



The Anglican Church

In Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Diocese of Wellington

Exploring a Call to Ordained Ministry

What is Ministry?

Every member of the Church is called to be a minister. We minister when the Church gathers as the Community of Faith and also when the Church scatters in mission to be the salt of the earth and light to the world in a myriad of different ways.

The people of God are sent on mission to the people next door, or on the other side of the world. That mission embraces evangelism, nurture, service to those in need, the transformation of unjust social structures and the care of God's creation. We are equipped for mission with the gifts of the Spirit for ministry.

All who are baptised are called to mission and ministry in a lay ministry role. Some are called to mission and ministry in an ordained ministry role.

The ordained ministry of bishops, priests and deacons exists to lead and enable the ministry and mission of all the Church, our life together, and the worship of the God who calls us.

How do I get started?

We expect that you will have been an active member of a Parish or Mission Unit for at least two years and have been discussing and praying about this 'vocation' (sense of calling) with your Vicar for some time. Try to talk to a variety of clergy to hear their story and do some initial reading (see the booklist). We ask you to enrol in an introductory course in Theology, such as the Diploma in Anglican Studies. When they believe you are ready, your vicar writes to the Director of Ordinands, who oversees our Discernment Process, and he will arrange to meet with you.

What happens then?

We have a thorough Discernment Process prior to someone being accepted into training for ordained ministry. This period of exploration of the sense of God's call upon your life involves one to one meetings with the Director of Ordinands or a ministry mentor, and is focussed around Bishop Justin's six criteria covering Character, Charism, Call, Capacity, Commitment and Culture.

How long will this all take?

This period of exploration lasts about a year and by embarking on it, you are calling upon the Church for its guidance and support, and also submitting your sense of call to the discernment of the Church. The process culminates in an annual Discernment Weekend for candidates and their spouses, based on a marae.

What else is involved?

We ask you to write up a 'spiritual autobiography', which is a reflection on your journey of faith this far and gives an account of how your sense of vocation has emerged.

The year will also include some guided reading, a book review, and visits to other churches.

If after several meetings the DDO believes you have the potential to progress, he will ask you to complete an application form, and our one to one meetings continue.

Are other people involved?

We request reports from referees who know you well and your vicar, as well as a police check and a medical reference.

A few months before the Ordination Discernment weekend the candidate has appointments with a lay examining chaplain and a clergy examining chaplain, who are there to help the Bishop get another 'view' on your potential and gifts. They each write a report with their observations and assessment of the candidate.

Each candidate also has a meeting with a psychotherapist, who writes a report on you.

What happens at the Discernment Weekend?

The annual Discernment Weekend for candidates is based on a marae, and spouses are invited to attend to support their partner.

The weekend takes place within the context of prayer and worship. The candidates have three hour-long interviews with individual advisers, and an interview with the Bishop. They take part in two small group sessions and share in leading worship during the weekend.

Bishop Justin and four advisers meet at the end of the weekend and he receives their feedback on each candidate. The Bishop then makes a decision as to whether or not he will ordain the candidate or sponsor them for training at St John's College, or whether they need to go away and do some more work/preparation.

Whether this testing of vocation leads to affirmation of ministry as a lay person or in ordination as a deacon or priest, we pray that it will be a time when God richly blesses and directs you.

More information:

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