

Positive Ministry Relationships

Resources for Church leaders: Incumbents, Church Wardens, Staff teams,
PCC, group leaders

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Positive Ministry Relationships

We believe that men and women are made in the image of God, equal and different, therefore both are indispensable and not interchangeable. Therefore, there is blessing for all when men and women work well together. In light of the wide implications of Genesis 3:16 in relation to men and women, and of the devil's schemes, we are aware it is not always straightforward to work well together, so, we are starting/continuing a conversation with all involved with staff and volunteer teams, to share our experiences, to inform, encourage, and enable one another to work well together, and then to do so more and more. (e.g. 1Thess 4:1)

The following is drawn from a range of sources, (interviews, articles, surveys) with the aim of promoting and encouraging ongoing healthy relationships on staff and leadership teams, with a particular focus on men and women working well together. Many of the points would of course apply to any team relationship, yet have been flagged up as particularly important.

Some points include current good employment practices for both men and women on staff teams.

'Why it is important/healthy to have women in your team'

Team work with women is important and healthy, as it actively lives out the complementarian relationships God designed in creation. 'God's people' in the NT are also described as 'God's family', and, as God's design for a family starts with a man and a woman, it makes sense for this to feed through to the church. There are numerous 'one another' commands, which apply to both men and women, and I Cor 11, makes it clear that both are needed in church life, (v3, 11-12). Whatever else they do, (and there is plenty) it is important for women to be able to teach and train women, *Titus* 2:3-5, and to teach and lead the children, (2 Tim 1:5 & 3:14,15) and many are gifted to do so.

What works well?

Genuine partnership in the gospel and real teamwork in practice, makes a significant difference.

- How does the work the woman is doing fit into, and contribute to the whole?
- Is it 'substantial', is it clearly valued?
- Does she have a voice - Being in the room and involved in decision-making works well, leading to understanding of decisions.
- Showing some concern for the woman as a person. (The pastor is a brother in Christ and a pastor to the woman, as well as (even before), being in oversight of her role).
- For the woman to have someone she can talk and pray with confidentially about the work.

Practical outworkings

- Clear direction for the work, ongoing interest by the incumbent in the work,
- Giving her responsibility and the authority to carry out that responsibility, and providing supportive oversight, (not micromanagement).

This is likely to involve:

- Regular meetings
- Open discussion about what is going on
- Hearing the woman, her encouragements, concerns, questions.
- Seeking to understand what is needed both to encourage and provide support in times of difficulty; this does not mean having to provide all the answers or solutions.
- Either talking together about options, or hearing a suggested mode of action and being supportive is often all that's needed.

Could be better if...

- The team members' convictions and understanding of complementarianism are able to be expressed clearly, and so working practices are understood from a biblical framework.
- Last minute changes - not so last minute! (they can negate work already done by others)
- On larger teams, where decisions affect the women's role, they feed into her experience of the role, so discussion of the potential or upcoming changes including considering their impact could make a real difference.

Could be better if - more details, Appendix 2 p.10

Questions to consider

How is the woman's voice heard if there is an all male eldership, or group within the staff team? Sometimes this starts to be more important as teams grow. This is covered well in the interview with Claire Deeves, link below.

Paid vs unpaid – why it is worth investing in gospel women's ministry

Much work at church is done by volunteers, small group leaders, children's leaders, practical tasks, and sometimes the occasional preaching. In addition, men are set aside to ensure good teaching and administration, Vicar, possibly a curate... Women also have responsibility to teach other women, and children, and to provide good pastoral support and care, as well as being able to feed into decisions. Therefore, it is worth investing in women, to be able to set aside time to study, teach and train others so they have the capacity to provide teaching and pastoral care to other women, *Titus 2:3-5*. It may not be possible to raise the funds, but we are all aware that in many cases it is vital for the woman to earn a wage. And, a worker deserves his/her wages.

Luke 10:7

Some considerations when employing a woman

1. a) Is there an employment contract with a job description - Areas of responsibility, hours expected, time off, rate of pay, pension provision?
b) Is the rate of pay truly enough to live off, (this would vary in different parts of the country), equivalent to the rates paid to men, and commensurate with the training she has received, the responsibilities she has, aligning with the uplifts that apply to the men on the staff team?

Remuneration – some suggestions Appendix 5 p.14

Extracts from Role descriptions Appendix 6 p.15

2. Does she have an Annual review? - reflecting on the year: what to commend, one or two areas to work on; looking to the year ahead: to note changes in job description if any, areas of growth, ongoing encouragement of how the work fits into the whole. This enables the woman to know that her work is valuable and valued and contributes to the whole.
Discussing any changes that have happened or that are being planned increases genuine partnership.
3. Ongoing learning and training - what might be appropriate and helpful at 'this stage'?
4. Is there provision for a Sabbatical if the job lasts longer than 7 years?

