

## *The optimum use of licensed lay ministers*

It is possible for parish leaders to adopt a variety of approaches to the licensing of lay people for ministry. These range from a refusal to license anyone right through to an attempt to license everyone who is significantly serving the Church. Neither extreme is helpful.

Another approach is to seek a diocesan licence only for those forms of lay ministry for which a licence is mandatory, eg preaching regularly in the absence of a priest or aspects of the healing ministry.

None of these approaches tap the full potential of the Diocesan Licensed Lay Ministry system.

The optimum use will depend on each local situation. For example, a parish with a number of worship centres will obviously need more worship leaders and preachers than a parish with only one centre. Nevertheless, a helpful minimum to aim for is at least one lay person in each parish in each of the seven categories of ministry with a diocesan licence. Such people, resourced and encouraged by the diocesan training system, then become a resource and encouragement for other parishioners in the same area of ministry (perhaps with a parish authorization). People with a diocesan licence also contribute to the richness and depth of that particular ministry throughout the Diocese and can help resource other parishes. Any one individual should not be overloaded with a number of categories of licensed ministry. It is particularly desirable for those who exercise any significant pastoral ministry on behalf of the Church to be within the Diocesan Lay Ministry system.

If you are interested in exploring licensed lay ministry talk to your vicar.

The Diocese of Wellington website is  
[www.wn.anglican.org.nz](http://www.wn.anglican.org.nz)

## *How can we foster lay ministry?*

Parishes do well if they:

- Plan how to discern, encourage, equip and use the gifts of the people.
- Plan the mission and ministry of the Parish around the gifts of the people.

## *Discerning & using our gifts*

God gives each member of the Church many abilities to use in ministry:

1. **Natural Talents.** These are abilities you are born with. For example, some people are natural listeners and attract all sorts of people who need to talk.
2. **Developed Skills.** These skills and capabilities we have either learned or grown into; they may or may not be based on natural talents.
3. **Spiritual Gifts.** These are abilities which God gives to people for ministry. When we use spiritual gifts, the Body of Christ is strengthened, and God's mission to the world is continued. There are many types of spiritual gifts, and some are specifically mentioned in the New Testament. Because all Christians have received the Holy Spirit, they may be given any spiritual gift and should remain open to that possibility. All Christians are given some gifts. However, it often takes time to discover what our gifts are and to grow into using them.

If you think you have no natural talents, developed skills or spiritual gifts to be used in ministry, look again!

# LAY MINISTRY



- What it is
- Where it fits
- How parishes can foster it

## What is ministry?

Ministry is God working in and through God's Church to build God's Kingdom and God's world. Nothing less than this "big picture" can do justice to what it means.

Every member of the Church therefore is called to be a "minister".

Where and when do we minister? We minister both when the Church gathers as Church, and also when the Church scatters to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world in a thousand different ways.

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

This is "lay ministry", the ministry of the *laos*, the people of God.

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

All ministry should be partnership:

- Of those called into different aspects of the Church's mission.
- Of those with different gifts for ministry.
- Of those who are ordained with those who are not.

## What about lay ministry in the Parish?

A "parish" is the People of God in a local community. Its ministry is primarily within that community though it may also have ministries focused elsewhere. It is the responsibility of the parish or congregation to discern what God is doing in that community, and to become an instrument of that "doing".

The Church gathers to worship God and to equip and strengthen its members for ministry in the world. Its gathered internal life is a sign of God's Realm. There are many aspects of its ministry which are properly fulfilled in this gathering. Ordained ministers and lay people share in this. The Church then disperses to be an instrument of God's Realm. Ministry in the gathered Church must flow through to ministry in the world.

Without the Church gathering, individuals find it hard to sustain their personal relationship with Christ and to find the resources they need for their ministry. Unless the Church disperses, the Church and its members are inward-looking, and do not share God's love with the rest of the world.



## Where does licensed lay ministry fit in?

Licensed ministry, whether ordained or lay, is that ministry which is openly done in the name of Christ and His Church.

It is licensed because:

- It is ministry which needs to be regulated, made accountable and systematically resourced.
- If done inappropriately it will compromise the witness of the Church.

Licensing affirms publicly the spiritual gifts and valued ministry of an individual. It acknowledges accountability and responsibility between the individual in ministry and the Church in licensing this ministry. Some licensed ministry is internal to the life of the gathered Church; some relates to the ministry of the Church in the wider community.

Licences are issued by the Bishop who carries pastoral responsibility for the Diocese and its various ministries. Some ministry may be acknowledged and recognized by parish authorization alone. To avoid confusion, it is better not to use the term "licensing" for this authorization.

Lay ministries the Bishop licenses are:

- Anointing and laying on of hands for healing
- Catechist
- Educator
- Evangelist
- Liturgical or worship leader
- Pastor
- Preacher