

MAP for Derby Diocese  
the MAP characteristics

# introduction

The MAP process is designed to help the Church become the healthy, flourishing Church that God intends them to be. The process isn’t focused on *doing* more things, but rather *being* God’s church. To do that, we need to understand what that Church looks like – in other words, we need to understand its **characteristics**.

The MAP Characteristics of a healthy Church have been carefully developed by examining different research across churches from a wide variety of traditions and contexts, that shows the common characteristics of churches that are healthy and flourishing. Next, we have brought the MAP Characteristics to Scripture to ensure that they represent a consistent and complete picture of the Church God calls us to be.

Whilst they may not be perfect, we believe that these characteristics represent the Church God is calling us to be, no matter what situation, tradition or context the church is in and no matter whether we’re looking at a church, benefice, deanery or diocese.

The MAP Characteristics are a core element of the MAP for Derby Diocese process. They are used through each of the five stages to help the Church seek and follow God’s call for them, and to discern who God is calling them to be. Exploring these characteristics carefully and prayerfully, and then examining before God whether the Church is exhibiting His desired character, is central to the MAP for Derby Diocese process.

This guide has a section on each of the eight MAP Characteristics. Each section has a summary of six aspects of the characteristic that are contained within it, a Scripture-based reflection and some questions that will help to explore and pray through the characteristic, understand it and see how it might be shown in the life of the church. The questions are simply starting points – you may like to think of your own, either instead or in addition to the ones given.

The guide can be used as a basis for preaching, for small group study or even for personal reflection and prayer.

All Scripture quotations are from the **New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)**

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# Christ-centred in life and worship

## Summary

A church that is Christ-centred in life and worship will demonstrate:

* lives motivated by faith  
  People demonstrate a reliance on God and have their faith in Jesus Christ at the centre of their daily lives. They are excited by their faith, and their ministry and lives are motivated by that faith. Faith and the church is a source of joy for people.
* inspiring worship that enables people to meet with God  
  People are excited and energised by times of corporate worship, which inspire them toward a deepening love for Jesus Christ and a commitment to follow Him in their daily lives. Conversation in the church is centred around faith and refers to it often.
* people living out their faith visibly at home, family, work and leisure  
  People’s attitudes and behaviours in every part of their lives are influenced by the understanding of their faith, so that those outside the church recognise them as Christians through their behaviour and form a positive view of Christianity as a result.
* deepening discipleship, prayer & worship  
  People are encouraged to grow in knowledge and love of God and faith in Jesus Christ through creative engagement with Scripture and helpful patterns of prayer, and worship, so that they are equipped to live Christ-centred lives in the world.
* people sharing their faith story naturally with those outside the church  
  People understand and can articulate the impact Jesus Christ has made and is making in their lives. They pray for and seek opportunities to bear witness to that understanding with those from outside the church and are happy to take them when they arise.
* help for those starting a journey of faith  
  There is encouragement and help for enquirers, and those who have recently come to faith, to explore faith for themselves, discover how their faith can continue to grow and how it impacts on their daily lives and responses in the world.

## Reflection

**23But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. 24God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’**  
***John 4:21-28***

What motivates us? What gets us up in the morning? Is it duty? Guilt? Habit?

As Christians, Jesus Christ should be the centre of, and motivation for, our lives. We are, before all else, a worshipping people. It was God’s first commandment (Exodus 20:1-3). It was Jesus’ response when asked about the greatest commandment in the law (Matthew 22:26-38), and it was also at the heart of his response to the woman at the well (John 4:21-28). Worship, of course, goes beyond our Sunday services; our whole lives should be an act of worship (Romans 12:1-2).

It is through prayer that our relationship with God is built and sustained. Even Jesus, divine though he was, knew the importance of a life steeped in prayer, withdrawing to pray regularly during His ministry. This same priority is seen right the way through the New Testament. It is through this life of worship and prayer that we receive the resources from God to live his way (Colossians 1:29).

