

MINISTERS NEED JOB DESCRIPTIONS

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Traditionally ministers have not had job descriptions. For, in the eyes of the law, they are not employees of the church, but office holders who are accountable to God. Unfortunately some of us ministers have abused our position. We have felt that provided we 'paid the rent' by preaching on Sunday and by visiting some of the 'chief stakeholders' during the week, then all was hunky-dory. But this is not so. I believe that today, for the sake of the minister as also for the sake of the church, there is a lot to be said for drawing up an agreed job description, which can then be subject to review, say, once a year. But what should such a job description contain? A few years ago I drew up an outline job description for myself. Although it clearly needs to be earthed, I offer it as a possible model. One necessary word of clarification: what I offer is just a model to strive after – would that I can claim that I always live up to the 'excellence' which it espouses! "My first responsibility is to be an 'exemplary pilgrim' to my fellow church members. Although of necessity my very humanity means that I will always fall short of the mark, nonetheless the way in which I live and cope with the ups and downs of life must be a spur as also an encouragement to others in their walk with Christ. My second responsibility is to be an "effective leader" of the church and thereby enable the church to fulfil her God-given calling. Such leadership in the first place involves developing a vision for the way in which the church lives its life together. The values, beliefs, style and culture of the church are dependent upon the kind of leadership that is exercised. My third responsibility as missionary strategist is closely related with that of being an effective leader, save that as missionary strategist the world as distinct from the church is primarily in view. My fourth responsibility is to be a "charismatic preacher": i.e. a preacher whose sermons prove to be a vehicle for God's Spirit to touch and transform the lives of individuals as also the corporate life of the church! Wow! Here is a challenge not simply to teach God's Word, but to act as a prophet and an evangelist at one and the same time. My fifth responsibility is to be a "creative liturgist", who through the regular Sunday worship as also through occasional pastoral offices enables God's people not only to celebrate their faith, but also discover resources in God for daily living. My sixth responsibility is to be the 'senior caregiver' responsible for the pastoral oversight of the church. This is a multi-faceted task, for it involves not only caring for the "weak" and for those going through the various crises of life, but also promoting the spiritual development of the "strong". Finally, as one who has been engaged in Christian ministry for a good number of years, and who has had the opportunity to read and reflect on pastoral practice, I find myself in the position of being able to serve others as a pastoral consultant and/or theologian".

Paul Beasley-Murray