



# The Minister's role in larger churches

**TN6** Training Notes series: Leadership

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**Ministers do not usually have job descriptions. Technically, many are self-employed. But when they lead a larger church, this lack of a framework for their ministry can be dangerous.**

The following is an outline of a possible job description. It assumes a church with a staff team and a congregation of above-average size. To avoid making it too general this outline is given for an Anglican incumbent, although it will not be difficult for other denominations to make the necessary adjustments to fit their own situations.

This job description should be used simply as a basis for the writing of a specific one for you / your church. Such a document, used in appropriate ways, could have many advantages for the Minister, all other leaders and the church membership. It should bring clarity to a role that is often not as clear as it needs to be.

## The job description

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### Heading

Job description for the Vicar/Rector of (name of church). *(Date – and date for review.)*

**Purpose of this position** *(here is just one idea for a possible purpose – but Anglicans may prefer to base the purpose on the Ordinal)*

To lead (name of church) in its people's growth in:

- their relationship with God through Jesus Christ,
- their love for one another,
- their witness to the world.

## Relationships

The incumbent is responsible to the Bishop of (diocese) with whom (s)he shares the 'cure of souls' within the parish.

(S)he acts as the leader of the church staff team, works in close liaison with the Church Wardens and is ex-officio chairman of the Parochial Church Council. (S)he is a member of the deanery chapter and synod and of the local fraternal.

*(Add other links which may also exist: eg. chair of governors of a church school, trainer of a curate.)*

## Responsibilities

- 1 To maintain his/her own spiritual growth, particularly by giving time to prayer and the study of the Scriptures. Also to engage heart and mind through wide reading in areas of theology, spirituality, etc. and to develop ministry skills through regular training.
- 2 To develop and then hold the church to the agreed vision. With other leaders, to determine priorities and to develop strategies to enable the church to work to that vision. Within this, to ensure that the church keeps appropriate forms of outreach high on its agenda.
- 3 To oversee and, with others, to develop the ministry of the Word of God through both preaching and teaching in all appropriate forms (in church services, small groups and one-to-one).
- 4 To hold overall responsibility for the leading of public worship, for the ministry of the sacraments, and for intercession for local and national concerns and God's world-wide work.
- 5 To lead the staff team, managing individual members in their delegated responsibilities, building up the team and pastoring them and their families.
- 6 To develop lay ministry by overseeing the appointment, nurturing, management and training of Readers and all other lay leaders, enabling them to develop their distinctive gifts and ministries.
- 7 To ensure that the decision-making processes of the church through staff team, Church Wardens, PCC, Standing Committee, and action and other groups are carried out effectively, with each body having a clearly understood role.
- 8 To serve the parish (and appropriate networks) by ensuring that Christ is proclaimed by word and deed, that pastoral needs are met, and that 'occasional offices' are conducted in an appropriate manner.
- 9 To ensure the church undertakes its responsibilities within the deanery and diocese and to undertake other specific and agreed responsibilities as incumbent (eg. school governorships, local chaplaincies, synod membership).
- 10 To take proper care of him/herself and his/her family through adequate time for rest, recreation and family life (or, as appropriate, with friends) as an example to others. To be involved in some activity with those who have no church allegiance.

## Exclusions

The incumbent is NOT expected to make the following a priority:

- routine administration of the church and parish;
- routine visiting and pastoral care which can be carried out by others;
- areas of ministry in which (s)he is not specifically gifted and where work can be delegated to others;
- areas of ministry not felt to be priorities at a given time.

The incumbent may, however, hold certain responsibilities in other areas of Christian work (eg. diocesan boards, national councils). All the above is to be read within the context of the canons of the Church of England.

# Notes on the job description

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## Delegation

To lead a larger church, the Minister has to realise that a different style of leadership is called for. It is not possible to do everything that his or her counterpart in a small church may carry out. Whole areas of ministry have to be delegated to other members of staff (in addition to the involvement of laity in every area of ministry). So the management of the staff team becomes an important element of the leader's ministry (but see TN20 for other ideas on this). Hard choices have to be made about priorities.

The list of exclusions is given so that the Ministers of larger churches do not feel guilty at delegating these items. They should beware of doing very much in these areas if this means that their priorities in ministry are neglected. For some, the temptation is to get back to the style of ministry they were used to in a smaller church and fail to offer proper leadership.

## The order of the ten items

Some may wish to adjust the order of the ten items. The deliberate order shown is:

- spirituality (1)
- vision (2)
- teaching/preaching (3)
- public worship (4)
- developing others (5,6)
- decision-making (7)
- parish, deanery and diocese (8,9)
- care of self (10).

Others may feel that items 1 and 10, though important, do not belong on this list. They are put here to stress that the responsibilities of spiritual leadership cover more than just the more obvious 'work' areas.

## Related documents

A job description only has value in its application. Two other documents should normally be associated with it.

The first is a '**person profile**', normally associated with the search for a new Minister but just as helpful as a check for the Minister him- or her-self. Scripture includes clear guidelines for the kind of people to be entrusted with spiritual leadership (eg. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

The second is a list of what may be termed '**medium-term aims**'. Whereas the job description is reasonably fixed (although it should be reviewed for minor changes on a regular basis), it is helpful to have a list of specific aims for a given period (such as a year). These show specific priorities within the scope of the job description for the period in question. Such a list should change from year to year.

## Feedback

*John Truscott welcomes feedback on this outline and updates it on a regular basis. If you would like to suggest improvements to it, please use the response page on this website or the communication details below.*

These notes are available at [www.john-truscott.co.uk/resources/training/tn6.pdf](http://www.john-truscott.co.uk/resources/training/tn6.pdf). They cover one aspect of a possible event for ministers on self-management. For a more general treatment of this topic, see Article A6, *Job descriptions*, and for practical hints on time for ones own spirituality and family life, see Training Notes TN7, *Ideas for how to make time for life*. For indexes of all items available on the site, visit the [resources page](#),

Contact John if you would like to enquire about the possibility of his running a self-management or desk management event for you.

Cartoons are by Micki Hounslow for filing categories of Leadership, Management, Structures, Planning, Communication, Administration. File TN6 under Leadership (with a link to Structures).

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