

THE MINISTER'S GUIDE
to incorporating the
“Called to Serve” Course
in the
Time Ministry Strategy
for the
local church

Together for
Intercession
Ministry and
Evangelism

“The Minister's Guide”. Edited by P. Higton B.D., A.L.B.C.

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Foreword

We believe that the New Testament ideal of the local Body of Christ - one in heart and mind; functioning as a living organism; worshipping the Trinity in spirit and in truth; interceding together; caring for one another; exercising every member ministry and reaching out to the unchurched - can only be achieved through prayer, in the power of the Spirit, in obedience to God's Word. Any method used will only be truly effective if that is the case.

We gladly share these Time principles with you as they have been born in prayer and based on careful study of the Bible. They were forged on the anvil of the life of an ordinary local church, and have been found to be effective in many widely different church situations. Hundreds of churches of various denominations using these resources are to be found in the cities, towns and villages of many countries. Some Ministers use them as an aid to encourage unity in the whole congregation; some to unite a core group to whom they delegate aspects of ministry and mission. We trust the Lord will use them to bring blessing to your church.

- N.B. 1 The word "Minister" is used as a non-denominational term to refer to the clergyman, rector, vicar, pastor, elder or corporate leadership of a local church.
- N.B. 2 "Church Council" is used to denote the official executive committee within the church.

Co-Directors of Time Ministries International: The Rev. T. and Mrs. P. Higton.

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What is Time Ministries International?

“Time” is both a prophetic and practical teaching ministry, formed towards the end of the 20th century, looking towards 2000 AD and beyond. Its main emphasis is to stress the importance of the local church, of any denomination or nation, functioning as a united dynamic living organism. The foundational study course, “Called to Serve”, is being used by many hundreds of churches world-wide. The Time Strategy for development of the local church features the formation of ministry teams, united on a biblical basis, for the purpose of evangelism, intercession, pastoral and practical work.

“Time” also emphasises teaching on eschatology. In the belief that each generation of Christians should be prepared for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, balanced, biblical teaching is given on this important subject. We believe it vital that the church is prepared to be the Bride of Christ.

What is the aim of the Time Ministry Strategy ?

"A Church united in vision for every member ministry and mission"

Together for
Intercession
Ministry and
Evangalism

This principle of unity (on a biblical basis) expressed in diversity, ideally may be applied to the entire active membership of a local church. However it may still be very effective if applied to the existing leadership, or to a group of people at the heart of the church, ready to become united for involvement in ministry and mission.

The following pages outline a flexible strategy for church development which is now being used internationally. Numerous churches, whether large or small, testify either to transformation, or to major benefit in aspects of their corporate life: e.g. unity, prayer, evangelism, as a result of using the Time strategy and resources in the power of the Spirit. All glory to God for these testimonies.

The Time Strategy is ideal for

1. Church planting - to ensure unity of the original core group. A firm foundation will be laid for every member ministry and mission.
- or 2. A struggling church - which may be divided, inward-looking or for various reasons is not developing as it should. It is vital that each step of the Time Strategy is carefully followed and not rushed. Much attention needs to be paid to achieving unity of heart and mind before diversity.
- or 3. A church bursting with life - which may need to be given a new sense of direction, or to regroup prior to making further major advances for the Kingdom.
- or 4. A Minister supervising several churches - where a strategy for every member ministry and mission is urgently required.
- or 5. Widely differing church situations - where attention is needed to certain aspects of the life of the church, e.g.. unity, delegation, every member ministry, corporate prayer, worship, evangelism etc.

Time Ministries Ecclesiology

Our doctrine of the church is that each person who is committed to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, belongs to the universal Body of Christ and should be involved in a local church, engaged in active service for God. Ideally every Christian should serve the Lord within the local church as well as in family life and in the world. Some may have a role in the wider church. Most local churches are part of a denomination which should provide sanction for ministry, a biblical doctrinal basis of faith, and usually also determines the method of church government. It should be possible to combine the latter with development of a shared leadership team and every member ministry, according to scriptural insights from the Charismatic Movement.

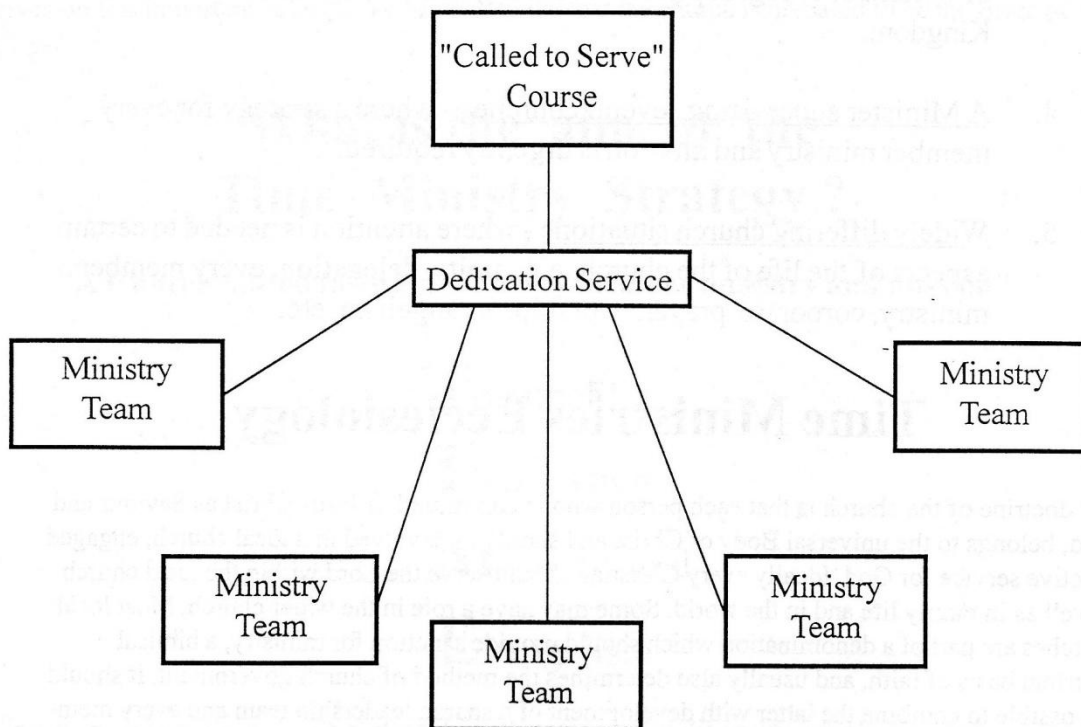
Any Christian or enquirer should be made welcome in church services, suitable pastoral care and fellowship being provided as necessary. The ministry and mission of the church, coordinated by the minister, should be carried out by those leaders and members who are willing to serve God in roles affirmed by the church whether in building up the church, or reaching out in evangelism and social care. Since disunity is so damaging to the ministry and mission of the church, biblical unity should be deliberately encouraged amongst those who are serving God in the local church. The Time Ministry Strategy advocates biblical principles and practical methods to be applied in the power of the Spirit, to move towards the ideal of unity in diversity. We believe ecumenical unity is also important, but unity begins at home!

Time Ministry Strategy

The following steps are recommended if the study course "Called to Serve" is to be more than a valuable teaching aid. In the power of the Holy Spirit and through prayer, we believe it can be used as a vital tool for the transformation or development of your church, if incorporated in a **flexible three year strategy**. (Only embark on this if you are fairly sure you will remain for three years as Minister).