Links and refs

- Clare Deeves, interview on the Pastor's Heart
<https://www.thepastorsheart.net/> 6th Feb "
- Book recommendation - Embracing Complementarianism by *Graham Beynon and Jane Tooher*.
- Generalisations, Appendix 3 p.11
- Positive Ministry Relationships - considerations for Women Appendix 4 p.13
- A Draft outline contract [Draft Church Worker contract of employment.docx](#) (separate file)

What works well - more details

A variety of replies/comments made in surveys, conversations, articles etc.

Belief in the mutual dependence of men and women. 1 Corinthians 11:11.

Our beliefs shape our values. Men and women work in a godly way together when they have mutual respect for each other's mind, skills and difference of perspective. This is essential and flows from the belief that men need women and women need men. True complementarianism is not just concerned with restricting the pastoral office from women but about believing that women are *needed* in ministry for their different yet valuable roles.

Being positive about what ministries women can do.

Caring for the woman: where possible to separate the line management from the pastoral care, while recognising that if the vicar is line manager then he still has a duty of care.

E.g. X spotted this gap and offered to take on the pastoral role which she did brilliantly. Once she left we found a replacement. Her conversations would only have been fed back if they raised safeguarding concerns, and she was free to nudge when it came to need for more time off, sabbatical et al.

Line management, asking an experienced female staff member to be line managed by a curate with far less ministry behind him is not good practice, even though the curate and the woman may work together in certain areas of work, e.g. 20s30s ministry, Youth ministry... (Working together can work well, but not the line management.)

Quote: Being seen and cared for as a person, not simply for what I can do!

Encouragement for and in ministry

I would not be in ministry if it were not for the complementation male ministers who encouraged me, invested in me, trained me and supported me in my training. I think it's important to say that this was *because* they were complementarian not in spite of their complementarian convictions, because they were truly complementation, they knew that women were needed in ministry.

Good to have male encouragement for women's time preparing for teaching. So often end up with admin jobs, and feel guilty about spending time on the Bible prep.

Included in planning ahead E.g. planning for the students weekend away, explaining what he is thinking and asking if anything else instead, or anything missed. Let in early to the discussion so the plan could genuinely be changed.

Asked for thoughts about application of passage for students/female students. (In advance of sermon or student group talk.)

Staff teams: will work in different ways but many will adopt some variant of silos. We need to cultivate a mind set of all for one & one for all, it is all 'our ministry'. That can be demonstrated in time given in a staff meeting and prayer time.

Because it is 'our ministry' the vicar must own it and be seen to do so by the lay leadership and congregation - eg he can give notices about women's w/e away and upcoming evangelistic event, or show support whilst asking the woman to give the notice.

If there is upset about something that the female staff member has done, he must publicly back her and not hang her out to dry.

Concern for learning and development of women 1 Timothy 2:11; Titus 2:4-5

1 Timothy 2:11-15 - enabling the women to learn and develop in their theological knowledge... Investing in ways to encourage and support a woman's learning creates a good working relationship where the woman feels valued because she is valued.

Extract from Kirsten Birkett's report - Easter 2021

Exercise on Women in Ministry, Easter 2021

Question: How do you think the complementarian stance of your church helps your ministry?

Of those who answered gave at least one sentence in reply; some answers were quite lengthy. Several themes emerged:

- It gives complementarian women freedom in their ministry:
- I'm not expected to do things I'm not comfortable with.
- I am wonderfully free to minister to women and children without being pressurised.
- It frees me up to disciple and train women.
- Gives helpful parameters to ministry:
- It gives me guiding principles for the extent of my role.
- My role is clearly defined and I'm not having to work through what I should or should not do

It means that women are valued:

- Women are valued as equal.
- I think it ensures my role is seen as important and valued'.
- I am definitely seen in the staff team as a valid member of staff.
- I am included in decisions, and my opinion is listened to.

It increases the amount of ministry to women:

- I think teaching to women has increased in quantity and quality.
- It ... means our church leadership is convinced women's ministry is worth investing in because they are convinced the church as a whole will benefit from this.

Could Be Better If, more details

- Last minute changes - not so last minute! Working on your own means that it is easier to make last minute decisions. When part of a team, they can be disruptive and frustrating, negating work that has already been done by others and this quite often affects women on the team.
- On larger staff teams, where decisions affect the women's role, they feed into her experience of the role, so discussion of the potential or upcoming changes including considering their impact could make a real difference.

