



# Wakefield Ministry Scheme



## COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY

Help for Clergy and Lay Leaders

### 3. Delegation

GR D3

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Collaborative ministry involves more than delegation, but it cannot work without the practice of delegation. This paper sets out some of the principles and practices to be learned by anyone in leadership who wishes to delegate.

### ***Some definitions***

Delegation has been defined in the following ways:

‘Giving people the freedom and authority to handle certain matters on their own initiative, with the confidence that they will be able to do the job successfully.’

‘Choosing to give someone else a piece of work / task / project, and giving them the authority to carry this out, when the person delegating could have kept it for him/herself.’

‘A means by which results can be achieved through the empowering and motivating of others to carry out tasks, for which you are ultimately accountable, to a specified level of performance.’

*How do these definitions match up to what you think you are about when you decide to delegate something?*

### ***A Delegation Planning Sheet***

Draw up the following to use as a guide whenever you are going to delegate a piece of work to someone.

1. Details of Person: existing skills & competencies; time availability; previous relevant training and experience; other current responsibilities, etc.
2. Details of Task: scope of responsibility; nature of results to be accomplished; any specific objectives or timescales involved, etc.
3. Authority needed, e.g. to draw upon a budget, to make changes in how task is done
4. Monitoring: what method, and how often?
5. Training needed
6. Your own responsibilities toward the person to whom the task is delegated.

also: as leader you are voluntarily relinquishing some of your control when you delegate. The 'control freak' is a poor delegator. But people are not truly empowered to complete the tasks they have been given unless the necessary authority and room for decision making is granted them as well. Having said that...

#### 4. Adequate support

Delegating is not abdicating. People should never feel abandoned. When you delegate responsibility and authority, you do not delegate the ultimate accountability that every leader must bear. The buck still stops with you (though if all goes well, circumstances should not arise in which that has to be demonstrated!) You are therefore responsible for the person's support: in the early stages this often needs to be quite direct and personal. Additional training may sometimes be needed. There should be a means of review and feedback (your role is one of supervision).

#### 5. The Team context

In the collaborative context, delegation will not just be an arrangement between two people. Try not to have a piecemeal approach (for example, delegating something only when a crisis looms), but see things whole and plan ahead. Map out what is delegated to the various individuals and sub-groups within the church, and in the ministry team. Are there good lines of communication between them? Is there a reasonable, balanced spread of roles and responsibilities? Are people growing because of the areas of responsibility genuinely entrusted to them?

### *Reasons for delegating*

Make a list of the reasons you are choosing to delegate. *What benefits would you hope to see from working this way?*

Here are some possible answers:

- To spread the workload
- To free up some time for the leader to concentrate on other tasks
- To increase the motivation and satisfaction of team members
- To contribute to people's training for new responsibilities
- To enlist a wider range of aptitudes and skills

*What are you looking for when you delegate? Is it mainly a way of offloading some work because you have too much? Or a means of getting rid of the tasks you dislike?*

Think of an example under each of the following headings of something you might delegate:

1. Things you are bad at, or dislike doing
2. Things you are good at, or enjoy doing
3. Work which will provide good experience for someone else
4. Work which will affirm / reinforce the talents of someone else
5. Routine work that need not be done by the leader

Note that delegation is not quite the same thing in each of these cases. Understand which category you are working with!

### *To whom should you delegate?*

Finding the right person is the essential first step. This will depend in part upon the type of delegation being proposed. Consider:

- Are you really benefitting from the expertise of others? Is there someone who can do this particular task better than you can?
- Perhaps you already do the task well. But is there someone else who, given time and training, would also do it to an acceptable level, even though they would do it in a slightly different way from you, thus freeing you to do something else?
- Perhaps you have no need to give up the task for your own sake. But is there someone else who would benefit from doing it in terms of their own personal development, increased confidence and team effectiveness?
- Are you managing your time efficiently? Is there someone who could do today what you are having to put off until tomorrow? (or next week, next month etc.)

### *Guidelines for good delegation*

#### *1. Clear Briefing*

Discuss with the person to whom the work is to be delegated exactly what is involved. Explain why it is important. Set it in the wider context of the church's life and activities. Show how it fits in with the ongoing vision and strategy: people need to feel that what they are doing is a worthwhile part of a project. Be clear about the level of commitment expected including time to be spent on the task.

#### *2. Proper Resourcing*

Make sure the recipients of the delegation have the necessary skills, information and capability to carry out the work. Provide training where needed. Check on material resources such as computer access, photocopier, any budgetary implications etc.

#### *3. Task, Authority and Responsibility*

Strictly speaking you cannot have true delegation if it is only the task that is delegated (unless there are good reasons why this particular person can only be expected to cope with this limited remit). In the context of collaborative ministry, delegation implies handing over the responsibility as well as the task: you trust the person to get on with the job, including the possibility that in due course they will make changes as they do it in their way. This will carry some degree of authority