Aim: Ideally to encourage the local church to function as the Body of Christ, expressing unity in diversity. A lesser aim is to encourage those in leadership, or a core group, to become united for ministry and mission.

Basic outline:



This programme is so flexible that it can be adapted to any church situation.

See next page for more details

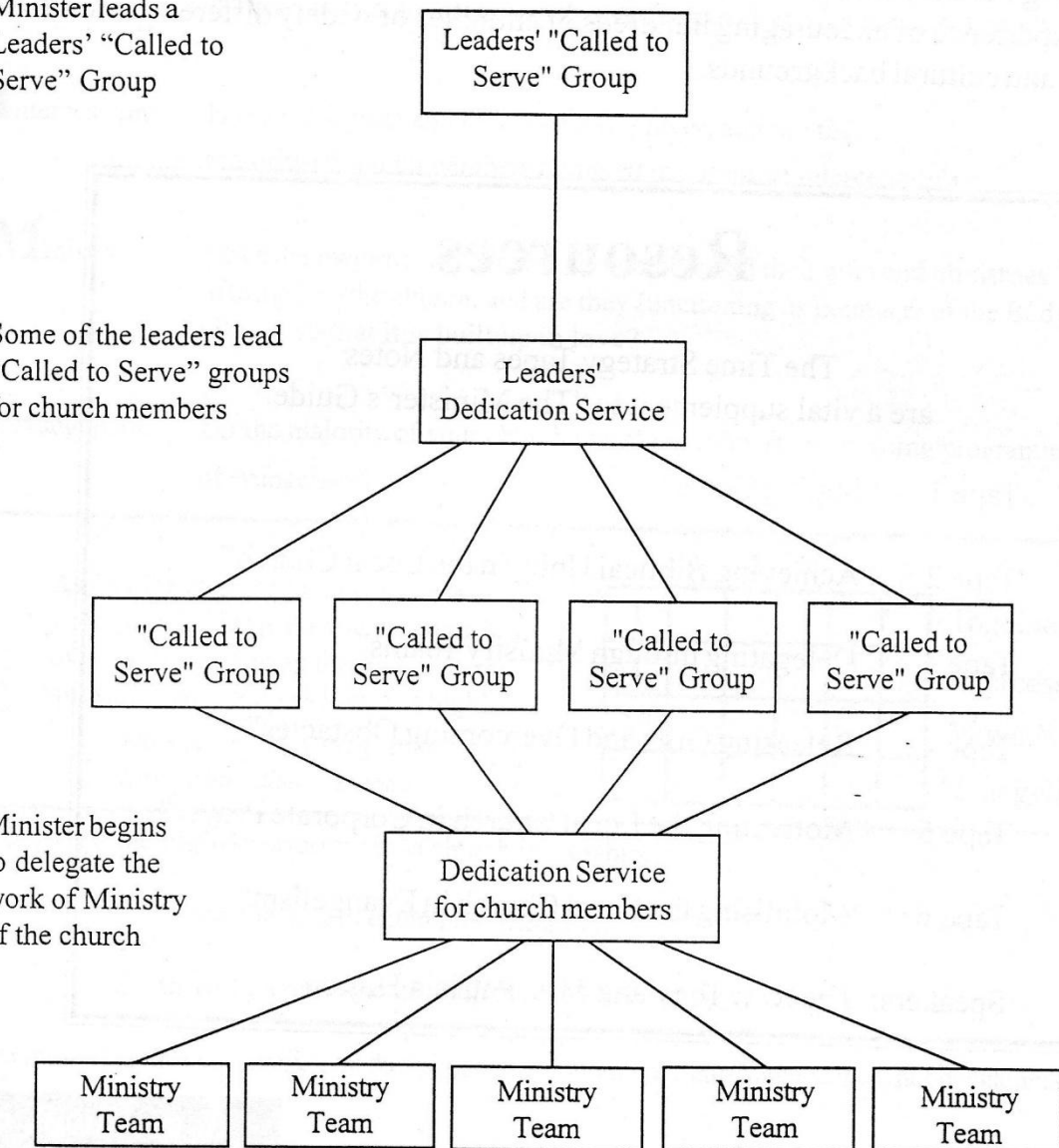
More Detailed Outline

for the whole church

Minister leads a
Leaders' "Called to
Serve" Group

Some of the leaders lead
"Called to Serve" groups
for church members

Minister begins
to delegate the
work of Ministry
of the church



Team members begin to share in the pastoral, practical and intercessory work of the church, after engaging in a corporate process of discerning gifts and ministries.

The evangelistic ministry of the church is developed.

(There are ongoing "Called to Serve" groups for new Christians and Christians moving into the area. More Ministry Teams are formed).

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

The rest of the Minister's Guide develops the outline, including describing variations on the theme. The suggestions are offered to you after ten years' experience of working out the principles in the Anglican parish of Hawkwell, UK, and ten years' experience of encouraging hundreds of churches of widely different denominational and cultural backgrounds.

Resources

The Time Strategy Tapes and Notes
are a vital supplement to "The Minister's Guide."

- Tape 1 "Setting Goals"
- Tape 2 "Achieving Biblical Unity in the Local Church"
- Tape 3 "Delegating through Ministry Teams"
- Tape 4 "Releasing Gifts and Overcoming Obstacles"
- Tape 5 "Motivating the Local Church in Corporate Prayer"
- Tape 6 "Mobilising the Local Church in Evangelism"

Speakers: The Rev. Tony and Mrs. Patricia Higton

As you, the Minister, digest the biblical principles and practical recommendations in the Minister's Guide and Strategy Tapes & Notes, convey what you are learning to your leaders and members as appropriate. If you have a shared leadership team, it is vital that they too study these resources and decide on any necessary adaptation for local circumstances. Those who are appointed to new positions of leadership should also be taught the Time Ministry Strategy. In this way it will come to be understood and "owned" by the church. It is vital that the leaders in particular become enthusiastic about every member ministry and mission on the basis of a united Vision.

Your Church?

Together: Is there unity amongst those involved in active service in your church?

Intercession: Is the work born and carried out in prayer, and are the majority of churchmembers involved in corporate intercession?

Ministry: Have the majority of your churchmembers had their gifts and ministries affirmed by the church, and are they functioning as members of the Body of Christ, so that it is built up in love?

Evangelism: Do the majority of your church members support an on-going programme of evangelism?

	1	2	3	4	5	
<p>Assess the strengths and weakness of your church. How do you rate on a scale of 1 - 5, in answering the four questions above? (1 is low, 5 is high)</p> <p><i>Do not get discouraged at this point - there is hope!</i></p>	T					Together
	I					Intercession
	M					Ministry
	E					Evangelism

In our view the **highest** priority of the church is worship,

the **second** task is to extend the Kingdom,

the **third** function is to develop the life of the church.

(Yet most churches concentrate on the third, and are often only into maintenance, not development).

Problem 1

Worship, evangelism and ministry can fall apart, be second rate or never get off the ground, if the majority of your church are not united. ***Delegation can be a recipe for disaster where there is disunity***

Problem 2

Some Ministers find it hard to delegate, and some congregations find it hard to accept e.g. pastoral visits, from people other than the Minister.

We shall first approach these two problems positively, before looking in more detail at the role of Ministry Teams. Recommendations for building a firm foundation of unity are to be found on pages 10 - 21; recommendations for delegation resulting in diversity, are to be found on pages 22 - 59.

HOW TO BECOME UNITED IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

In John 17 Jesus stressed the importance of unity in his moving prayer on the night before he died.

It is true that every believer is a member of God's family world-wide.

