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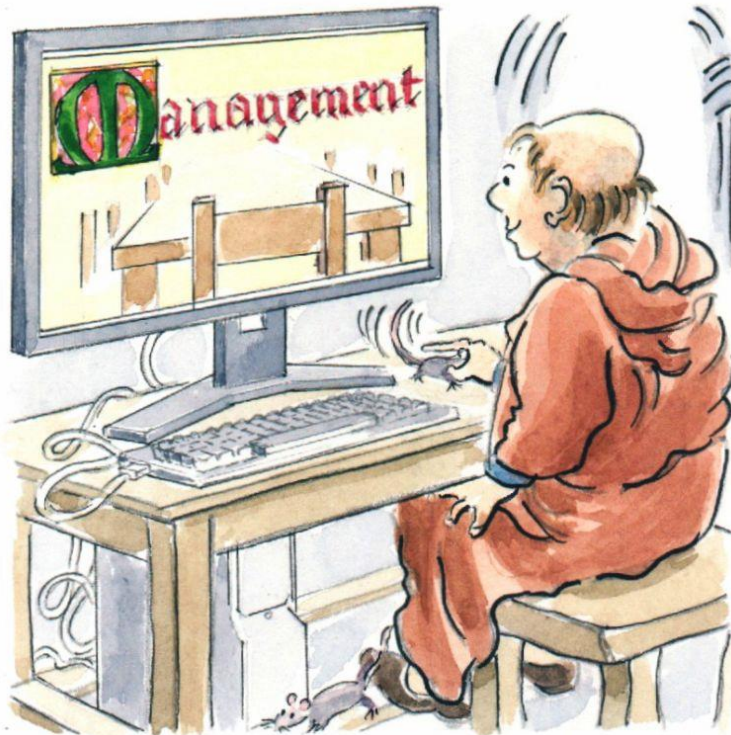
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Minister and Administrator

Building an effective partnership



Diocese of Gloucester – 10th October 2019

If you prefer to work from a screen, you may access this set of notes as a pdf today or later at <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/News> and then the item for today's date.

Roles and responsibilities

What we aim to do for what outcomes, so we understand the partnership

Most Minister and Church Administrator(s) partnerships are going to be a pairing of differences. This applies in your giftings, passions, possibly in your personalities, perhaps in your genders. Much of this morning will be concerned with understanding how the other one of the partnership sees things.

Administrator roles

A good job description has, as its first section, a purpose statement. This explains why the job exists. It should be more than just “to be the Vicar’s PA” or “to run the church office” and rather more specific than “to glorify God”.

One helpful way to structure it is in the format: “To (do something) so that (something results)”.

Here are some ideas for Church Administrators (adapt for PA/EAs or Operations Managers).

Releasing front-line ministry

To release the Minister and spiritual leaders for the work to which they have been called and appointed by taking as much day-to-day organisational work as possible off them **so that** they are freed up for their priorities of leadership, prayer, teaching and outreach and the church can be healthy.

Bringing excellence to organisation

To handle the day-to-day organisational and statutory requirements of the church (or benefice) in such a way that the church functions safely, legally and efficiently. The aim is for the organisation itself to be hardly noticed, **so that** the priority ministries can be the focus knowing that all is being administered with professional excellence behind the scenes.

Earthing administration in the vision

To manage the administrative function of the church(es) as a full member of the staff team.
To share in the vision of the church(es) by enabling the growth we pray for by ensuring that our systems are working in the very best way, **so that** members can have confidence in our organisational ability, and that visitors will be dealt with in a style that matches the values of the gospel we proclaim.

Demonstrating a creative approach to this work

To be responsible for a creative approach to the operational functions of the church(es) to support the front-line ministry, using the organisational gifts that God gives to his Church and the opportunities presented by modern technology, **so that** God’s work may be promoted in a way that is Christ-centred, prayerfully supported, servant-hearted and pastorally sensitive.