But God doesn’t just want us simply to worship him blindly. His desire is that we should have a full relationship with him, of knowledge, love and faith; a true and deep relationship with the creator. He longs for us to know and love Him intimately; this has always been his intention (Jeremiah 31:34; Ezekiel 36:26-28). Jesus commanded us not just to make converts but disciples, teaching them everything he taught (Matthew 28:19-20). Paul yearned for those in the churches he had planted to grow to maturity in faith (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12-13).

It is our love of the Father, our faith in Jesus’ work on the cross and our story of how God’s Holy Spirit is working in our lives that equips and compels us to bear witness to Jesus Christ, according to His command (Acts 1:8). As Jesus left us with His command to make disciples, he told us to do so with His authority and presence (Matthew 20:18-20).

It is our task to help all God’s people bear witness to the hope of Christ that is in them (1 Peter 3:14-16). We are called to be a Christ-centred Church of disciples that makes disciples. We cannot be God’s people out of duty or habit. We must be a people filled with God’s Holy Spirit, living lives of worship, love and relationship, centred on the one who created us and proclaiming his glory in the world.

Jesus speaks to his disciples about leadership (Mark 10:41-45) and Paul writes to Timothy about the character of an overseer (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Leaders are mentioned throughout the epistles (Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Hebrews 13:17). Displaying Christ-like leadership is one of the eight characteristics that the MAP process recognises as important for the Church.

## Questions

1. *What does the word ‘worship’ mean to you?*
2. *Which parts of the reflection do you find the most challenging?*
3. *What does it mean to ‘live a life of worship’?*
4. *Does the Church help you to deepen your discipleship and prayer life? If so, how?*
5. *Do you agree that every Christian should be ready to share their faith story with others?*
6. *What prevents you from sharing your faith story? How could the Church help?*

# focused on God’s mission and purpose

## Summary

A church that is focused on God’s mission and purpose will demonstrate:

* a clear view of God’s mission for the church and a determination to fulfil it  
  The church seeks to engage consistently and fully in God’s mission in the world as expressed in the five marks of mission, doing so in contextually appropriate ways and inviting people into a life of faith and discipleship with Jesus Christ.
* effective communication of the church’s mission inside and outside the church  
  There is regular and effective communication of God’s mission for the church in the church, in local communities and in the wider world, so that people understand and commit to this mission and own their part in it.
* wider church, ecumenical and secular partnerships that help fulfil God’s mission  
  Links are made with the global church as well as active relationships with the deanery and diocese, other denominations and secular organisations and groups in the local community, all working to fulfil God’s mission within these partnerships.
* activities focused deliberately toward fulfilling God’s mission  
  The church focuses on how activities are contributing to God’s mission. It is happy not to be involved in activities that don’t support that mission. New opportunities for mission and ministry are tested against the way they fulfil God’s mission.
* stewardship of God’s resources that is effective for and linked to God’s mission  
  Integrity and best practice is exercised in managing finances and other God-given resources (e.g. buildings), meeting all legal requirements, so that they are used to fulfil God’s mission in the local and wider church in the best way possible.
* administration and governance that adequately support God’s mission  
  There are administrative, safeguarding and governance structures and procedures that enable the church to fulfil its legal obligations and carry out its mission and ministry in the best way possible, without being over burdensome or inflexible.

## Reflection

**9But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.**

***1 Peter 2:9***

I wonder if you’re the planner in your household? If you’re going on holiday, are you the one that gets everything sorted, or are you the ‘along for the ride’ type? If there’s one thing that’s clear from Scripture, it’s that God’s a planner.

God’s plan is laid out in the movement of the Bible from the Garden of Eden in Genesis to the City of God in Revelation; to bring creation to wholeness. However, God’s plan isn’t short on detail; each one of us features in it. The Psalmist tells us that God formed us knowing exactly who we would become, right from the start (Psalm 139:13-16) and we were chosen for His purpose from before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:3-6). He has plans for each of us – plans that are good (Jeremiah 29:11). He calls and equips us for that plan and purpose (Romans 8:28).