If a decision feeds in positively it builds trust, but if it has a negative impact on her role, it is better if there is discussion about the decision, and the impact as soon as possible, preferably before any decision, to prevent a negative spiral.

e.g. meetings were regular and not sporadic or unscheduled, and if we could look back at what has been happening and forward to the plans for the next week(s).

- It would be good to have an opportunity to share concerns in the meetings and for this to be given and heard constructively.

Generalisations!

Over time some common differences between the way men and women work, have been noticed and remarked upon. (Obviously these do not apply to everyone, (they are generalisations) but on a number of occasions they have been a helpful guideline.) Not necessarily positive or negative, just to be aware of!

Authority

‘Male presbyters can use their authority to serve, edify, build up their flock in love as this is the purpose of their authority and so can their female colleagues.

In male and female working relationships in the church there is an authority imbalance as the male presbyter is called to steward more authority as the leader of the church. Therefore, perhaps there is more duty placed on the male presbyter to set the tone of the relationship with his female colleagues, a tone of seeking their good and edification and valuing their contributions. The Apostle Paul exemplifies this conduct. I am always encouraged by the myriad of women Paul knew, loved, valued, as fellow co-workers in the gospel as recorded in passages such as Romans 16:1-16 as well as his deep concern for women in his church and their unity Philippians 4:2-3.’

Switching off from work

It can be easier for men to ‘compartmentalise’ different things going on in their lives, meaning that he can switch from concentrating on one thing to another relatively quickly. Women can take longer to switch focus, and may be processing one thing while doing another. This can mean that it takes longer to ‘switch off’ from work, and that the impact of a difficult pastoral situation/meeting is harder ‘to put down and think about later’.

Meeting 1:1

For men this often takes 45 mins to 1 hour.

For women, it is more often around 90 mins to 2 hours.

Peer support

It can be more 'normal' for men to have peer support groups - prayer triplets, termly or 6 monthly accountability meetings - and count this as 'work', than it is for women. It is helpful to encourage women that time for relevant support can be part of her working life.

Food!

Single men often have meals cooked and cakes baked for them.

Single, or married, women are often expected to cook meals and bake cakes for others.

Practical tasks

Sometimes a higher standard is expected from women than men in terms of housework, and hospitality.

Women can be expected to do more housekeeping tasks at church than men.

Women can feel that they have to use their day off, instead of taking time during the rest of the week to do home admin, cleaning etc. whereas men often find it easier to add that into a working day. The Main point being that it is important for the woman to be able to have a full 24 hours off, to be able to visit friends and family.

Positive Ministry relationships - for Women

The main discussion paper's prime focus is for those leading teams and this sheet starts the discussion for how those on the teams, particularly women, can relate in a way that also contributes to positive ministry relationships.

What works well?

- Being able to express an idea or suggestion of change, without it being an 'immediate demand'. Perhaps as something to think through and showing how it might contribute to the ministry as a whole.
- Knowing/learning what works well and being able to express that when asked. E.g. If working late one evening, and getting over tired, to know whether having a later start on that or the following day, or earlier finish the following day?
- Not to remind people of things if they have not asked for reminders.
- Realise that when things go wrong, it is often not intentional, so raise concerns in a constructive way.
- Be able to listen well to others, as well as having a voice
- Not treating the Vicar as your Saviour, you already have one!
- Having others around who can support you.
- Appreciate the differences between you.
- Appreciate God's design, as we try and work it out, submitting to God given authority, as to the Lord.
- Be thankful for what the men/leaders on the team do.
- Perhaps first on the list - pray for the men on the team.
- When female colleagues respect the authority of the male presbyter. 'It is good when female colleagues take responsibility to avoid undermining, resenting, grasping at the authority of the pastoral office. Women working alongside male presbyters need to have honesty with themselves if there is bitterness or resentment at the Lord's words in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 or elsewhere, and seek the Lord's help to trust his word and embrace the different and equally valuable tasks that God has made men and women for in His household.

Remuneration - Some suggestions

Rate of pay

What does the local diocese pay its clergy? The women's wage could be aligned with this, based on the number of years worked. Also, housing allowance. (One church has increased that in line with wages, even though the diocese has not increased the housing allowance, despite significant increases in accommodation costs.)

If not based on diocesan scale, how does it relate to the wages received by members of the church. If congregation members are generally on low wages, and support is being received from outside, then the Living Wage may be the fair amount to pay.