Adapted from page 4 of Article A42, *What do Church Administrators do?*, in the Resources section of my website.

Administrator responsibilities

Now for another part of a job description. Here is a list of some possible responsibilities for a Church Administrator. Yours/you may focus on several of these or just one or two. Note that these are still at quite a high level, not getting into daily detail. You will be able to see where each of these fits into the four possible roles outlined on the previous page.

- To provide high-quality administrative services for the church(es).
- To act as a focus for church life, a communications hub where questions are answered, data is stored and information disseminated.
- To protect the Minister/clergy and other staff from as much routine business and unnecessary interruption as possible.
- To be the church’s interface with the outside world, providing a neutral and unthreatening point of contact.
- To manage a reception point for the church plant, especially in a church centre that is let out to a variety of external groups.
- To act as an on-site trouble-shooter for maintenance and equipment issues.
- To manage the membership records and people’s ministry overseeing the work of the volunteers in the church(es).
- To act as on-site Book-keeper for the finances of the church(es) reporting to the Treasurer.
- To oversee all the resources and operations of the church(es), managing staff and ensuring the implementation of the strategic plan.

That final bullet takes us into the area of an Operations Manager who may have a role:

- To turn the vision into reality.
- To enable continual change for effectiveness.
- To manage people well.
- To co-ordinate all aspects of organisation.
- To release the pastoral staff for church growth.

From Article A38, *Appointing an Operations Manager*, and more from A42, on the website.

Ministers: What I note from how the Administrator expresses their role in their Exercise 1 and how I see it in my Exercise 2

Administrators: What I note from how the Minister views my role in their Exercise 2 and how I see it in my Exercise 1

Clergy role and responsibilities

Role (adapted from the Ordinal)

Your role is to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel.... You are to be a servant and a shepherd among the people to whom you are sent. You are to be a messenger, watchman and steward of the Lord.

Responsibilities

1 To proclaim the gospel

You are to lead Christ's people in proclaiming the gospel, so that the good news of salvation may be heard in every place.....

2 To baptise new disciples

You are to baptise new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith.

3 To teach the Scriptures

You are to teach and to admonish, to feed and provide for God's family, With others you are to make clear the Scriptures, to preach the word in and out of season....

4 To lead in worship

You are to preside at the Lord's table and, with others, to lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving....

5 To minister to the world

You are to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor and intercede for all in need. You are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death.

6 To foster people's gifts

Guided by the Spirit, you are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people, that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

7 To stir up your own gift

You are in, the strength of the Holy Spirit, continually to stir up the gift of God that is in you, to make Christ known among all whom you serve....

8 To accept discipline

You are to accept the discipline of this Church and respect authority duly exercised within it and, when necessary and with others, to minister such discipline yourself.

9 To order your life

You are to be diligent in prayer, in reading the Scriptures, and in all studies that will deepen your faith and fit you to bear witness to the truth of the gospel. You are to fashion your own life and that of your household according to the way of Christ....

Remember always with thanksgiving that you are entrusted with the privilege of leading Christ's own flock, bought by the shedding of his blood on the cross. It is to him that you will be accountable for your stewardship of his people.

You cannot bear the weight of this calling in your own strength, but only by the grace and power of God. Pray therefore that your love of people and your understanding of the Scriptures may grow daily. Pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Taken from Training Notes TN78, *The role of a church leader*, in the Resources section of the website. See also TN87, *What to look for in your leaders*. Adapted freely from *Common Worship Ordination Services* © Archbishops' Council 2013

Administrators: What I note from how the Minister expresses their role in their Exercise 1 and how I see it in my Exercise 2

Ministers: What I note from how the Administrator views my role in their Exercise 2 and how I see it in my Exercise 1

The gifted Administrator in life

Organisation

A gifted administrator will live an ordered life in the way they:

- plan their time with clear priorities and review with flexibility;
- manage themselves, be punctual and seek not to waste time;
- handle their own finances and possessions with care;
- use digital tools effectively without being enslaved to them;
- list and co-ordinate a range of different activities at work and home.