But it is also a fact that:-

- ◆ Some believers are half-hearted about their faith.
- ◆ Some are lazy and do not want to serve God.
- ◆ Some find security in tradition rather than God.
- ◆ Some resist change even to make the church more biblical.
- ◆ Some are independent, refusing to act as part of a Body.
- ◆ Some are rebellious against God-appointed leadership.
- ◆ Some leaders are self-seeking, clinging to position.

Have you got people like that in your congregation?

Have you got people like that in your leadership?



The result

The local church will at best be less than effective and at worst, next to useless, in glorifying God and extending His Kingdom. The enemy will ensure our time is taken up with in - fighting or trouble - shooting, rather than pushing back the forces of darkness in the world.

**IT IS ESSENTIAL THEREFORE TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO
ACHIEVE UNITY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH AS A BASIS FOR
MINISTRY.**

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?



10 Practical Steps to Encourage Unity

(This advice is to encourage unity in the whole congregation, but may be adapted for a lesser aim.)

THE BEST RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED BY CAREFULLY FOLLOWING EACH STEP OF THE STRATEGY, THUS ENSURING A FIRM FOUNDATION OF UNITY BEFORE DIVERSITY

1. **Pray**, preferably with a small group of trusted intercessors, for the Holy Spirit to bring about biblically-based unity in your church. Persevere in prayer throughout the three years of implementing the Time Strategy, at least until you are able to set up a system of prayer cells. A foundation of prayer is absolutely vital, to discern God's timing for implementation of the strategy, to discover the heart reaction of leaders and members, and to pray God's purposes into being.

2. **Aim towards the Vision**

The "Called to Serve" course recommends, and teaches the biblical basis for a 12 point Vision Statement for the local church, to be found on page 17, and in Session 1 of the Course.

The secret of unity is aiming towards a common goal

If people are converging from different directions towards the same point, they will come together.

It is vital that the Minister is totally convinced of the biblical nature of the Vision, the importance of having a Vision, and the necessity for all who share in the work of Ministry and Mission to be aiming towards the Vision.

3. **Teach the Vision to Leaders first, using "Called to Serve"**

CHOOSE A PILOT GROUP OF LEADERS TO STUDY THE COURSE

These may be all your recognised leaders

OR all your church council

OR any existing housegroup leaders

OR a small hand-picked group

Select a group which is likely to be at least 75% positive in reaction. If this is not the case, move to stage 6.

- N.B. 1 Lead this group yourself, but we highly recommend the "Time Called to Serve Teaching Tapes" if your group is English-speaking. Even if you are the only one who understands English, we recommend them for your benefit.
- N.B. 2 Meanwhile, teach the congregation generally from the pulpit about having a biblical vision and some of its features. (Illustrate from the Strategy Notes).

4. Interview each leader personally

i.e. Those leaders who have studied “Called to Serve”. See page 14 and Appendix 1

5. Leaders make the act of dedication (See Session 20, “Called to Serve”).

i.e. Those leaders who:-

- a) Have completed the course and attended regularly.
- b) Are in agreement with the Vision.
- c) Are willing to rededicate themselves in the Lord’s service and to have their gifts and role reassessed in the near future.
- d) Are willing to join or lead a Ministry Team as directed by you.

6. Teach the Vision to churchmembers, using “Called to Serve”

Either . . . invite all your churchmembers over 18, if you are fairly sure they have a personal faith. (Help is given later in the Guide about action to take if the response is small).

Orask all existing housegroups to study the Course.

N.B. 1 These “Called to Serve” groups should only be led by yourself or leaders who have made the act of dedication. (If there are not enough such leaders, you may have to lead the Course centrally).

N.B. 2 Any leaders who have made the act of dedication but are not involved in teaching the groups could form a prayer group to pray for the church doing the Course,
or they may form a pilot Ministry Team.

N.B. 3 It is possible that any existing housegroups may need to be reshuffled for the purpose of studying the Course. If this is necessary, warn them that the major change is still to come: when the Ministry Teams are formed.

7. Adopt the Vision officially through your Church Council

(See pages 20,21).

8. Interview each member personally

(See page 14 and Appendix 1).

9. Members make the act of dedication

i.e.. Those members who:-

- a) Have completed the Course and attended regularly.
- b) Are in agreement with the Vision.
- c) Are willing to dedicate themselves in the Lord's service.
- d) Are willing to join Ministry Teams.

10. Ministry Teams are set up to share in the work of the church

(See from page 22).

It is important that within approx. 18 months from launching "Called to Serve" all church members have at least been invited to study it. If only a few respond, one or two Ministry Teams may still be formed, and at least all were offered the opportunity of being involved (which counters any concern about exclusivity).

SUMMARY OF TEN STEPS TO UNITY

- 1. Pray about the Strategy from beginning to completion**
- 2. Aim towards the Vision**
- 3. Teach the Vision to Leaders through a "Called to Serve" Group**
- 4. Interview each leader**
- 5. Leaders make act of dedication**
- 6. Teach the Vision to churchmembers through "Called to Serve" Groups**
- 7. Adopt the Vision in Church Council decision**
- 8. Interview each churchmember**
- 9. Members make act of dedication**
- 10. Ministry Teams are set up**

If these steps (which may be achieved in one year) are followed, a sure foundation will be laid for the shared ministry of the church.

The Importance of Personal Interviews

Although time-consuming, Ministers have found this aspect of the Ministry Strategy to be very valuable, and in the majority of cases, positive in outcome. It can be regarded as a constructive spiritual check-up. One Minister said this was the most rewarding activity of his entire ministry.

a) For Leaders

Plan to see each leader personally (or a married couple together) to assess their reaction to the "Called to Serve" Course, by asking:

- (i) if they are one in heart and mind with each point *of the longer version of the Vision* (in Session 19 of "Called to Serve").
- (ii) if they are willing in principle to hand back their gifts and role in the church to God, for him to change or confirm in practice during the next year.

Only those whom you discern to have the right heart attitude over these two matters should take part in the Leaders' Dedication Service. (We shall discuss later what to do about leaders who are less than positive - See Appendix 1).

Obviously, only leaders with the right heart attitude who take part in the Dedication Service, should be used in teaching "Called to Serve" to church members.

We suggest arranging the interviews from Session 15 of "Called to Serve" onwards to give plenty of time.
--

b) For churchmembers

If there are too many churchmembers for you to interview personally, then this can be shared between trusted leaders, who have made the act of dedication.

It is necessary to assess the reaction of each member to the Course to see:

- (i) If they are one in heart and mind with each point of *the longer version of the Vision*, and
- (ii) as above in a. (ii), if they are already serving God in the church; or if they have not participated before, to see if they are willing to be used in God's service.

IT WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT TO DEAL WITH FEARS AT THIS POINT.

(See Appendix 1)

e.g. What will serving God mean in terms of time? (but Ministry Teams can actually cut down on time involvement). What about the elderly or physically less able? What about the excessively shy, or those prone to depression? etc. (Hawkwell Ministry Teams have included all the above including several 80 year old members.)

Stress heart attitude and willingness, and that the Dedication Service is a declaration of intent, by the grace of God.

More About the Pilot Group of Leaders

A. Guidelines in selecting the group.

If there is an obvious group of leaders (eldership, P.C.C., Vestry, Session, Diaconate), the majority of whom are likely to be positive, this is one possibility. Bear in mind, however, that if there are a few leaders who are likely to be negative and seek to spread such attitudes, this could introduce a most unhelpful atmosphere into Course meetings.

