

Thinking about Baptist Ministry?



All Christians everywhere are called to love and serve God. We're given gifts, abilities and experiences that enable us to serve Him, one another and the wider community. Indeed the Baptist tradition holds dear "the priesthood of all believers", an individual and corporate responsibility for being involved in God's mission and ministries.

Some ministries are specifically mentioned in the Bible as being particularly significant for the health and growth of the church. In line with this, individuals may feel compelled to take on a certain role or responsibility. In some cases, individuals may feel God is asking them to offer themselves to full-time Christian ministry in a pastoral, evangelistic or youth work capacity.

The Baptist family recognises that God may call individuals to be "set apart" to minister on His behalf. There is a process in place which ensures such people are recognised, encouraged, fully trained and supported appropriately to enable and release them into ministry.

Getting involved in full time ministry needs to be more than just a good idea or career choice! Even if you have a passion to serve God you need to have a clear sense of call and this needs to be thoroughly tested by your local church and the wider Baptist family .

Here are some elements that constitute a true call of God...

1.

There may be **some indication of call through the Scriptures**. As you read and meditate upon it, certain words, verses, or passages may become prominent, impressing themselves repeatedly upon your heart. In this way, the Lord can reveal his purpose.

2.

Within you there should be developing a strong and irrepressible desire to engage in the work of Baptist ministry. One enters ministry primarily because it will enable you to dedicate your entire

life over to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. This real and deep conviction within you cannot be suppressed by you or anyone else.

But are you being called to Baptist ministry rather than ministry in another denomination? You need to be certain that you are in total agreement of the Baptist way of 'doing Church'.

3.

You should possess the necessary gifts. A vital part of the call of God is the God-given ability to teach and lead others. These gifts might need to be refined and developed through training and experience but there should be some visible signs of this gifting at the outset.

4.

Your call should be confirmed by spiritual men and women. This consent and approval of the Lord's people are vital elements in a true call to the ministry. This is why your home church and the wider Baptist family will need to confirm your calling to Baptist ministry.

5.

There should be some clear evidence of the call of God upon your life. Have people responded positively to your ministry (including preaching and leading of worship) thus far?

6.

It should be clear to see how God has directed you through His Spirit in the past to this stage, and how He has, and is, opening doors of opportunity for you to train for Baptist Ministry now. We need ministers today. But no-one should even begin the work unless they have an unmistakable conviction that the Lord, and the Lord alone, has called him or her to this.

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You might also like take a look at two very helpful Baptist Union documents that can be found on their website
[A guide to pastoral practice](#) & [Marks of Ministry](#)

... a final thought

Full time ministry is not an easy option, ask any existing minister! Though serving God in this way can be immensely fulfilling it is often a lonely path. There could be repercussions for family life for example; manse life is often a bit of a “goldfish bowl” and then there is the possibility of relocating every few years. People often have higher expectations of those in ministry than others and there is still a residual sense of ministers being “on call” 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

The living God calls every disciple to service and ministry. Some are called to a specific ministry of leadership, often those who feel inadequate for the task. If God has called you, He will equip you for this task. Listen to God, test the call you feel God has laid on your heart and life. Pray, believing that God always has your best interests at heart and will send the Holy Spirit to be with all concerned in the process of discernment.

Further Help

We hope this leaflet gives you the basic relevant information you need. Further help and advice will be available from your own minister or your Regional Minister.

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