So, we shouldn’t be surprised that throughout the gospels, Jesus was crystal clear about his purpose. He was focused on that purpose right from the start of his ministry (Luke 4:16-21). That awareness of his plan sometimes made others look askance at him and because of it, he was content to let things go undone (John 2:4). His purpose informed his actions and priorities (Luke 9:51-53) even when this was unpopular (John 6:60-66).

We have the privilege of being invited by God to take our part in his plan. Whilst we cannot know its full scope, His desire is that we should know and follow His plan for our lives (Romans 12:2), as individuals and as a Church. That means we must take time to know God’s purpose for us and to be focused, just as Jesus was. When we don’t do that, we can end up simply wandering, rather than journeying, as Israel did in the desert (Numbers 14:20-25).

God’s purpose should be paramount as we decide what we do, how we do it and (just as important) what we leave undone. Jesus knew the importance of being obedient to the will of his Father above all, and being single-minded in the pursuit of his call (Luke 9:57-62). Our God is a God of purpose. He has a plan for our lives and for His Church (1 Peter 2:9). He calls us to listen to Him, to discover our part in His plans, and then to follow that call with single-minded focus.

## Questions

1. *What would you say is God’s mission and purpose for the Church?*
2. *What aspects of God’s mission for the Church do you think we find most difficult?*
3. *Why do you think it may be important to partner with others in God’s mission?*
4. *What reasons might there be for an activity in the Church to not be focused on God’s mission?*
5. *In what ways can the Church ensure that they are being ‘good stewards’ of God’s resources?*
6. *What would it mean to have ‘good administration and governance’ in the Church?*

# loving, servant-hearted and generous

## Summary

A church that is loving, servant-hearted and generous will demonstrate:

* a good, current understanding of the communities of which the church is a part  
  The church works to find out about the wider community through information gathering, as well as active involvement and listening, to find out what the community can offer the church and the best ways the church may serve the people in it.
* sharing the good news of Jesus in the community through actions and attitudes  
  The church makes sensitive, relevant and unconditional contributions to the needs of the community through engagement, service and occasional offices and by allowing the community to serve the church, thus building positive and loving relationships.
* engagement with those outside the church  
  The church takes a full role in the community through positive involvement in secular organisations and groups. The church shares its faith in the community in a non-threatening way that addresses the needs and questions of that community.
* generosity within the church and toward those outside it  
  Generosity and appreciation is shown toward the church’s staff and volunteers that goes beyond simply what is required. Financial and other resources are shared generously with the wider church and community, without conditions or expectations.
* effective pastoral care and loving relationships that bear with one another  
  There is well publicised and accessible pastoral care such that people feel loved by the church and can receive practical and prayer support and signposting to other support agencies. Relationships demonstrate mutual love, support, forgiveness and reconciliation.
* a commitment to social justice and environmental stewardship locally and globally  
  There is prophetic engagement with current local and global issues of social justice, with resources given over to that engagement. The church advocates for the weak and voiceless and exercises responsible stewardship of environmental resources.

## Reflection

**7As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.” 8Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.**  
***Matthew 10:7-8***

During the 1960s, New Zealand Cartoonist Kim Casali drew a series of cartoons entitled ‘Love Is…’, featuring a cherubic girl and boy. They originated from a series of love notes that she drew for her future husband, and each one had a line that defined love. Of course, as Christians, love is defined by the God whom we worship (1 John 4:8). Jesus came to show God’s love (John 1:14); he dwelt with us and made his home among us. He spent little time in the synagogue, but rather went from village to village – going out to be where the people were (Luke 9:6). Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom motivated by this deep and abiding love (John 3:16). It is a love that we are commanded to show to one another and to the world (John 15:12-17).

As he shared the love of God, Jesus told parables that used familiar language and concepts that is his listeners would understand. When he spoke to individuals, he answered their questions – questions like, “Where should we worship?” (John 4:21-26), “What is the greatest commandment?” (Matt 22:36) and “Who is my neighbour?” (Lk 10:29). Jesus took note of where people were. Paul did something similar as he spoke about Jesus (Acts 17:22-23). As we tell people about the good news of Jesus Christ in accordance with his command (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8), we need to do so in a way that takes account of peoples’ questions, needs and culture.