There are a number of possible variations. One is to broaden out the Pilot Group to include anyone in any leadership capacity, or to consider a different category of leaders altogether (e.g.. leaders of any existing housegroups. It is vital to include them if the next stage is to teach the course to existing housegroups). It is a good idea to include spouses where possible, although any number over 20 is rather unwieldy for the first group.

Another possibility is for you personally to choose one or two individuals or couples with whom you believe you are already "one in heart and mind" and study the course on a more private basis.

B. The purpose in studying the Course with Leaders

Firstly this means you will be teaching the Course yourself, thereby going into it in depth before launching it on the whole church. It is obviously preferable to do such in-depth study rather than just looking through it in a cursory way. Sessions 2 - 4 and parts of some of the other Sessions are fairly basic, but it is good for leaders to know what the rest of the church will study.

Secondly it gives an opportunity to discover which of your existing leaders are truly one in heart and mind with you about your aims as a church.

Thirdly, by the time you come to study the Course with the rest of the church you will know those whom you can use to teach it.

C. Circumstances in which it might be preferable to by-pass the Pilot Group Stage

(i) Normally, a Leaders' Group can be chosen without much fuss and it can be explained to the rest of the members that this is a group blazing a trail which they can follow in five or six months. However, if there were undue feelings of rivalry and envy this would be unhelpful.

(ii) If you were unable to choose a sufficiently positive Pilot Group, this would obviously be very unsatisfactory, e.g.. you might have a very traditional leadership but a more renewed membership.

(iii) If you have a very tiny congregation (20 or less) it might not be worth the extra six months involved, as you could teach the whole congregation.

In any of these situations, simply invite the congregation to study the Course and towards the end of the Course put proposals to your Church Council and embark on interviews.

It is IMPORTANT THAT ONLY THE MINISTER TEACHES THE COURSE TO THE PILOT GROUP (or in one of the above situations, to the whole congregation). The reason for this is that it would obviously be very unhelpful to share the teaching with someone who later proved to be not entirely enthusiastic about the Course and Strategy.

If for some reason you end up teaching an over-large group, perhaps half-way through the evening after the main teaching it could break up into smaller groups for discussion, prayer etc..

NB: The circumstances referred to in C. above are exceptions.

A FIRMER FOUNDATION IS LAID FOR EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY AND MISSION IF, a) THE COURSE IS TAUGHT TO LEADERS FIRST, AND b) THE PERSONAL INTERVIEW FOR LEADERS AND MEMBERS IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

Tension between the Biblical Ideal and Reality

Ideally every true believer should demonstrate his/her love for Jesus not only by displaying the fruit of the Spirit in Christian character, but by discovering his/her particular calling to serve God including in the local church.

The *reality* is that many go through times in their Christian lives of being apathetic or half-hearted. The normal procedures of church discipline, as described in Strategy Tape 4, are inappropriate for such attitudes. Church discipline according to Matthew 18 should only be used for those living in blatant sin or spreading negativity or divisiveness. The Time Strategy steps towards unity (p. 13) help to deal with independence or failure to discern the importance of unity of the Body.

What *can be done about the half-hearted*? We obviously reject coercion or pressure, but advocate challenge, biblical teaching, envisioning, encouragement, counselling and prayer, in addition to the "Time" Strategy to bring about change. Where all that fails to make an impression on an individual, he or she should not be used in the ministry and mission of the church until change takes place. General fellowship and teaching should be offered (p. 45).

The *more likely scenario* is of someone who has been initially enthusiastic about the Vision and Ministry Teams, but whose enthusiasm wanes. That is why there should be an *annual service of rededication* so that those who have done "Called to Serve" may move into or out of Ministry Teams at that stage. (Some for reasons such as bereavement may also naturally want a temporary respite from being in a Ministry Team.) A system of one or more general fellowship and teaching groups, whether separate from Ministry Teams or alternating fortnightly (see p. 26) is therefore vital. If this is not provided, apathetic attitudes may adversely affect the Ministry Teams. It should be a matter of prayer that after a few months there will be a positive change of heart.

For advice on how to tackle "Second Generation Syndrome" see p. 62

More about the Vision

VISION STATEMENT FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

The Vision is of a loving fellowship for people at different stages in their Christian pilgrimage, where those involved in ministry and mission aim to be:

1. **Wholeheartedly committed to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.**
2. **Baptised and regular at communion.**
3. **Experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit.**
4. **Doers of the Word, not hearers only.**
5. **Resisting the enemy.**
6. **Living by faith.**
7. **Seeking holiness before God.**
8. **Involved in intercession and 'hearing' God.**
9. **Offering wholehearted worship to God.**
10. **Committed to each other in unity and love:** respecting and trusting the leaders; encouraging each other; refusing to gossip but rather endeavouring to sort out any problems constructively with the people concerned.
11. **Recognising gifts and practising "every member ministry".**
12. **Involved in evangelism and social concern, by love, word and power, in the light of the return of Christ.**

The Longer Version

Session 19 of "Called to Serve" not only amplifies the above, but clarifies what is meant.

Although it is too long to be memorised, we strongly recommend that this longer version forms the basis of personal interviews. This is in order to avoid dilution of the biblical teaching in the "Called to Serve" Course.

"In every one of the growing, healthy churches I have studied, a discernible link has been forged between the spiritual and numerical growth of those congregations and the existence, articulation and widespread ownership of God's vision for ministry by the leaders and participants of the church. Conversely, visionless congregations fail to experience spiritual and numerical growth."

George Barna, 'The Power of Vision' (Ventura, CA :Regal 1992)

Why a Written Biblical Vision? (or Vision Statement)

1. It summarises much of the New Testament teaching on the local church in a convenient form and is therefore a teaching aid.
2. It is a check-list by which the individual Christian and the church can measure its spiritual development, (not only once but at regular intervals).
3. It gives a biblical, outward-looking and challenging focus for the church's unity, and so helps prevent a holy huddle. The aim is to function as a united Body, reaching out as one, to the area, the nation and the world.
4. A church which doesn't know what it is aiming at is unlikely to hit anything!

Is it not legalistic?

1. It is no more likely to lead people into "legalism" than reading the New Testament itself. We are not aiming at mere orthodoxy (correct belief) but at being transformed by the Holy Spirit. Christians have the law written on our hearts (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 10:16), i.e. we have the Holy Spirit indwelling us to remind us and lead us into the truth of the written word, which points us to *the* Word (Logos - Jesus himself).
2. Reliance on prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit and a right heart attitude, are still all important. Nobody can claim to fulfil the Vision perfectly, but we can have an aim.
3. Jesus prayed for deep unity between Christians based on truth. Although interdenominational unity is important, it is a priority to aim at unity in the local church. Jesus was not thinking of some cosy, introspective unity, but a united commitment to doing God's word. So Paul urged the Corinthians to "agree with one another" and "be perfectly united in mind and thought." (1 Cor. 1:10). The very early church was in fact "one in heart and mind" (Acts 4:32) - one in their convictions and beliefs.
4. Jesus challenged people deeply: to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength (Matt. 22:37-40); to put Jesus before anyone else, loving him more than nearest and dearest (Luke 14:25); to reject personal comfort, desires and ambitions in favour of accepting hardship, suffering, hatred and persecution for Christ's sake (Matt. 10:22, 38-39; 16:24-25; John 15:20); to be perfect (Matt. 5:48).

Yet many Christians today feel that we shouldn't make such demands on modern disciples. People are said to be "not up to it" or frightened by it. Such excuses are contrary to the teaching of Christ.