The Living Wage calculation [What is it? | Living Wage Foundation](#)

Is there consideration of pay increases built into the contract, as for the men.

Housing

Is this affordable for the individual?

Is it accessible and safe for her to travel home late at night if she is required to work late?

If local housing is too expensive, what about extra costs of travel compared with the men provided with a home nearby?

If a housing allowance is given to the men on the staff team, is it also given to the woman?

Pension

Clergy are included in the CoE pension scheme.

What provision is made for men or women who are not ordained and included in that scheme?

It is important that provision is made, as demographics indicate that it will be harder for the State Pension to be funded in years to come. If the individual is living in rented accommodation, or accommodation owned by the church, they will need to be able to fund housing in their retirement.

Volunteers

Is the volunteer going to incur expenses?

If so, what is the procedure for being reimbursed?

Is there an outline/description of the work being done, and any time frame for that work.

Extracts from role descriptions for women's ministry, including section for Families

The following are a variety of descriptions used in a variety of role descriptions:

Role: Women's worker, Associate Minister for women,
Pastor for Women (full-time or part-time)
Families and Women's Worker

Line Manager: Vicar, Senior Pastor, Families Minister

Reports: Ministry Trainees

General Responsibilities

- Be committed to praying regularly for the church family at X church and for other members of the team.
 - As a senior member of the staff team, to support the Senior Minister in the management and care of the wider staff team including mentoring of female Ministry Trainees.
 - Together with others in senior leadership to play a part in the ongoing pastoral support of the wider church including a share of pastoral visiting (e.g. sick, older members etc.) as well as support of individuals or couples requesting help (e.g. relationships, crises etc.)
 - Collaborate with the Senior Minister and others on the staff team in strategic planning for the wider church programme to promote the growth and ministry of the church.
 - As a member of the staff team, to attend regular staff meetings and prayer meetings.
 - To take on any other responsibilities as may be directed by the Senior Minister
- OR Flexible to perform such duties and tasks as are required to support the mission of the church working with congregation members and other ministry team leads

OR The candidate will need to demonstrate a commitment to flexibility. The job description may necessitate revision over time as the needs of the role and the church change.

- You would be expected to play a full part in the life of the church in general, especially being visible and available on a Sunday, and it may include the occasional leading of services, but your main areas of ministry will be as follows:

Specific Responsibilities

Areas of Bible teaching

- Overseeing the 1-2-1 Bible reading programme for women in the church
Working with the women's morning group co-ordinator to support and equip our women's morning groups / Overseeing the women's Morning Groups including recruiting and supporting leaders.
- Women's Bible Study Groups – to plan and run the termly programme, care for group leaders, recruit and train new leaders, prepare Bible study resources (with others), lead the leaders' prep session each week and lead a Bible study group.
- Women's Leadership Team – Equip the team and work with them to help lead the women's ministry in X church
- to plan and run occasional events for women that encourage their faith in Christ to grow and mature (Saturday brunches, weekend away, women's day etc

Pastoral Care

- Meeting up with women in the church for discipleship and pastoral care purposes
- Undertaking and supporting pastoral care among women, especially those...
- Working with the leaders of Carers & Toddlers groups to support pastoral care in the ministry area.
- Helping look after other women on the church staff team

Evangelism

- Opportunities to plan and co-ordinate evangelistic events
- Women's "Outreach" events – to plan and run occasional guest events for women that commend and declare the gospel of Christ (Christmas event, midweek guest events, Saturday brunches etc).
- Undertaking and supporting evangelism among women, including helping to arrange women's outreach events
- Evangelistic Courses – to run Life or Christianity Explored courses for women (as required) and to train others to do the same.

General Church ministry

- Opportunities to serve on one or more of the church committees (outreach, mission support, property, church council).
- Opportunities to plan, lead and review church services in collaboration with other staff team Members
- To attend and sometimes lead the Sunday services (and church prayer meetings).
- (To attend PCC)
- To be committed to praying for the work of the church and its members

Other descriptions for Families' work

Co-ordinate work amongst 0-11 year olds, Sunday groups and children's groups that meet during the week, encouraging good communication and planning across the age-groups and amongst the church family

- Be point of contact for enquiries about children's work at X Church, for staff team, parents and volunteers
- Support and encourage members of X Church who lead different age-groups e.g. Sundays: leaders of crèche, A, B, and C groups, and during the week: Babies Club, Toddlers
- Meet with overall leaders of Sunday groups once a term together; to meet with mid-week leaders twice a year.
- Be involved with others in identifying, recruiting and training new leaders and helpers

