

The Basic Task(s) of the Ordained Ministry
(from RevRabRants Blog October 2018)

1. Answer all e-mails swiftly.
2. Lead all spiritual discussion evenings at Church because you are the expert.
3. Open and close up the Church for worship and meetings you're attending.
4. Go to Church early and make sure the heating is on.
5. Landscape that huge garden you've got at the manse.
6. Find a person to look after building maintenance, the money, and the post-worship teas – it could even be three people.
7. Put out the chairs for Kirk Session meetings.
8. Visit as many people as possible, mainly for a blether, including those with flu or a bad cold – remember you're immune.
9. Visit housebound members, even if they never came to Church when they were able, and make return visits if they were out at the bingo when you called earlier.
10. Visit all organisations regularly as chief cheerleader – outfit and waving pom-poms optional but preferable.
11. Don't miss a coffee morning.
12. Come up with names for flower delivery, and if no one turns up for flowers, deliver them too.
13. Inspire young people and families to flock to the Church.
14. Take funerals of folk in your ever-expanding parish if requested, even if there is no Christian connection.
15. Remember post-funeral visits because that's what you were "taught" even though your visit seems more like an intrusion.
16. Visit new folk.
17. Take up as many chaplaincy opportunities as possible to fill your spare time.
18. Go to General Assembly every 3-4 years, remembering to read all reports, cover to cover, whilst continuing your daily ministry.
19. Put up the Christmas decorations in Church if no one else is willing to do it.
20. Make up a mission plan and lead it.
21. Conduct weddings.
22. Visit all care homes in your parish.
23. Serve on a Presbytery committee, maybe a national one too.
24. Become an Interim Moderator because it is your duty.

25. Take all your holidays and study leave as long as you can provide cover and supply whilst you're away, and if you can't, don't.
26. Know everything that's going on at your Church so folk can phone you anytime for information.
27. Work morning, noon and night, like everyone in your Church does.
28. Be brilliant.
29. Pursue excellence.
30. Be an excellent steward of everything.
31. Be nice.
32. Buy an elastic diary.
33. Eat mars bars regularly, helping you to work, rest and pray.
34. Have a sound devotional life, preferably in a traditional form.
35. If you think you're doing a good job, revisit the 1990 basic tasks of ordained ministry and pull your socks up.
36. Don't look for Biblical back-up for the multitude of ministry tasks, it must be in there somewhere.

In 1990 we talked of the Basic Tasks of Ordained Ministry. Even then we talked of "ministers uncertain of their role" & "unrealistic expectations tied to a former day" & "doubt as to priorities" & "congregations clinging to patterns of a former day".

1950...2200 ministers

1975...1600 ministers

1990...1300 ministers

2023...611 ministers (projected)

And still we cover every inch of Scotland!!

Ministry is a calling and a way of life BUT we minister alongside ALL who are CALLED to live the Christian life as part of the ministry of all God's people.

In "The Gift" by Eugene Peterson, he writes:

"It is far more Biblical to learn quietness and attentiveness before God than to be overtaken by...the twin perils of ministry, flurry and worry. For flurry dissipates energy, and worry constipates it. Years ago I noticed, as all pastors must, that when a pastor left a congregation, the congregational life carried on very well, thank you. A guest preacher was assigned to conduct Sunday worship, and nearby pastors took care of funerals...a congregation would go for months, sometimes as long as a

year or two, without a regular pastor. And I thought, *All these things I am so busy doing – they aren't being done in that pastorless congregation, and nobody seems to mind.* I asked myself, *What if I, without leaving, quit doing them right now? Would anybody mind?* I did, and they don't."

In "The Contemplative Pastor" by Eugene Peterson, he writes:
Pastor...we want you to be responsible for saying and acting among us what we believe about God and kingdom and gospel...we believe God's Spirit is within us and within the wreckage of the world...we believe in the Ezekiel story...the resurrection body of Christ. We need help in keeping our beliefs sharp and accurate and intact...we want you to give us help. Be our pastor, a minister of Word and Sacrament in the middle of this world's life...this isn't the only task in the life of faith, but it is your task. We will find someone else to do the other important and essential tasks, this is yours: Word and Sacrament...There will be times when we don't want to listen and you don't want to say, but do it...you are vowed to do it. Your task is to keep telling the basic story, representing the presence of the Spirit, insisting on the priority of God, speaking the Biblical words of command and promise and invitation.

The basic task of ordained ministry!