Of course, God’s love isn’t just shared with words (though they are essential) but also in action. Jesus demonstrated the love of God through the miracles he performed, bringing healing and wholeness. For Jesus, our compassion was a sign of faithfulness to him (Matthew 25:31-46). This call to compassion runs through the New Testament (James 2:14-17). We are called to serve our neighbours – both near and far – and to meet their needs in Jesus’ name. This reflects God’s generosity, which has been lavished on us (Romans 8:32). Our lives need to be lived generously (with our money, our resources and our lives) in our relationships in the local church, the wider church and the community and world we serve (Matthew 10:8).

How should we define love? God is love, and as we share that love we do so in words, in ways that answer the questions of our community and our world, and in action, in ways that demonstrate God’s love and meet the needs of each other, our neighbours, our community and our world.

## Questions

1. *What examples can you give of the Church being ‘loving, servant-hearted and generous’?*
2. *Why does the Church fail to engage well with those outside the Church? What might be done?*
3. *Do you agree that we should love and serve those outside the Church? If so, how?*
4. *What does ‘generosity’ mean to you? How can the Church show it?*
5. *What are the most challenging parts of being open and inclusive? How can the Church help?*
6. *In what ways can the Church exercise ‘good environmental stewardship’?*

# welcoming, open and inclusive

## Summary

A church that is welcoming, open and inclusive will demonstrate:

* welcome for newcomers and visitors that demonstrates genuine love  
  The church is ready to receive newcomers with easy access, good signage, appropriate facilities and a warm welcome throughout the church. People are not excluded through lack of familiarity with church language and culture.
* welcome and inclusion of those from different backgrounds and with special needs  
  Those with special needs are welcomed (including visually or hearing impaired, physical infirmity or disability and those with mental health problems), along with love and acceptance toward those with different values and social culture than the church.
* a joyful desire to develop new relationships with people and groups  
  People naturally prioritise engagement with newcomers over existing friends during church gatherings and are happy to make changes to familiar patterns of church life to accommodate new groups and individuals.
* a willingness to welcome diversity and see it as a strength  
  A positive welcome is shown to those of differing ages, social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, mental and physical abilities. The church that is happy and prepared to accommodate and celebrate such difference.
* help for people to develop real and accountable friendships in the church  
  Newcomers are introduced to, and befriended by, others in the church. There are open and well publicised ways for them to build real and ongoing relationships in the church and grow in faith and service, so that everyone can feel loved, supported and cared for.
* inviting people into the full life of the church  
  Newcomers are encouraged to take part in all aspects of church life and can be involved all the ministry and mission of the church as appropriate. There is no sense of newcomers being ‘separate’ or ‘on the outside’.

## Reflection

**2Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.**

***Hebrews 13:2***

If there is one thing that almost every church will say about itself, it is, “We are a very welcoming church!” But what does that truly mean?

From the beginning of being God’s people, Israel was commanded to care for those among them who were outside the faith community (Deuteronomy 24:17-21). Jesus continued this teaching (Matthew 25:35) and it is present in the New Testament Epistles (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2). Welcoming outsiders and newcomers may challenge us, but God calls us to show hospitality to everyone, wherever they come from and whatever their background, culture, behaviour and attitudes. It’s not for us to judge who is ‘in’ or ‘out’ – as someone once described it, a church should have ‘blurred edges’.