- Facilitate discussion and teaching about Christian parenting and discipleship of children, helping parents to be engaged in their children's spiritual growth at home
- Encourage and facilitate children and youth work training opportunities at X Church and in the Parish (with Parish youth and children's workers) and elsewhere (e.g. Growing Young Disciples, London)
- Be aware and supportive of Christian ministry (assemblies & Bible clubs) in local schools
- Develop and lead Messy Church (or equivalent) as outreach to younger families
- Regular liaison with Parish children's worker and youth worker
- Ensure that Child Protection Policies are being followed in the children's and youth work

Examples of shorter role descriptions

WOMEN

We are looking for a spiritually mature woman with prior ministry experience (paid or unpaid), who will take the lead in providing discipleship and pastoral care for the women in X church

The primary responsibilities of the role will be:

- Discipling women of all ages and stages in the church family
- Providing pastoral care for women in the congregation
- Equipping women for ministry and evangelism
- Developing new opportunities for outreach to women and families in the community

Day to day, this will mean:

- Working with and developing existing groups (Over 50s friendship group, women's breakfast)
- Starting up new ministries, such as a daytime under-3s group, 1-2-1s, evangelistic events.
- Supporting the vicar in the day to day leadership and activities of the church: playing a key role in Sunday services, attending prayer meetings and home groups, and leading and assisting in the planning and execution of church events, such as weekends away etc.

FAMILIES

- Overseeing the Sunday School: curriculum, health and safety of volunteers, recruiting and equipping of volunteers, rotas and also aiming to grow the work by fostering links with XY Nursery and by linking up with other local schools.
- Fostering links with X Church families, starting/building up a baby/toddler group midweek,
- Supporting local mothers where needed, being resourceful about other avenues such as XY for Baby
- Fostering links with local community using the facilities we might have such as 'Drop in for coffee', Free English Classes, morning prayer time in the church, Residents association, XY school

MINISTERING TO WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

...we expect the role to include:

- Growing and making disciples among Women and Young People of all ages and stages
- Providing pastoral care for Women and Young People in the Church Family
- Equipping Women and Young People for ministry and evangelism through teaching the Bible in a variety of contexts and to a range of ages e.g. 1-2-1s, Bible Studies, talks at evangelistic events, training courses etc.
- Overseeing and actively joining in with current ministries to Women and Families, including safeguarding
- Supporting the vicar in the day to day leadership and activities of the Church – attending staff meetings, prayer meetings, PCC and Church events
- Mucking in with the general running of the Church e.g. practical and administrative tasks

Other sections included by most churches

COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING

Candidates must undergo a safer recruitment process and the person appointed will be required to undertake relevant safeguarding training.

X church takes the safety of everyone within the Church very seriously and expects that everyone will work within the Church safeguarding policy. In particular, the Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk, or of actual abuse, to immediately raise this with their line manager or with y/z, as Safeguarding Officers.

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

- Committed Christian, well established in her faith
- Committed to regular personal Bible study, prayer and evangelism.
- Strong bible knowledge, preferably underpinned by formal training (e.g. Cornhill)
- Previous ministry experience

SKILLS/ ABILITIES

- Strong communication and listening skills
- Confidence and ability to speak in public
- Strong relationship skills with ability to relate to others in different stages and walks of life
- Professional and competent manner in willing co-operation with others
- Adaptability and flexibility to manage multi-tasking and the emotional pressure of ministry
- Good organisational skills
- Familiarity with office software

OUR IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

X church is a Bible believing church which seeks to glorify God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - by:

- Teaching the word of God, to help all ages grow in Christ.

- Praying and caring for everyone within our church community.
- Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with our parish, our town, and the world beyond.

x Church exists to know Jesus better and to make Jesus better known.

VALUES

A practising Christian supporting the values, vision and ethos of X church, including demonstrably firm belief in conservative evangelical doctrine and practice, committed to growing in relationship with Christ through regular Bible study and personal prayer, and committed to evangelism. Able to support the complementarian stance of the church in relation to headship in the church and family. Committed to our Church family, attending services regularly and the monthly prayer meeting.

SUPERVISION, APPRAISAL & TRAINING

- Employed by the Parish of X PCC, but managed and under the pastoral oversight of the X Church Team Vicar
- Monthly meeting with the X Church Team Vicar to review progress and to give and receive feedback
- Annual Parish Staff Team appraisal
- (Report to x when required)
- Further training will be encouraged, including attendance at a relevant ministry conference each year
- The job description will be reviewed at the end of the 6 month probationary period

If you have any further queries, please contact the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's office:
admin@bishopofebbsfleet.org or on 07710 232423.