Some Ministers back off from a challenge because of fear of losing people, or division. Obviously there is a risk, because some may respond negatively to a challenge. But this never deterred Jesus (look at John 6:60-66; Luke 12:51-53).

5. Although we are saved by grace through faith, saving faith should result in love for Jesus, which in turn should result in obedience to his word. (John 14:15,21,23).

6. So much Christianity, particularly in Westernised nations today, is sub-normal, because to become a Christian does not usually require laying one's life on the line. Deliberate efforts therefore need to be made to teach "normal" Christianity. The Vision, the Course and the Dedication Service help in this.

The end result of the act of dedication in the Dedication Service, should be a people who are one in heart and mind about the nature and mission of the local church, and eager to serve God for the first time or to rededicate themselves to him.

The work of ministry of the church (worship, corporate prayer, evangelism, pastoral and practical jobs) will soon be carried out only by those who have made the act of dedication to implement the biblical Vision. They will be willing to have gifts and ministries (re)assessed, so that they are serving God in ways affirmed by the church.

Is it loving?

Christian "agape" should be fostered at all levels, in any and every way, in the local church. The Time Strategy implemented without love would be sterile. But part of love is to challenge people to be more committed to the Lord and one another. They also need the fulfilment of discovering God's calling for their lives. The Time Strategy releases far more people to serve God than is normally the case in a local church.

Is it exclusive?

Is it exclusive to insist that all the Ministry and Mission of the church should soon be carried out only by those who are united in aiming towards the Vision which they have studied in "Called to Serve"?

We would argue that the Ministry and Mission should be shared by those who can be relied on for cooperation and who are committed to biblical principles. The Time Strategy is a positive way of discovering such people and more effective than other criteria e.g. those who are baptised or confirmed, or already ministering, or chosen by the Minister, or thought to be believers, or on an electoral roll, or who volunteer or are chosen by a committee.

However, if the unity of all those serving God is thought to be an impossible goal in a particular church situation, it could still be the aim of a core group within the wider congregation.

(For a well argued theological paper on Corporate Ministry in the Church of England with reference to ACCM 22 & Time Ministries, send to the Time UK office. Author M. Higon, Cambridge University Graduate, pursuing Ph.D. theological studies at Cambridge).

Suggested Motion for the Church Council

A good time to put an official motion to the Council is towards the end of the time when the churchmembers study the “Called to Serve” Course.

As we believe God can restore to biblical principles a church of any historic denomination (as well as independent churches), it is important to work within the normal structures, whilst praying for transformation. E.g. work with your Church Council and follow all the correct procedures. But teach churchmembers to nominate and vote for leaders who are in harmony with the biblical Vision.

It is wise if the use of the Course, the adoption of the Vision, conducting the interviews, holding the Dedication Service, and setting up Ministry Teams, all become part of the official policy of the church.

Step 1

It is useful to have an initial resolution for financial reasons about using the “Called to Serve” Course and tapes. However, this is not essential. In some situations it is best simply to introduce the Course - which the Minister normally has the authority to do - and to defer official corporate decisions.

Step 2 (a)

If your pilot group of leaders is the entire official leadership, and the majority are likely to be positive, then a decision could be taken when the leaders have studied “Called to Serve” to adopt the Vision. Otherwise this can be deferred to Step 2 (b).

Step 2 (b)

Towards the end of the time when the “whole church” is studying the Course (e.g.. after Session 15 “Honouring your leaders”), full proposals may be put to your Church Council. This way people understand fully what they are voting for.

NB: In the event of a new minister being appointed, the fact that the council has approved an official motion, will help to ensure continuity of vision. Presumably council representatives or nominators, or the whole council, will have some influence in connection with the new appointment. We trust that when this situation arises, they will stress the importance of the new minister being one in heart and mind with the vision and that he should intend to continue with the strategy.

The MOTION

This Council states as a basic principle that the ministry and mission of _____ church shall be shared by those who are “one in heart and mind” about basic biblical principles concerning the Christian life and local church.

To this end we resolve:

1. That we adopt as our common goal “The Vision of the Nature and Mission of the Local Church” as appended, which is a summary of biblical teaching about personal or corporate Christian life. [A decision needs to be made about whether to append (a) The Short Version, (b) The Longer Version, or (c) both, with the Longer Version being seen as a commentary on the Short Version].
2. That all those who attend the church at present or in the future [including those on the electoral roll or membership roll if any] shall be invited to study the “Called to Serve” Course which expounds the Vision.
3. That each individual on nearing completion of the Course shall be interviewed by the Minister(s) in order to arrive at a mutual decision as to whether the individual is one in heart and mind with the Vision, and so ready to participate in a Dedication Service.
4. That a Dedication Service be held on completion of each “Called to Serve” Course with the two-fold purpose of the participants
 - (a) Affirming the Vision
 - (b) (Re)dedicating themselves to serve God in ways to be discerned by the church.
5. That Ministry Teams be set up to facilitate shared ministry, and that the Minister(s) allocate only those who are participants in the Dedication Service to those teams, so that every member ministry and mission is carried out by those who are united in vision.
6. That members of the Ministry Teams who continue to be one in heart and mind with the Vision, are afforded opportunities to affirm this in an annual Rededication Service. But any who, after being offered necessary help, persist in behaviour or belief contrary to the biblical Vision, shall be asked to withdraw from Ministry Teams until the matter is rectified. This is also an opportunity for those who have recently studied “Called to Serve” to join Ministry Teams, or for lapsed members to re-join, if they are able to re-affirm the Vision.
7. Anyone who is unable or unwilling to participate in the “Called to Serve” Course, or who in the personal interview is found not to be in agreement with the Vision, or who later find they are no longer able to reaffirm the Vision, shall continue to be made welcome in the church, given pastoral care and provided with opportunities for general fellowship. However it would be inappropriate for such people to participate in the Ministry and Mission of this church.

HOW TO DELEGATE AND ACHIEVE SHARED MINISTRY THROUGH MINISTRY TEAMS

Remember your goal: to share the work of ministry (including worship, prayer, teaching, evangelism, pastoral and practical work) with those who are one in heart and mind with the Vision.

It is vital therefore that leaders and members have been interviewed and seen to be wholehearted in aiming towards the Vision, and are ready to have gifts and role discerned or reviewed.

◆ Once you have unity you can embark on diversity with confidence.

Be prepared to delegate in a radical way, aiming to arrive at a position within three years where you are rather like the conductor of an orchestra, drawing out the gifts of others, and also able to concentrate on developing your own gifting.

IF YOU DO NOT DELEGATE, OTHERS ARE PREVENTED FROM SERVING GOD.

Take risks

Train people not so much by theory but as “on the job” assistants.

- e.g. - By agreement with the counsellor, as prayer-backer in counselling, soon able to do follow-up and eventually counselling (first with you as prayer-backer, then training others).
- Going with you to do a pastoral visit, then visiting the same person without you.
 - Leading a group in the presence of an existing leader, then taking over, etc.

Prepare people for changes: Well before Ministry Teams are set up, ensure that those studying “Called to Serve” realise that any existing housegroups may be restructured etc. **Communicate changes well in advance.**

Steps to take in setting up Ministry Groups or Teams

MODEL A :“GENERAL PRACTICE” MINISTRY TEAMS

1. The Purpose of these Teams

These teams are homegroups with a dimension of ministry, which involve members in pastoral ministry, practical jobs, intercession & evangelism.