Of course, our welcome goes beyond a smile and a handshake at the door. In their course, *Everybody Welcome*, George Fisher and Bob Jackson write,

True welcome is about active encouragement into the heart of the community of the church, and its job is not done until someone is completely at home, a valued, contributing member of the body of Christ. *Everybody Welcome: Leaders Manual – Bob Jackson and George Fisher (CHP, London, 2009)*

In the early Church, God was adding to the church’s number daily. There would have been many newcomers. Even so, the church shared every part of their lives together (Acts 2:42ff). Our relationships need to be similarly real. Paul also sees the members of the body of Christ as being accountable to one another, sharing their lives with one another to such an extent that they can help one another, with love and patience, to grow in faith and Christian maturity (Galatians 6:1-2). Church should be a place where we care for one another and build one another up (Ephesians 4:15-16), so that that our lives are intertwined (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

Our welcome also affects how we do things, especially our times of worship together. Whenever we meet, we can expect there to be visitors and non-Christians present; we are called to include them and make them feel at home, providing ways in which they too can meet with God. Paul expresses this expectation and call to the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 14:22-23).

Our welcome into the heart of the faith community of all people, no matter who they are, will say much about the love we have for them. God calls us to be an open faith community, with ‘blurred edges’, to which anyone can come, be welcomed, find friendship and meet with God.

## Questions

1. *What does it mean to demonstrate genuine love in our welcome?*
2. *What are the challenges of welcoming those from different backgrounds?*
3. *How can the Church help those among them who have special needs?*
4. *Do you agree that we should see diversity as a strength? What does that mean for the Church?*
5. *In what ways might the Church help people to develop real friendship among themselves?*
6. *To what extent do you think newcomers should be fully involved in the Church, and how?*

# willing to adapt for God’s purposes

## Summary

A church that is willing to adapt for God’s purposes will demonstrate:

* regular and honest reviews of how things are going without apportioning blame  
  The church leadership reflects on existing ministries and people are asked about how they feel things are going. Progress is explored in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere that engenders trust and openness.
* regular celebration and thanksgiving to God of the good things in church life  
  The church deliberately creates opportunities to celebrate what God has done and is doing in the life of the church and to give thanks to Him. Those involved in ministry are routinely thanked and encouraged, often publicly.
* a willingness to make sacrifices when necessary for effective ministry and mission  
  People’s comfort and preferences do not hold back changes that may help to fulfil God’s mission. People are happy to let go of familiar patterns of church life to further the mission and ministry of the church.
* a willingness to listen and learn from those outside the church  
  The church creates opportunities to allow different groups outside the church to say what they think about the church and what it can contribute to the communities it serves. The church makes positive changes because of this feedback.
* an openness to try new and imaginative ways of working without fearing failure  
  The church tries new things, celebrates success and learns from things that don’t work without becoming risk-averse or apportioning blame. The church accepts that every ministry has a natural life and is willing to stop things without implying failure.
* an understanding and acceptance of the cost of change and of how to manage it well  
  The church leadership recognises that change is costly and takes steps to ensure those affected by change are well supported. Changes are carefully managed, communicated and implemented to ensure that everyone feels involved and valued.

## Reflection

**22To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. 23I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.**

***1 Corinthians 9:22-23***

There’s an old joke that goes something like this: “How many Anglicans does it take to change a light bulb? … Change!?” Very few of us enjoy change. It can be costly – emotionally, spiritually, even physically and materially. In a world that is so often shifting and unsecure, church for some might be the one place of security. After all, the Bible tells us that, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8), so surely his church should be unchanging too?

However, although it was costly for his disciples, Jesus often challenged their thinking and asked them to respond (John 6:60). At the heart of his challenge is the recognition that this was and is the Church of Jesus Christ, before ever it was ‘our church’ or ‘my church’ (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Although Jesus Christ and his good news are unchanging, the communities in which we are called to share that good news are not. We should not change just for the sake of it, but as God calls us join in with His mission in a changing world, so we must adapt to that changing world.

This means that, as we listen to God, we may need to let go of the things that are precious to us, even if we have held on to them for a long time. The rich young ruler was not able to do that (Luke 18:18-30), but Zacchaeus was willing to change and was blessed (Luke 19:1-9).

Adapting for God’s mission is, above all, about a change of heart and a willingness to put God first. Paul warned the Corinthian church against thinking that they had nothing to learn and no need to change (1 Corinthians 4:8-13)!

