

## 10 SUPPLY MINISTRIES

### General Information

A supply ministry is one where a Minister “minds the shop” while the Minister in placement is on long service leave; is absent through illness; has been given leave of absence for an approved purpose; or where there is a vacant placement. In the latter it is likely the congregation has already embarked on the process needed to fill the vacancy. The Supply Minister focuses on keeping everything functioning well, and assisting the congregation to continue to implement its current priorities, rather than commencing any new programs or directions.

Those serving in supply ministries need to be aware of local congregation(s) practices regarding such matters as baptismal and pre-baptismal procedures and should adhere to the established practice in consultation with the Church Council.

Care should be taken to provide adequate preparation for couples who are to be married during the supply period.

Where a program has been begun by the local congregation this should be supported but extreme care must be exercised in starting anything new during a supply ministry unless the person has been sent to the congregation(s) to initiate some specific new venture.

Sensibility and sensitivity are the essential attributes of a Supply Minister.

Short term supply for Ministers who are temporarily absent from their placement for a few weeks or months, must be seen clearly for what it is. The purpose of such supply is to maintain the ministry rather than to initiate changes, unless the congregation has already begun the process before the resident Minister commenced leave. A great deal of common sense and sensitivity is required here.

### Dangers

Those serving in supply ministries should refrain from becoming involved in stewardship and financial matters. If they do become involved it should be at the request of the congregation(s) and, even then, only in an advisory capacity.

The Code of Ethics for Ministers states that Ministers shall respect the call and placement of other Ministers and recognise them as equals in standing and responsibility in the fulfilment of their duties as a Minister in that placement. For this reason those in supply ministries should offer no criticism or adverse comment regarding the Minister who is on leave, particularly if there have been tensions in the Congregation(s).

### A Key Factor

A key factor in both supply and transitional ministry is that the person appointed does not become available for call to the placement. Particularly for congregation(s) who are vacant, between calls they may feel fragile and vulnerable, and like a bereaved person or one who has experienced pain of some kind, come to rely on or become dependent on a caring other person, rather than making the changes needed to move on. As stated in the policies, “will not normally be considered for permanent call to that placement” enables the appointee to preserve the emotional detachment and “outsider view” needed for that person to be of most assistance to the congregation.

*References used include the National Handbook of Procedures for the Placement of Ministers 2006*