Decide on the *number of and leadership for* the Ministry Teams. The number of members could be 10-15 people. Aim at a mixture of ages, sex, mature and newer Christians. The leaders are not necessarily teachers but co-ordinators. They should be full of enthusiasm about the concept of united, shared ministry. *We strongly recommend that you do not allow General Practice Ministry Teams to be composed of people with a shared special interest or ministry, e.g.. musicians or youth leaders, just for the sake of saving in terms of time spent on church activities. Experience shows that such special interest groups rarely share in the general ministry of the church, which is the main purpose of these Ministry Teams. They should meet at a different time. But see Model B p. 34.*

2. Aim towards having *Area* Ministry Teams (see exceptions below)

First define your total area on a map. We shall call this your “parish” for simplicity. (In many denominations this is done for you, but some independent churches are too ambitious, regarding a large town as their area. Such churches can grow “fat” by drawing Christians from a very wide area, but this can disguise a failure to evangelise the people local to the church building). A population of 1,000 - 10,000 is usually manageable.

Your *aim* is to place a Ministry Team in a small area or “patch” of the overall parish. These small areas should again be clearly defined on a map.

Do not attempt too much. If you only have e.g.. three Ministry Teams, decide on a priority area of your “parish” for you to divide up between the three groups. The rest can gradually be covered by groups as you expand.

If you have several villages or churches.

- (a) If your Ministry Teams are drawn from one village or church, then that becomes your priority area, and the other villages/church areas become mission areas. Your long term aim will be to plant Ministry Teams in each village/church area.
- (b) If drawn from several villages/church areas, decide on your number of groups and therefore the number of villages to cover.

The reason for encouraging area groups is:

- (a) For the members to “own” those streets as their “patch”. They should pray for the people who live there specifically, ask God for a burden for them, do prayer walks, get to know the people and needs.
- (b) It also makes delegation easier - you will know which group can be given a particular pastoral visit, and it simplifies literature distribution.
- (c) It is especially important for evangelism.
- (d) It is important that church members understand the principle that they have the responsibility of sharing with the minister the commission to evangelise and pastor the people in a specific geographical area.

What about groups outside the “parish”?

Many churches before the “Called to Serve” Course will have had fellowship/teaching-style housegroups meeting outside the “parish”. However, it will be seen that the work of ministry cannot easily be carried on by such groups - you would fail to pastor and evangelise your parish which is your priority. In some cases (e.g.. The Church of England) it would be inappropriate to carry out organised evangelism in someone else’s parish, except by invitation. Therefore **unless it is impossible for people to travel**, we recommend area General Practice Teams within the “parish”. People travelling from outside the “parish” should be encouraged to regard the area allocated to the group as the responsibility of the whole team to pastor and evangelise. Obviously they will still be encouraged to witness to their neighbours.

Exceptions to the concept of *area* Ministry Teams

The ideal, for easier delegation of pastoral care and development of evangelism, is the simple concept described above, of a geographical area drawn on a map, which your church is there to serve. Ministry Teams are allocated a small section each of that area. These geographical areas are metaphorically “Jerusalem” (Acts 1:8) for the church and the group (i.e. their priority for evangelism).

Exception 1

There will be rare cases where it will be impossible to have area teams, e.g. where a city centre “parish” consists mainly of shops and offices, and the majority of members live outside the “parish”, as there is little residential accommodation within it. In this case, the groups would have to meet outside the “parish”, but develop a) a strategy for evangelising and pastoring the “parish” and b) ways of witnessing to their neighbours.

Exception 2

There might be several churches with a healthy biblical and gospel ministry which co-operate well together in a small town. In this case it would be ideal if each agreed on their priority geographical area, and also in some cases on a type of evangelistic ministry to major on, e.g. one church could minister to drug addicts, another could develop pre-school ministry for the town.

Exception 3

The church might have been formed to minister to a particular tribal, or language group, e.g. a Chinese-speaking church in an English-speaking city. It would be important for Ministry Teams to be located in homes in the city in the various areas where such people live, or at least to find ways to evangelise them.

3. Devise a Monthly programme for all Ministry Teams eg:-

Year 1		Year 2 onwards	
Week 1	Fellowship/Teaching	Week 1	Fellowship/Teaching
Week 2	Practical or Pastoral Jobs/Prayer	Week 2	Practical or Pastoral Jobs/Prayer
Week 3	Central Meeting of all M.Teams for fellowship, teaching, etc.	Week 3	Central Meeting
Week 4	Low-key Evangelism and (after 6 months) discerning gifts & ministries	Week 4	Planning for or doing evangelism

NB A practical point is to have teams on weeks 1, 2 and 4 meeting, e.g., some on Tuesdays, some on Wednesdays, so that people can baby-sit for one another, and married couples can attend the same group.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT MINISTRY TEAMS ARE COMPOSED ONLY OF THOSE WHO ARE “ONE IN HEART AND MIND” OVER THE VISION, FOR UNITED EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY AND MISSION. IF THIS CONCEPT IS WEAKENED IN ANY WAY, PROBLEMS WILL SOONER OR LATER ARISE, AS A RESULT OF FAULTY FOUNDATIONS.

4. Decide on the relationship between Ministry Teams and other fellowship groups

This is a crucial decision and needs much prayer. It largely depends on the relative proportion of Ministry Team Members to **the rest of churchgoers who want midweek fellowship.**

SCHEME (1)

If the Ministry Team Members are in the majority:

We recommend a weekly meeting of the Ministry Teams and the setting up of a weekly (separate) General Fellowship Group. (See p.45 for details on the General Fellowship Group).

SCHEME (2)

If the Ministry Team Members form approx. 50%

General Fellowship Groups open to all including Ministry Team members, but only led by Ministry Team leaders, meet fortnightly.

On the alternate weeks only the Ministry Teams meet.

Weekly Timetable

Week 1	General Fellowship Groups (Fellowship/Teaching)
Week 2	Ministry Teams (Practical/Pastoral and Prayer)
Week 3	General Fellowship Groups (Fellowship/Teaching)
Week 4	Ministry Teams (Year 1 Discerning gifts & ministries. Year 2 Evangelism)

The third week could be a Central Meeting for all groups and there could be Central Meetings on a fifth week in the month for all Ministry Teams only.

SCHEME (3)

Where the Ministry Team Members form a minority

There should be a continuation of any existing housegroups, but the Ministry Team members could meet together fortnightly, on an extra evening, to share as a leaders' group in the work of ministry.

Week 1	Practical/Pastoral and Prayer.
Week 3	(Year 1) Discerning gifts and ministries. (Year 2) Evangelism.

If Schemes 2 or 3 are adopted

The ideal is to continue to encourage the majority of the church to join in subsequent "Called to Serve" Groups and so aim at Scheme 1. New Christians will be very willing to join a "Called to Serve" group and so the number of Ministry Teams will increase.

NB If a church has a significant proportion of *students*, who of necessity are only present during term time, it could be helpful, if Scheme 1 is adopted, to involve them as "honorary members" of Ministry Teams.

5. More about the Practical/Pastoral/Prayer evenings

The first half of the evening could *either* be used to carry out *practical jobs* such as church cleaning, which could be allocated to Ministry Teams on a rota basis, (see below), *or* to have an *administration time* ensuring that practical and *pastoral duties* are shared out in the group. These may be done at a different time from the group meeting, or, to save members' time, a few members of the group could do e.g. pastoral visits during group time, whilst the rest support them in prayer. Ministry Teams should not add to the pressures on church members, but rather ensure that tasks at present carried out by the few are shared by the many. By including opportunities for ministry and mission in group time, a busy mother for example, with an unchurched husband, is able to serve God *and* have fellowship without spending more than one evening per week (+ Sunday morning) away from home. The group leader should also ensure that elderly/infirm members have a role to play e.g. paperwork administration or praying for members as they go visiting.