If we struggle with change, we could do worse than to look to the story of Paul. Paul went from presiding over the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58) and ‘breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord’ (Acts 9:1), to being perhaps the greatest missionary the Church has ever known. Paul understood the cost of change, but he also saw the need for it. He was willing to adapt however he needed to for the sake of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:22-23).

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever, but we bear witness to him in a complex and changing world. We must be ready to change, both in heart and practices, for God.

## Questions

1. *Do you agree that being ready to change for the mission of God is important? Why or why not?*
2. *How does the Church celebrate the good things God is doing in and through them?*
3. *How do you feel the Church might be affected by the fear of seeing things not work?*
4. *What are the challenges of change?*
5. *How can the Church help those who find change difficult?*
6. *In what ways can we learn from those outside the Church?*

# encouraging in Christian vocation and service

## Summary

A church that is encouraging in Christian vocation and service will demonstrate:

* accessible ways to help everyone explore their vocation  
  People are encouraged to explore God’s calling on their lives and there are opportunities provided by the church for them to do so. This exploration is not limited to a narrow range of vocations and includes opportunities outside the local church.
* support for those pursuing their calling both inside and outside the local church  
  The church provides prayer for people and opportunities to be refreshed and equipped for vocation, whether that vocation is inside or outside the church. People are publicly commissioned and prayed for when starting a new ministry.
* a desire to see people serve God in a way that reflects their calling  
  The church encourages and helps people to find the ministry to which God is calling them and finds creative ways that they can exercise that calling, inside or outside the local church (as opposed to asking people to ‘fill rotas’ regardless of areas of gifting).
* a wide range of people involved in a wide range of mission and ministries  
  The ministry of the church is shared between different types of people, so that a few are not doing all the work. Ministry not limited to clergy; there is a high degree of lay involvement and few ministries are ‘reserved’ for a specific group of individuals.
* help for people to serve in new ways and to step down when appropriate  
  The church encourages people to be open to new vocations and there are opportunities for them to explore serving in new ways. People don’t feel trapped and can step down easily at the end of their commitment or if circumstances change.
* encouragement for newcomers and younger people to serve in Christian ministry  
  The church encourages newcomers to explore opportunities to serve in appropriate ministries without pressure to ‘join a rota’. Young people are encouraged and able to participate fully in ministry, including leadership roles (e.g. membership of the PCC).

## Reflection

**4Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.**

***1 Corinthians 12:4-7***

When you hear someone talk about ‘a calling’, what do you think of first? Often, as Christians, we might think of ordination. But of course, Our vocation – God’s call to serve him in the way he has made, gifted and equipped us to – is much wider than that. Far more often than not, Christian vocation does not involve turning your collar around.

We are called first to be human; created by God and the object of his love (Psalm 8:3-8; Psalm 139:13-16). We are called to be in relationship with him. Without that acknowledgement, we are incomplete. As St Augustine wrote in his ‘Confessions’, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” We are next called to be a follower and disciple of Christ. We have been chosen for that calling since the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), and we hear that calling resonate all the way through the New Testament (Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 4:1,4).

But as we are called into relationship, we are also called into service in God’s Kingdom. Within the one church of Jesus Christ, bound together in him, each of us is gifted and called to serve together in the Kingdom of God. As we look at the various passages of Scripture that express this calling (e.g. 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Ephesians 4), there are some key messages to reflect on.

We all have an individual vocation from God. Each is different, according to the unique way in which God has made us. That means each one of us is called to different types of ministry throughout our lives. We will flourish and grow more easily when we’re serving in these ministries, because we will be operating according to the Spirit’s gifting rather than in human strength. Although, that’s not to say that we don’t need to roll up our sleeves and get stuck in with other areas sometimes!

Each calling and ministry is there for the Kingdom of God and His Church. God has put these gifts together not at random, but just as he needs them to be so that God’s church can flourish and God’s Kingdom can be built. This means that the vocation of every person is valuable for the church as well as for that person.

