

Exploring a vocation to ordained ministry

There are three stages to exploring a vocation to ordained ministry:

1. Informal exploration

Begins when someone contacts a Vocations Adviser or Diocesan Director of Ordinands to find out what is involved. Usually this contact is made through the incumbent. This is usually followed by a time of fostering spiritual growth and exploration of different types of ministry. This may involve guided reading, spiritual direction, attendance at the Fellowship of Vocation, opportunities to meet with individuals exercising different ministries, a placement in a different type of parish, attendance at a vocations conference, etc.

2. Diocesan Selection

When the DDO believes the person is ready to proceed, the candidate fills out an application form and has interviews with three diocesan selectors. The selectors advise the DDOs whether someone should be sponsored by the Bishop for a selection conference. Candidates may be sponsored for stipendiary/non-stipendiary ministry, permanent non-stipendiary ministry or ordained local ministry. The selection criteria are common to all types of ordained ministry.

3. Bishops' Selection Conferences

These are organised and run on behalf of the House of Bishops by the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council (formerly the Advisory Board of Ministry and normally run from Monday evening until Wednesday teatime. There are a number of selection conferences each year in different parts of the country. Candidates are sent a booklet explaining what is involved so that they can be as well prepared as possible. At the end of the conference the selectors make a recommendation to the Bishop as to whether a person should proceed to training or not.

If a person is not recommended for training reasons for this will be discussed with them. Support for non-recommended candidates will be offered by the diocese, but the primary support must come from the incumbent and members of the local church. People do not normally return to a conference within two years but may, at the discretion of the DDO and Bishop, attend up to three selection conferences.

Training

Candidates for stipendiary ministry who are usually under 30 years train residentially at one of the eleven English Theological Colleges or at St Michael's College, Llandaff. Those over 30 years may train residentially or on the Northern Ordination Course. Those for non-stipendiary ministry train on the Northern Ordination Course and those for ordained local ministry train as part of the Manchester Ministry Scheme. Recommended candidates receive grants to cover the cost of training from the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council. Family support grants are given by the Diocese, when necessary, to candidates training residentially.

ALSO

Vocation is a wide area, as it covers the calling of all Christians to follow God's particular calling for their lives, and to use their gifts in his service. Much of this exploration will take place at parish level, whether this is to do with vocations in the wider world, or particular avenues of service in the church.

Further information is available from: www.cofe.anglican.org/more_involved/index.html