For further information on Delegation of Pastoral Care, see Appendix 3.

The second half of the evening could be devoted to outward-looking *prayer* e.g. for an aspect of the work of the church and its mission, or prayer for the next group evangelism evening. The Minister or Prayer Secretary may want to give a prayer topic to the group each month. Prayer for group members can take place on the fellowship/teaching evenings, but the monthly group prayer evenings are intended to encourage intercession for the wider ministry and mission of the local church.

For further information on corporate prayer, listen to the Strategy tape on the subject (Tape 5).

Further details on practical jobs

The following are examples of duties which could be shared between Ministry Teams:

1. Cleaning church buildings; maintaining church grounds.
2. Minor repairs and decoration.
3. Catering at church functions; flower arrangements; creche duties.

Services led by Ministry Teams

It might be possible to roster the Ministry Teams to take a service once a month. They could take a big step forward as a Team in planning this together. They could pray about a theme; plan to lead intercessions; lead songs; give a testimony or perform a drama; read the Lessons etc.

6. Ministry Team Evangelism evenings

a. *Low-key evangelism in the first year* of Ministry Teams

In the first six months, members should be encouraged to do evangelism once a month in non-threatening ways. This will vary according to the cultural context. In countries like the UK invitations to the next evangelistic service could be distributed through letter boxes in the homes located in the geographical area allocated to the group. On another evening members could pool their knowledge of the area and go for a “prayer walk” around the streets, praying silently for the homes on the way. There could be some low-key training in personal witnessing. Members could practise their testimony on each other (see notes on page 32).

In the second half of the first year, one evening per month will be needed to discern gifts and ministries (see the next main section of the Minister’s Guide).

b. *On-going evangelism from the second year* of Ministry Teams

- ◆ It is vital for the Minister, or an appointed church evangelism co-ordinator, to enthuse the groups for their task of mission. Ideas should be shared in the leaders’ meetings, and a monthly letter written to clarify the suggested evangelistic activity (see pages 29 - 31). As accountability is important, there should be a system of reporting progress.
- ◆ Allowing for holidays, there could be approx. 10 evangelistic evenings per team per year. Some of these will still be low-key e.g. distributing leaflets. Some will be major events for the group e.g. inviting neighbours into the home for a social evening followed by an evangelistic epilogue or testimony. Some of the evenings could be “parish”-wide events in which all the groups share.
- ◆ Most people feel threatened by the prospect of witnessing, which results in a range of negative reactions, from apathy to aversion. The role of the Minister or evangelism co-ordinator is vital in ensuring that initial enthusiasm is maintained and that groups do not revert to being inward-looking. Evangelism must therefore be planned into the system. It should then become on-going, so that the church has a continuous programme of every member evangelism.
- ◆ Everyone is called to witness but some members will be recognised as gifted in evangelism. They could co-ordinate the evangelism for the group or plan church evangelistic events. Such people need to be given more thorough training e.g. in “Evangelism Explosion”. (Address on page 65)
- ◆ It is vital that methods of evangelism are adapted according to the cultural context. Some of the methods we used 1983-93 are not necessarily the most appropriate for the late 1990’s and beyond e.g. door to door visitation from “cold”, in contrast to visitation by appointment to build on a contact, is probably no longer suitable in the post Christian West. (See p. 59 “Developments in Local Evangelism”)

The following pages (29 - 31) are sample letters to Ministry Team leaders with suggestions for Evangelism Evenings

January

Dear

Evangelism Evening 20th or 21st January

On your evangelism evening January 20th/21st we would appreciate it if you would complete your survey of the area, or if necessary update it and give a full report to the administrator by February 1st.

Please pool your knowledge re: e.g.

1. Christians living in the area who attend other churches.
2. The elderly/housebound/sick/problem families etc.
3. Homes where there is openness to the gospel.
4. Homes where there is opposition to the gospel.
5. Any spiritual discernment God has given you about particular spiritual forces etc. in your area, e.g. spiritualism, or social problems e.g. drug abuse.
6. Newcomers.

Please write out a systematic report road by road.

Pray for your area and especially ask God to show you who to invite to the healing service in February.

With many thanks,

(Evangelism co-ordinator)

February

Dear

Your next evangelism evening is the 17th or 18th February. We should be grateful if your group would distribute the invitations to the healing service to be held at Emmanuel 10.30 am February 22nd. Please pray this week in your group about any sick person in your area whom you should invite personally (aim at e.g. six people per group). On the evening when you distribute the leaflets, please visit these six homes inviting them and offering to call for them. If they are vague in their response then be prepared to pray for healing for them then and there, and/or share the Gospel.

Please choose an inexperienced member of the group to pray with you at the end of the healing service for those who respond to the invitation for prayer at the front of church. If unsure of the commitment of the person who comes for prayer, be on the look-out for an opportunity to ask if they have put their trust in Jesus. These services have proved to be used by the Lord in evangelism.

Many thanks,

(Evangelism co-ordinator)

May

Dear

We very much hope that you will take advantage of the summer evenings to encourage your Ministry Team to be involved in evangelistic visiting on May 19th and 20th, and June 16th and 17th. You will be given a list of addresses in your area where the church already has some contact.

You have already learned a brief gospel presentation which can be given on the doorstep or if you are invited inside. The purpose of the visiting should be that each member of the group aims at giving a brief presentation of the gospel at least once in May or June. This will raise their faith and confidence and we trust lead to folk showing an interest or even making a commitment.

You should take a copy of "Just Grace" and a Gospel to be handed over if any interest is shown, also take a leaflet on Emmanuel which can be given to everyone. Always leave a positive impression and an invitation to the 10.30 am service even if the reaction is negative.

By way of introduction, tell them that you are their Church of England representative from Emmanuel Church, Main Road, and that you would love to tell them a bit more about our church and what we believe.

If you discover anyone with physical or emotional needs, offer to pray for them then and there or tell them you will pray for them in your group. Tell them where and when the group meets, and give a phone number they can contact if in need. Be on the alert for any practical help which the group could reasonably offer.

Familiarise yourself with the various activities to which you can invite them: Emmanuel 10.30 am service, children's groups, Faithsharing, Coffee Morning, or offer a further visit.

Many thanks,

(Evangelism co-ordinator)

September

Dear

Thank you to your group members for your hard work in evangelistic visiting in the Summer. Although most members were nervous their level of faith was raised, especially when some people came to church as a result. We are now thinking ahead to the Autumn programme. As the date of our Harvest Guest service is now 27th September, we leave it to you as to whether you distribute the invitations to this on 15th/16th September or 22nd/23rd September.

Could you pray about what you are going to do as a group for your own Harvest event, preferably held on one of the two dates above so that folk who attend can be invited more personally to the service. Some of you will want to provide a Harvest meal or buffet. Others might think of a coffee evening when people from 2 or 3 roads are invited to bring food-stuffs or for example hand-made goods for auction for the third world (contact our representative immediately for Tear Fund display materials).

Folk will often respond to something where they can give as well as receive, especially in a good cause. It might be as well not to make the evening too high-powered, but just use it for social contact purposes.

Many thanks,

(Evangelism co-ordinator)

November

Dear

It's been good to get the feedback from the "Harvest" outreach. Most of the groups have been encouraged by the contacts that were made.