Detail

A gifted administrator will be meticulous in handling detail. They will

- seek accuracy and aim to be correct;
- tidy loose ends and close things down well;
- notice what needs doing and get on with it;
- love neatness and tidiness;
- ensure filing systems work well.

Service

A gifted administrator seeks to serve others and to enable others' ministries and so will:

- be reliable, keeping promises and delivering on time;
- serve quietly behind the scenes in unglamorous jobs;
- be noticed by others as having this gift;
- Foster good relationships with people;
- be creative in finding innovative solutions to problems.

Extracted from TN115, *Identifying gifts of administration*, in the Resources section of the website.

The gifted Minister in life

People

A gifted Minister will be people-centred in their thinking and actions. They will:

- care deeply and pray passionately for all people;
- give time to listen to people's issues and offer empathy;
- give wise advice to those in need or difficulty of any kind;
- work for God's truth, justice and security in society;
- build teams and train others to take on responsibilities.

Teaching

A gifted Minister will be an acknowledged teacher and trainer. They will:

- teach in a way that people can understand;
- interpret the Scriptures into people's daily lives;
- proclaim the Good News to others at every opportunity;
- be able to instruct people one-to-one or in small groups;
- grow in their own understanding through disciplined study.

Leadership

A gifted Minister will lead people to new places by example. They will:

- believe themselves to be called by God to a ministry of leadership in some form;
- lead events and worship so that people come into the presence of God;
- be able to take a diverse community through difficulties and new challenges;
- have vision of what the future could be and take people there;
- set an example of discipleship in their own life and home.

Understanding

We each need to be clear about our own roles and responsibilities – but we then need to understand what it is like to be the other person in their role. What are the issues that they feel we may not fully appreciate?

What I heard my colleague say about what they love most about their role

What I heard my colleague say about what they struggle most with in their role

The working relationship

How we can enable each other's roles so we can develop the partnership

Aiming for good results as partners in ministry

The following set of guidance notes are for both the Minister (M) and the Administrator (A). The term 'Administrator' applies to a Church Administrator, a PA/EA or an Operations Manager. There will need to be a slightly different emphasis for each of these three examples.

- 1M Ensure your Administrator has a clear grasp of the church or benefice (and your) vision – let them in to the secrets of the **big picture** rather than just focusing on daily detail.
- 1A Keep the big picture in mind in all you do (to give you purpose), ask questions if necessary, and check what you are doing contributes to the vision.

- 2M Similarly, help them to see that the purpose of their role includes to **release** you for your priorities so they share in the front-line ministry of the church(es).
- 2A Don't be afraid to point out when your incumbent is tackling detail that you have both the time and the expertise to deal with – or can see another solution to free them up.

- 3M A sharply worded Job Description is a must so they know exactly what their **responsibilities** are (and perhaps include some negatives too to define the boundaries).
- 3A But ensure your job description defines your purpose, your working relationships and your responsibilities or tasks, rather than being merely a shopping list of activity.

- 4M Follow all good **line management** principles: including encouragement and, when necessary, reprimand, and remembering birthdays and other important events.
- 4A Don't be afraid to suggest how line management could be improved – encourage them and remember their special days and other important events too!

- 5M Give them **your time** whether daily or weekly. Ask them what kind of meetings they would value. Drop in on the church office regularly.
- 5A Help your Minister ensure that your meetings are at about the right frequency and length, that you are stretched but not too much, and that actions happen.

- 6M **Tell everyone** how much your ministry depends on them. Then they can see that you value them.
- 6A Be loyal to your incumbent, ensuring you keep confidences and not complaining to all and sundry about them.

- 7M Let them know where you are **when you are away**, even if they are told to keep that information to themselves.
- 7A Be clear which decisions you can and cannot take in your incumbent's absence.

