

Model 5 – A medium-sized urban parish

Ministries Committee

This Ministries Committee is a standing committee of the vestry made up of four members selected by the rector and vestry.

A parishioner begins exploring his or her call by contacting the rector. The rector describes the overall process. The first step first involves a series of one-hour meetings with the rector every three or four weeks over a six to twelve month period. These sessions include in-depth discussion of Baptismal vows and a close examination of the ordinal for the diaconate, priesthood and episcopate. The rector asks for an autobiographical statement describing the spiritual journey that led to the aspirant's sense of call to ordained ministry. The rector also assigns selected reading material based on the aspirant's perceived call to diaconate or priesthood.

If reasonably convinced of a potential call, the rector asks the Ministries Committee to meet with the aspirant. The committee meets with the aspirant approximately monthly over a period of six months to two years. Members explore with the aspirant most of the same readings, topics and issues the rector did, and they are encouraged to ask the hard questions. For an aspirant looking at the diaconate the committee is clear about expecting to see him or her engaged in a ministry expressive of the ministry of servanthood. For those with a focus on priesthood, the committee wants to see some priestly ministry already in progress. One of the committee's main goals is to discern if there is a sense of call "out of the community."

The Ministries Committee asks to meet with the rector at the conclusion of the six-month to two-year discernment period. The committee chair makes a presentation to the rector, then to the vestry. The vestry accepts the committee's decision whether or not to recommend the aspirant to the diocese.

Through their work on the Ministries Committee members have gained further clarity on the role of the laity. Among the long-range goals of the vestry is an expanded Ministries Committee providing active leadership in teaching about lay ministry.