We must recognise and value every gift and ministry in God’s church and see their diversity as precious. We should encourage and enable people to explore and respond to their vocation so that God’s purpose can be fulfilled in every Christian.

## Questions

1. *What does the word ‘vocation’ mean to you?*
2. *How can the Church support those whose vocation outside the local Church?*
3. *What most often drives someone serving in the Church; the Church’s need or their vocation?*
4. *How can the Church encourage a wider variety of people to explore their calling?*
5. *How easy is it to stop serving in the Church? Why, and what might make it easier?*
6. *Do you think it’s a good idea for new Christians to serve in the Church? Why or why not?*

# Christ-like in leadership

## Summary

A church that is Christ-like in leadership will demonstrate:

* servant leadership that helps individuals and the church to flourish  
  Church leaders are willing to release power and authority to others and help individuals and the church to flourish and grow. The leadership supports those who minister in the church by ensuring that they are valued and resourced for ministry.
* a wide range of lay and ordained people in leadership roles  
  The leadership team is made up of lay as well as ordained people and is, as far as possible, is representative of the makeup of the church. There is a good mix of ages, genders and backgrounds represented on the team.
* inspirational leadership that excites and motivates others about God’s mission  
  The leadership takes time to ensure that the mission and activities of the church are imaginatively and effectively communicated, so that people feel part of the work of the church and are excited about seeing what God will do in and through them.
* a wide range of skills and gifts among the leadership that are valued and used  
  The church seeks to include a wide range of personalities and gifts in its leadership team and understands how to use those gifts and personalities creatively. All the leaders are valued for what they contribute to the leadership of the church.
* leaders that encourage the development of other potential leaders  
  Potential leaders are identified from within the church and encouraged in their development through training, experience, support and mentoring. Environments and opportunities are created where leadership can be explored safely.
* a church that loves its leaders through prayer, encouragement and support  
  The church frequently prays for and thanks its leaders and ensures they are resourced and cared for. Criticism is balanced by encouragement and handled sensitively, always seeking to build leaders up and help them to flourish.

## Reflection

**42So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 43But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.**

***Mark 10:42-44***

Do you see yourself as a leader or a follower? Do you like to take charge, or do you prefer for someone to tell you what to do? Although we may feel that we are naturally a leader or a follower, as we all know, life’s not that simple! We will need to be both leader and follower in our lives, and leadership isn’t just about being the one who makes the decisions and tells people what to do. To

understand Christian leadership, often referred to as servant leadership, is vital.

Leadership might also smack of something that isn’t anything to do with the church. It can seem ‘worldly’, and something we hear too much about already in our working lives! However, the Bible talks a lot about leadership. It is exercised (for better or for worse) in the nation of Israel throughout the Old Testament. Jesus speaks to his disciples about leadership (Mark 10:41-45) and Paul writes to Timothy about the character of an overseer (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Leaders are mentioned throughout the epistles (Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Hebrews 13:17).

What leadership looks like in Christian terms will differ greatly to the leadership we see exercised in the world. Very often, leadership in the world is associated with holding on to power and with being served. It is this type of leadership of which Samuel warned Israel when they demanded a king to rule over them (1 Samuel 8:10-18).

Leadership in the Kingdom of God – the sort of leadership that Christ commands in his Church – is very different. The character of a Christian leader is vitally important, as Paul reminds Timothy (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Leadership is demanding. As we take on a leadership role in the church, more and more is likely to be demanded of us. Leaders are especially visible people, and are therefore held up as examples and ambassadors for Christ. They must be beyond reproach and are often held to a higher standard as a result.

Christian leaders must be ones who listen, who are not afraid to learn from others and who recognise that God does not just speak through leaders but through others inside and outside the church. It was this wisdom that Moses showed when he listened to Jethro and changed the way he led Israel (Exodus 18:13-27). Above all, Christian leaders must not seek their own power or advancement. It was this lesson that Jesus’ disciples singularly failed to learn (Mark 10:41-45). Christian leaders release power to others so that they might flourish. They are there to serve, rather than to be served. Christ-like leadership is servant leadership.

