

Where do I go from here?

Should you wish further information or wish to apply to be considered for training as a Reader please contact:

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Readership



It's your call



The Church of Scotland
Ministries Council

Introduction

Readers are commissioned locally by the Church to conduct worship, preach, and in some cases offer pastoral care. As with all recognised ministries, the ministry of the Reader must be seen in the context of the ministry of the whole people of God. Readers can be attached to a charge, working regularly with one congregation. In some circumstances they can also work as chaplains and can act as locums during vacancies.

Readers fulfill a variety of patterns of work or roles, including:

Pulpit Supply

A Reader is qualified to lead public worship anywhere within the Church of Scotland. Traditionally the main role Readers have played has been providing 'supply' when ministers are unavailable or sick, or in situations where there is no minister regularly available. Undertaking a task similar to that which other denominations might be carried out by someone called a 'local preacher' or 'lay preacher', Readers enable worship to take place Sunday by Sunday in locations where otherwise it might not happen. For many Readers this is the characteristic role.

Attachment to a Charge

As part of their strategic planning, roughly one presbytery in three now attaches some of its Readers to specific charges. An attached Reader may engage in service in a variety of ways. These may include:

- > The conduct of worship, including funerals
- > Chaplaincy
- > Participation in school assemblies
- > Other forms of ministry which have mainly to do with the conduct of worship but may include related pastoral work.

In such roles, the Reader is normally seen as a member of a ministry team under the minister's leadership.

One problem about attaching Readers to a charge is that it tends to remove them from their home congregation and cut down the number of Readers available for pulpit supply. Some Presbyteries have chosen to limit the attachment to, for example, two Sundays a month, leaving the Reader free on the other two or three Sundays to be involved in their home church or to take pulpit supply elsewhere.

A specific role allocated by Presbytery

As Readers are under Presbytery supervision, the Presbytery can choose to use them across Presbytery as a whole. Examples have differed widely, ranging from a training role to acting as a locum. The only requirement is that the role should be worship related. Some Presbyteries have made particular use of Readers as members of chaplaincy teams in hospitals or prisons.

Limitations on service

Readers may conduct funerals and other acts of worship, but cannot preside at Communion, conduct baptisms or marriages.