

Living Well in Ministry



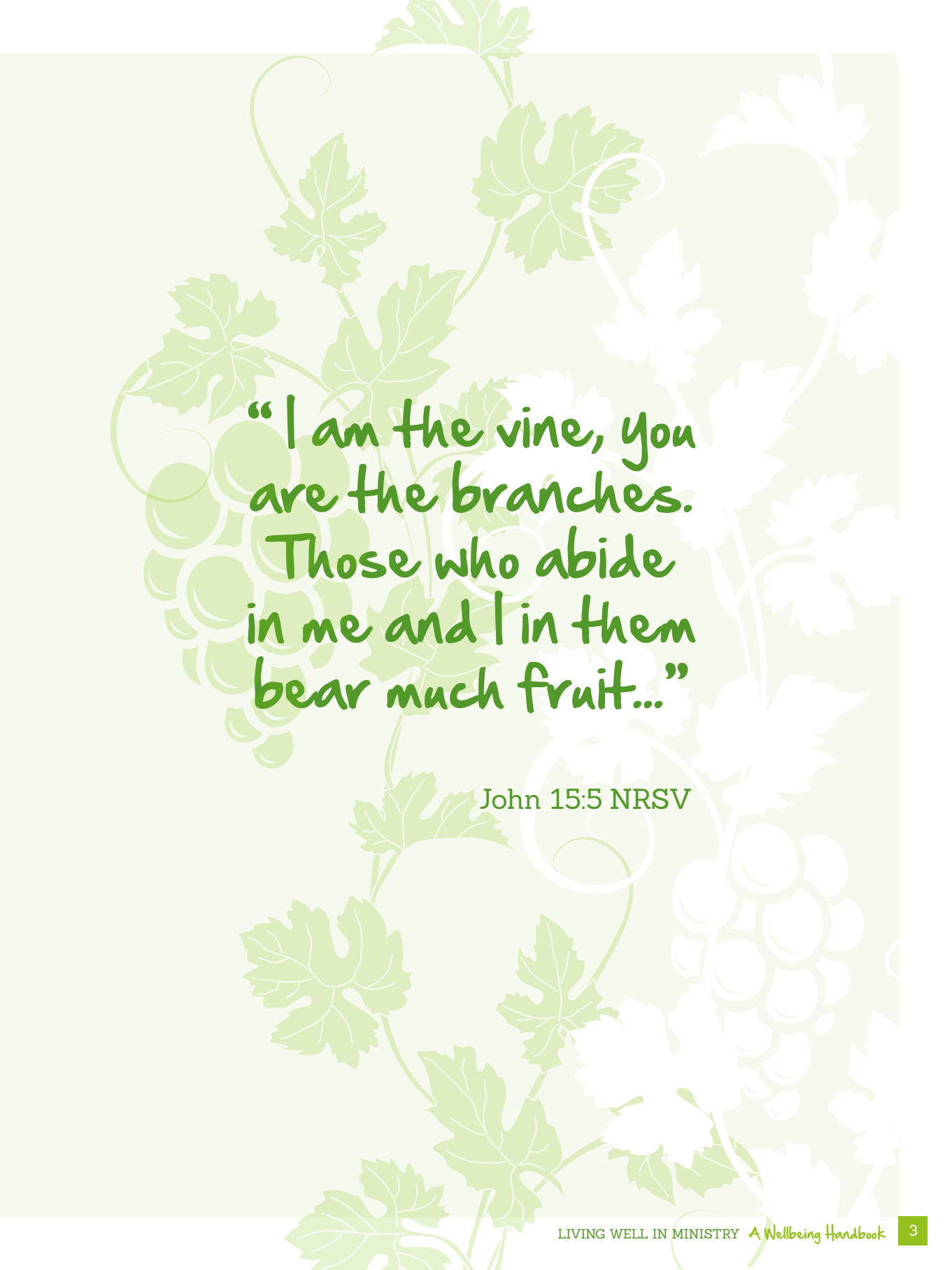
Providing wellbeing support, guidance and signposting for those exercising licensed lay and ordained ministry in the Diocese of Exeter

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We are grateful to those who have contributed quotes and shared their experiences to help bring this Handbook to life



*“I am the vine, you
are the branches.
Those who abide
in me and I in them
bear much fruit...”*

John 15:5 NRSV


Welcome from the Bishop of Exeter

Dear sisters and brothers,

Given the demands of ministry today, growing in self-awareness, monitoring our health, and maintaining a creative work-life balance are all pre-requisites for our human flourishing. As a Diocese, we embrace the *Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing* wholeheartedly, and endorse its statement that, 'Each minister is well-advised to attend to their own care and wellbeing, and to set aside time for rest, recreation, retreat and study for their own and others' flourishing and growth.'

