



## Training Ministry Trainees

### Regular supervision of Ministry Trainees

A ministry trainee is someone who has committed themselves to learning about gospel ministry as part of a local congregation. A key part in this process is regular (ideally weekly) supervision by the minister or another senior member of the church leadership.

If possible, it is best for the Trainee to have two people he or she meets up with regularly, a Supervisor and a Mentor. The Supervisor is responsible for the workload and work patterns of the Trainee. The Supervisor should be the trainee's 'boss'. The Mentor (who should be the same gender as the Trainee) is responsible for studying the Bible and praying with the trainee, and encouraging them to grow in Christian character. The Mentor should also be helping them to deal with aspects of their training which they find emotionally challenging or hard, and help liaise if there are unfair expectations or misunderstandings between the Trainee and their Supervisor.

This resource paper is to help a Supervisor help a Trainee manage their workload and ask good questions during the weekly supervision to help the Trainee. There are some other papers produced by the North West Partnership to help Supervisors, which it would be worth looking at:

- How to work out a Trainee's aims for the year
- Guidelines for good practice in minister/trainee relationship
- How to give feedback after a talk or Bible study

### How to help a trainee manage their workload

The key part to helping a trainee to manage his or her workload is to know what he or she did during the last week, and what he or she is planning to do during the next week. For my trainees, I use two documents to help with this:

#### Review of last week

The first is a review of the last week, where they write down what they did each hour. I also keep an identical sheet, so that while I am studying theirs, they can look at mine. I like being mutually accountable, and think it can be a useful part of training to see what I do – it is also good to make me reflect on how I spend my time. Here is an example sheet, filled in for a fictitious Trainee:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Before 9.00		Emails					
9.00	Staff meeting	Emails	Visiting with minister	NWMTC	Day Off	Off	Helping set-up church
10.00	Staff meeting	1-2-1 Bible study	Visiting with minister	NWMTC	Day Off	Off	Church meeting
11.00	Going home via shops	1-2-1 Bible study	NWMTC prep	NWMTC	Day Off	Admin	Church meeting
12.00	Lunch	Lunch with friends	NWMTC prep	NWMTC	Day Off	Lunch	Church meeting
1.00	Prep youth group study	Lunch with friends	Lunch with Mentor	NWMTC	Day Off	Prep youth group study	Lunch with church family
2.00	Prep youth group study	Helping at coffee bar	Bible study with Mentor	NWMTC	Day Off	Prep youth group study	Lunch with church family

3.00	Off	Helping at coffee bar	Read home-group passage	NWMTC	Day Off	Meeting youth leaders	Lunch with church family
4.00	Off	Helping at coffee bar	Off	NWMTC	Day Off	Prayer for evening	Prep youth group
After 5.00	Dinner with students	Writing prayer letter	Home-group	Off	Day Off	CU Grill-a-Christian	Youth group

This sheet should provide an easy way to review the Trainee's week. Whilst it is a bit of a pain to keep it filled in, it shows whether a trainee has enough to do, enough variety and is getting enough rest and time off. I encourage my Trainees to give me a rough idea of what they are doing in their time off – if they are only getting enough each week to do the shopping and washing, that isn't a lot of use. It also enables you to see when Trainees are going to bed and getting up and so help you encourage them to good work patterns. Most questions in supervision come from this sheet.

## Week planner

The week planner is a tool we use at our staff meetings as well as supervisions. It is filled in for the coming week, rather than retrospectively. It allows us to see what we are all up to each morning, afternoon and evening. If we have nothing planned for a session, we leave it blank – that way we can easily see who has spare time for urgent work. Here is one filled in for a fictitious staff team (with the Trainee's week from before, although not everything went as planned – the coffee bar needed a helper at the last minute):

Day	Minister	Assistant Minister	Ministry Trainee
Monday	Staff meeting	Staff meeting	Staff meeting
	Admin	Christianity Explored prep	Prep youth group
	Home group prep	Off	Dinner with students
Tuesday	Off	Home group prep	1-2-1 study
	Off		NWMTC prep
	Off	Christianity Explored	Prayer letter
Wednesday	Visits	Sermon prep	Visits
	Prep Doctrine course	Leading church meeting prep	Prep for youth group
	Home group	Home group	Home group
Thursday	Leading church meeting prep	Off	NWMTC
	Prep doctrine course	Off	NWMTC
	Doctrine Course	Off	Off
Friday	Sermon prep	1-2-1 Bible study	Off
	Sermon prep	Preaching Group	Off
	Off	Off	Off
Saturday	Sermon prep	Sermon prep	Admin
	Elders' meeting	Elders' meeting	
	Admin	Sermon prep and off	CU Grill-a-Christian
Sunday	Church meeting	Church meeting	Church meeting
	Friends form church for lunch	Friends form church for lunch	Off
	Church meeting	Church meeting	Youth group
Task List	Write talk Prep doctrine course Write church planting strategy Plan monthly prayer meeting	Write talk Prep CE course Prep 1-2-1 Prep home group	Prep for NWMTC Write prayer letter Prep for youth group Arrange

## Questions to ask in supervision

There are a number of areas it is worth covering:

Workload (using the review of last week and the week planner)

- Are you getting a good balance between time off and work?
- Are you having time to read God's word and pray daily?
- Are you getting enough sleep? Too much?
- Is your work varied and interesting

Year plan

- Are you doing what we planned for you to do?
- Are you developing gifts and Christian character?

Review specific events

- What events / teaching have you done this week?
- How did it go
- Give feedback or ask who else has done so

Find out how Trainee is feeling

- Are you enjoying your work?
- What is particularly exciting? And why?
- What is hard? And why?

*John Hindley  
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