## Questions

1. *What does it mean to be a leader?*
2. *Think of a Christian leader who has inspired you. How did he or she do that?*
3. *How does servant leadership differ from other sorts of leadership?*
4. *What do you think are the important gifts and attributes of a Church leader?*
5. *What can the Church do to help develop new leaders and young leaders?*
6. *Why is it important to encourage and pray for leaders?*

# engaging with children, young people and families

## Summary

A church that is engaging with children, young people and families will demonstrate:

* genuine welcome and hospitality shown toward children, families and young people  
  The church takes steps to ensure it understands of the needs of children, young people and carers/parents and accommodates those needs joyfully. The church is prepared to receive children and young people and is equipped to meet their needs.
* readiness to nurture the faith, prayer and worship of children and young people  
  There are appropriate opportunities for discipleship and worship for all ages. The needs of children and young people are considered in corporate worship and they are involved in leading and participating in worship, prayer and teaching.
* children and young people fully involved in the life of the church  
  Opportunities are created for children and young people to contribute fully in every part of the life of the church, without simply being tokens. The contribution of children and young people is valued and recognised by the church.
* support for and work with parents and carers as they encourage faith in their children  
  Parents and carers are encouraged to play their full part in the spiritual development of their children. Resources are provided to equip and support them in doing so and the children’s and youth work provided by the church inspires parents and carers.
* effective engagement with baptism families from preparation through to follow-up  
  Baptism enquiries are met supportively by the church. Parents and godparents are helped to explore baptism and through it encouraged to consider their own spiritual lives. Families are helped to explore faith and deepen relationships within the church.
* support for and engagement with local schools and their students  
  Supportive relationships are developed wherever possible with schools of all types in the community. The church offers practical as well as prayer support to schools and develops and maintains opportunities for working with them and their students.

## Reflection

**2He called a child, whom he put among them, 3and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.**

***Matthew 18:2-5***

‘Youth is wasted on the young…’ As youngsters, we might have got fed up with hearing phrases like this, and yet when we’re older we delight in repeating them! As we grow old, we often lose touch with the viewpoint of young people. We forget all the blessings they bring and remember only the mess and the disruption.

Children and young people, though, are noticeably absent from our churches. Recently, the average age of people in the churches of Derby Diocese has been put at 60 – in many churches, the average age is much older. Given the rising number of children in our society, this should make us stop and think. The fact that most Christians come to faith as children and young people (under the age of 25) might make us think even harder.

Every person, however old, is precious to God and worth of our love and care. By focusing on the young, we don’t devalue those who are older. We do, though, recognise the disparity of ages between our wider communities and our churches. Most important of all, though, we recognise the special place that children and young people have in God’s Kingdom and in the Church. Jesus gave children an importance that was unusual at the time, and encouraged adults to learn from them.

When the disciples tried to keep the children from disrupting and disturbing Jesus, he was angry. Not only did he want the disciples to let the children come, he told them that the Kingdom of God belonged to them (Luke 18:15-17). Jesus used children to show us how to come to him – open and humble (Matthew 18:1-5). He made it clear that children could fully participate in the life of God’s church; in fact, it was the children who could lead the way in praising God (Matthew 21:15-16).

Throughout Scripture, God has used young people and children to speak to His people and to draw them back to himself. Instead of the young people learning from the adults, it seems that the adults often needed to learn from God through young people. Think of Samuel, a boy serving in the temple when God used him to speak to Eli about his sons (1 Samuel 3:1-18), and David, a young man who taught Saul and the whole of Israel a lesson about reliance on God (1 Samuel 17).

## Questions

1. *What does it mean to truly welcome children and families?*
2. *What are the different ways in which the Church can engage with children?*
3. *What do children and young people bring to the Church?*
4. *What are the costs of integrating children and young people in the Church?*
5. *Are there differences in nurturing the faith of children and adults? If so, what are they?*
6. *How can the Church support schools more effectively?*