Now we need to look to our Christmas outreach-social; please try to be creative with your themes. Why not try a book party to sell Christian books for children for Christmas. All group leaders have had the opportunity to see the video "Better Get Ready" about what people think of Christmas. This could be an alternative to open up conversations, as you have the traditional mince pies and carols.

Plan NOW and book the video early to avoid disappointment.

The other aspect of our outreach that is developing is that of making inroads into the society around us. The Cancer Support Group is starting to see people coming along, and several church members are involved in "Meals on Wheels", the Tuesday Coffee Bar etc.

We are enclosing the Life-Line cards; the idea is for groups to canvas their area for people who are vulnerable, of any age (i.e. OAP's or one parent families), and leave them with a card with the name and telephone number of someone in your group they can contact in case of emergency. On the back of the card is a list of useful telephone numbers so they may choose to keep the card by the phone. Do try to distribute the cards before Christmas, it gives us a good reason for knocking on doors and even inviting more people to your Christmas events.

Many thanks,

(Evangelism co-ordinator)

Advice to Ministry Team members on giving a testimony

1. **Pray**
Pray a good deal before you plan your testimony, and before and after you give it. Ask others to pray for you and your hearers.
2. **Make it God-Centred**
Stress what God has done. Some testimonies draw attention mainly to the person giving it rather than glorifying God.
3. **Don't over-emphasize the "bad" side**
Refer as necessary to any failings in your life or to what things were like before God blessed you in the way He did. Be specific but don't over-emphasize this side of things or go into unnecessary detail.
4. **Describe clearly what God did**
Say in some detail exactly what God did and how.
5. **Emphasize the difference He has made**
How, in detail, is your life better now? But NB. Not an insurance policy against troubles.
6. **Be specific**
Don't just say "The Lord blessed me." - say what that blessing involved in simple words, e.g. don't just say "I was away from the Lord" - say what that meant in practice.
7. **Include the main points of the Gospel**
Jesus' death for your sins, repentance, faith, His risen life in you now.
8. **Use simple language**
So that even newcomers can understand, e.g. "I was laid on one side in a bed of sickness" really means "I was ill".
9. **Be brief**
When preparing each part of your testimony (and notes can be helpful), ask, "Is this really relevant and important to what I want to convey to my listeners?" If not - cut it out!
10. **Respect others feelings**
If you mention anyone else by name, don't say anything that could be at all embarrassing or even slightly private unless you have permission from the person concerned. If in doubt, ask them.
11. **Be humorous not frivolous**
Use humour by all means - so long as it is strictly relevant and adds something helpful to the story or makes some point clearer. But if you are frivolous (being funny for the sake of it either to cover nervousness, to entertain people, or draw attention to yourself) it will detract from your testimony.
12. **Don't preach**
By all means quote a verse of scripture - but don't let it turn into a sermon, or try to "get at" people.

FINALLY whatever blessings and benefits you may mention, always remember and convey that now you are in a right relationship with God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, whereas previously you were estranged.

Hawkwell Parish Church invite you to a

GUEST SERVICE

with prayer for

HEALING

10.30 am



We believe God heals
today!

During this special guest
service there will be an
opportunity for any who
request it, to receive
Christian prayer for healing.

**Emmanuel Church, St. Mary's Church and
Golden Cross Community Church (Holt Farm School)**

Sample leaflet

(A recent testimony of healing could be
printed on the back of this leaflet)

MODEL B : “SPECIALIST” MINISTRY TEAMS

These are ideal when only a minority in a church have studied “Called to Serve”. If this model is followed, the process of discerning gifts and ministries (described on pp 36-44) should take place as soon as possible after studying “Called to Serve”, beginning with existing leaders. But instead of all members of the team being involved in a variety of ministries (pastoral, practical, intercessory and evangelistic) people are allocated to teams specialising in a particular ministry. These teams will only involve people who are aiming towards the Vision after studying “Called to Serve”. They may attend a general fellowship homegroup weekly or fortnightly, but also be involved in a team which plans and carries out a specialist ministry (usually a termly planning meeting is required, plus weekly or fortnightly involvement).

How to become involved in a Specialist Ministry Team

Study “Called to Serve”



Participate in Dedication Service



Gifts and Ministries discerned



Specialist Team

It may be necessary to keep the Called to Serve Group together for this purpose, after the Dedication Service

Examples of Specialist Ministry Teams

Pastoral team

The minister trains the members and delegates some of the pastoral work to them (Appendix 3, sections 1-4).

Evangelism team

This team co-ordinates an ongoing programme of evangelism, including, eg. a continuous series of “Alpha” courses (see pp 62-65).

Discipleship team

This team ensures that all new Christians are invited to “Called to Serve” and oversees the organisation of these groups in the future.

Young Church team

Musicians/Singers team

Practical duties team

Worship planning team

Intercession team

Self - explanatory

Although at first this team may form the only group of intercessors, it is to be hoped that eventually they will co-ordinate corporate prayer throughout the church (see pp 47-49).

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Two Models of Ministry Teams

The General Practice Model is excellent for channelling the enthusiasm of church members, when a majority have studied “Called to Serve” and are keen to discover new ways of serving God. If most of the existing housegroups are willing to be re-formed into Ministry Teams, there will be a sense of working together to fulfil the aim of every member ministry and mission, as all groups follow the recommended monthly programme.

Certain tasks may be delegated to the newly-formed Ministry Teams before they embark on the process of recognising gifts. This gives an opportunity for team members to discover the strength and weaknesses of other members. General Practice Teams not only afford to **all** who have studied “Called to Serve” an opportunity to serve God, but also a chance to be involved in many different types of ministry, rather than specialising too early. The system makes it possible to regard the teams as “mini-churches”, ideally with responsibility for an area of the parish.

However if someone also wants to specialise in a particular ministry, it means being involved in both a Ministry Team and that ministry. Whereas General Practice Teams render unnecessary some specialist departments eg. for pastoral care (as this is carried out by the teams) there is still a need for a young church or worship department, for example. If individuals become too overloaded, they should not also have a role in the team, or they could even attend just fortnightly on the fellowship and teaching evenings.

The Specialist Model comes into its own in a church where only a small number of people have studied “Called to Serve”. Although they could form a General Practice Team, it might be better for the church if, after the discernment of gifts and ministries, they are able to develop aspects of ministry which may have been lacking, at church rather than group level eg. Pastoral Care or Evangelism. Gradually there may be enough who are one in heart and mind with the Vision to fulfil most of the ministry roles in the church.

However this system can lock people into a particular ministry for some years (eg. music, counselling) without affording different opportunities for service. It may also mean that more people are involved in both a housegroup and a specialist ministry, whereas the General Practice model involves only one evening a week for many people. Gradually as more people study “Called to Serve”, it might be possible to adopt the General Practice Model.

N.B. 1. Some churches may want to start with the General Practice Model and, as the years go by, keep the best aspects of that whilst also setting up some Specialist Teams or departments (eg. a Counselling Department; an Evangelism Department, but still leaving normal pastoral care and some aspects of evangelism with the Ministry Teams).

N.B. 2. With both models the challenge is to involve in “Called to Serve” those who have already been fulfilling roles in the church, leading to reassessment of their ministry. If not, there will be some people serving the Lord who understand the concept of a united Vision, and others who have not been willing to learn about this. That is why it is important to launch the Course enthusiastically for the whole church, if possible. Prayer, patience and counselling are important in helping reluctant individuals, but in the end determine that, after a period of time, the ministry and mission of the church will ideally be carried out by those who are one in heart and mind with the biblical Vision.