

Order for Baptist Ministry

A CELL REVIEW PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

One practical way of integrating the desire to remain true in our relating and discipleship to the values of the dream, and also to walk with and watch over one another in the specifics of being called to – and sometimes tempted away from – Christian ministry is the following:

- Hospitable gathering;
- At each cell meeting suggest the scene is set for our way of being together by reading aloud *The Dream* near the beginning of the meeting;
- Daily Office follows soon after;
- Review could comprise reading out a reminder of one core area of Christian ministry, followed by a reminder of the general review questions.

Eg 'Committed to being faithful in Christian ministry we particularly ponder the following area of our calling...' (*reading out the introduction for and one question from one of the five categories of review questions listed below*)....

'As we do so we remember that God may be speaking to us in an area not addressed by this question, and overall we are asking ourselves

- In what part of my life and experience is God particularly addressing me at the moment?
- What part of my life am I keeping away from God's gaze and word at the moment?'

How it might work: For a cell that meets every 4-6 weeks, with five main areas on a continuous cycle, each area would be entered into once or twice a year and the whole cycle of specific 'questions' within 2-3 years. For a cell that meets on a flexible pattern with longer but fewer meetings a year (eg to accommodate the geographical distance of cell members) it might be possible to consider more than one area within the space of a longer meeting. In any case, for every cell, it would be important to engage with the two questions about the Cell/OBM ('E') at least once a year in order to reflect on the way the cell is functioning and also to enable consideration of the nature of each cell member's call with regard to OBM.

So, taking an average, once-every-6-weeks cell: 'Mid January's' cell considers A1, 'Late Feb' – B1, 'Mid April' – C1, 'Late May' – D1, 'Mid July' – E1 and 2, 'Early Sept' – A2, 'Mid Oct' – B2, 'Late Nov' – C2 etc.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

A. Ministry Vows: *A review based around the content of ordination, induction or commissioning vows*

A1. In what way(s) am I currently tempted to give up on or play down what it means to lead with courage, love and self-discipline, sharing the Word in season and out of season?

A2. In what ways am I being called to minister courageously in the Spirit's love and power at this time?

A3. Our call is to exercise Christian ministry with faithfulness and love including going to and making disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Am I regularly proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ through words and deeds and seeking the coming kingdom of God?

A4. How far am I serving and leading the people of God through pastoral care, gentle nurture and faithful teaching, setting before them the whole counsel of God?

B. Ministry Pitfalls: *A review of some temptations and distractions that go with the calling to minister*

- B1. In what way(s) am I currently tempted to seem 'relevant', or 'spectacular', or, 'powerful' at this time?
- B2. Where are the places and times of prayerful, considered reflection on my own ministry and leadership at this time? And with whom?
- B3. Am I experiencing particular distractions at the moment – what and where are the siren voices?
- B4. What and where are the hidden rocks in my ministry? And where are the safe harbours and refit yards, the wise guides and fresh supplies?
- B5. Am I experiencing any creeping acedia – a spiritual apathy or carelessness, a lack of care or refusal to grow expressed in either unreflective activism, or a lethargic pottering-round withdrawal? Or a professionalism expressed in critical superiority and busy-messiah-like, top-down, un-self-aware ministry and leadership?

C. Spiritual and Personal Resources: *A review of the practice of prayerful and accompanied attentiveness both to God and to what I most need*

- C1. How full or empty is my spiritual, emotional, and intellectual 'fuel tank' or 'well' at this time? Is there anything I need less of, or to drop? Is there anything I need more of, or to start, (or re-start)?
- C2. What and who are enabling me to be attentive to God at this time?
- C3. In what ways am I sharing in being attentive to God for and with my church and community?

D. Personal Discipleship: *A review of life as a disciple rather than simply as a minister*

- D1. How am I doing in exercising ministry in all humility and patience, serving the people of God and not lording it over them; welcoming the stranger and building up the body of Christ until we all come to unity and maturity?
- D2. Jesus challenged his disciples to leave self behind, take up a cross and follow him. Am I following Christ wherever he leads, remaining faithful to him?
- D3. *Regarding prayer and attentiveness:* In what ways am I seeking to keep connected to God...and how is that going?
- D4. As one called to: *...be a maker of peace:* in which relationship(s) am I being invited to build or restore better communication and trust, or be reconciled?
- D5. As one called to *be a pursuer of justice:* in what relationships or structures am I being invited to enable fairer and more inclusive treatment?
- D6. As one called to *be a lover of mercy:* is there someone vulnerable or broken, or who gives power away to me, who I have been walking by or taking for granted and who I can bless in some way?
- D7. As one called to *bear witness to Christ:* where and with whom might I be marginalising, toning down or resisting the radical presence and message of Jesus?

E. Cell and OBM: *A time to explore the process and meaning of involvement with OBM, perhaps including a reminder of the vows or intent and commitment before using the following prompts:*

- E1. In my - and our - commitment to gather as cell and order - what am I grateful for? What do I - or we - need to do differently?
- E2a. If I am exploring a possible commitment to OBM as a way of sustaining and enabling faithful ministry, am I being called to deepen that commitment through words of intent as a novitiate? Or through vows of commitment as a full member of the OBM community? E2b. If I have already made vows as a full member of the OBM community, in what ways are those vows being fulfilled?