- 8M Ask them to help you become a **better boss** to work for – and then action the advice suggested. Avoid giving them extra work just before they are due to leave for home.

- 8A Ask them what changes they would like you to make to work alongside them more effectively.

- 9M Be particularly careful over how much time you spend in each other's company **out of sight of others**. If married ensure your spouse gets to know the Administrator.
- 9A Be particularly careful over how much time you spend in each other's company out of sight of others. If married ensure your spouse gets to know the Minister.

- 10M **Pray for them** regularly and seek to help them develop in their role.
- 10A If you are a Christian, pray for them regularly and seek to work together better.

Finally

Whichever you are, put yourself in the other person's shoes and aim to keep three areas in balance:

- 1M between micro-management and having no idea what the Administrator is up to;
- 1A between wanting to know everything they are doing and having no interest in their work at all;

- 2MA between a relationship that becomes over-familiar and staying distant and cold from them;

- 3M between dumping work you dislike on them and holding from them work you love but which should not be a priority for you;
- 3A between taking too much initiative without authorisation and awaiting instructions for anything you can see needs actioning.

Adapted and expanded from Training Notes TN101, *Working with a No. 2*, on the website.

Exercise 3: What my colleague says about how they appreciate my ministry

Exercise 4: How this differs from what I was expecting if at all

Exercise 5: What my colleague says about any changes/developments they would like to see in my scope of ministry or way of working

Exercise 6: How this differs from what I was expecting if at all

Resources on my website you might find helpful on today's overall theme

(especially those in bold italic) <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources>

Articles

- A6 Job descriptions – *advice and examples for staff and volunteers*
- A12/13 The leader as a shepherd – *biblical research and practical application*
- A27 Reliability in ministry – *for administrators and leaders*
- A32 *Be creative as a line manager – how to develop paid staff***
- A38 Appointing an Operations Manager – *or reviewing a post*
- A42 *What do Church Administrators do? – roles defined***

Training Notes

- TN6 The Minister's role in large churches
- TN17 Suggested questions for an annual review
- TN15 How not to delegate
- TN20 Line management in a church staff team
- TN28 No two leaders are the same
- TN30 How to give and receive criticism
- TN31 Affirming volunteers
- TN40 *Appointing an Administrator***
- TN48 Let's get purpose statements right
- TN49 What's going on under the water
- TN60 Administrator types
- TN72/73 Church administration explained
- TN77 Administrator wisdom'
- TN78 *The role of a church leader***
- TN9 How genuine are your GORs?
- TN94 Becoming self-aware
- TN101 *Working with a No. 2***
- TN102 People who visit the church office
- TN110 It's confidential but it still leaks out
- TN112 *Set my leaders free***
- TN115 *Identifying gifts of administration***

You might also like to follow me on Twitter @johnntruscott.

Acts 6:1-7 for Ministers and Administrators

Some principles from a well-known Administrator passage but this time for Ministers to learn from and Administrators to support them.

1 They asked questions starting 'Why?'. not just 'How?'

2 They saw the big picture, not just the detail

3 They involved everyone, not just themselves

4 They selected on spiritual maturity, not just on competence

5 They delegated responsibility, not just task

6 They focused on their priorities, not just on the pastoral

7 They modelled God's calling, not just people's appointment

Based on TN112, *Set my leaders free*, on the Training Notes page of the Resources section of the website.

Action plan

So, what do I need to change or develop myself in the way I work or the way I view my colleague as a result of this morning?

What do we need to change or develop together about our partnership?

What do I want to see by the end of the year in our working relationship?

Write this as a scenario for the two of you.

Please copy what you have written in that last box onto the slip we shall give you, place it inside the envelope, seal the envelope and address it personally to yourself for postal return at the beginning of January. Then leave it behind. This unopened envelope will be posted back to you in January.