We each need to take responsibility for our own wellbeing, our on-going professional development and our spiritual vitality, not least because exhausted and stressed ministers are poor adverts for the Gospel of Christ. St Francis de Sales, in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, says 'One form of gentleness that we should all practise is towards ourselves.' When we become aware of our needs and limitations, and allow the grace of God to pour afresh into our vulnerability, we take a significant step in our personal journey.

This Handbook is part of a wider wellbeing framework that seeks to promote a culture of interdependence and mutual support in ministry across the Diocese. It gathers resources for pastoral self-care, infused with a honed wisdom to help in times of difficulty and of joy. Each of us



has something to contribute as well as to gain from such a culture, mindful of St Paul's words: 'Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ' (Galatians 6.2 NIV).

Francis de Sales writes, 'Be careful and diligent in all your affairs, for God who has committed these things to your care would want things done well in accord with his will, but without your care and attention degenerating into nervous anxiety. Do not hurry or excite yourself because this will undermine your judgement and prevent you executing your responsibilities effectively.' As Bishops and Archdeacons, we seek to nurture a network of pastoral care and invite you to be living members of it. Together, by God's grace, our labour will not be in vain and we will be better able to serve the people of Devon with joy.

With my thanks for our partnership in the Gospel,



+ Robert Atwell

The Right Reverend Robert Atwell
Bishop of Exeter

Introducing the Handbook

In the Diocese of Exeter we recognise the importance of wellbeing for those in ministry. We want to promote a culture of health, wellbeing and pastoral care across the Diocese and we are committed to providing resources which will help us to do this.

Being in ministry and following God's call gives enormous purpose and joy. Leading worship, preaching, serving the community, seeking God's vision and purposes, getting to know people at significant moments in their lives, working in schools, praying with others, caring for those in need, enabling Christian communities to grow and flourish - these are examples of what makes ministry fulfilling and a privilege.

This handbook is about resourcing us to live well in ministry. It aims to offer a framework for wellbeing for the Diocese which is suitable for both our personal and ministerial lives. The Handbook details the approach we are taking to promoting wellbeing and it encourages us all to develop and establish healthy patterns and habits of pastoral self-care and to maintain good ministerial practices. The Handbook has been reviewed and endorsed by the Wellbeing Panel whose remit is to oversee, coordinate and monitor both the wellbeing of individuals and the nurturing of a Diocesan culture in which all can flourish.

Who is this Handbook For?

This Handbook is provided as a resource for all those exercising licensed lay and ordained ministry in the Diocese of Exeter. Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers), Ordained Ministers and those in training will be referred to as ministers.

This Handbook forms part of our commitment to upholding the principles of the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant. It supplements the existing provision for the support and wellbeing of ministers found in the *Bishop's Guidelines for Ordained Ministry* (Bishop's Guidelines), the Clergy Handbook – *Terms and Conditions of Service* (Clergy Handbook) and the *Bishop's Regulations for Reader Ministry* (Reader Regulations). As with any resource relating to ministry, ministers should keep in mind the *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy* and the *Five Guiding Principles*.

How to use this Handbook

Whilst all aspects of wellbeing are interlinked, the Handbook looks at the different aspects of wellbeing in turn providing guidance, tips and suggestions others in the Diocese have found helpful, along with some questions to aid personal reflection. The Handbook also contains comprehensive signposting to a wealth of resources and sources of help from the Diocese of Exeter, the National Church and many other organisations which we may find useful in supporting our overall wellbeing.

Five Principles of Wellbeing

The Diocese of Exeter's framework for wellbeing is based on five key principles:



Remembering Grace

Grace is the thing we need most from God and it is the thing we are most likely to forget: we forget to ask for it, we may not even recognise it at work, and we may struggle to receive and respond to it. Grace is like a clean oxygen rich atmosphere we breathe, necessary for life, health and for growth. We can describe grace as God helping us in our lives to do what we cannot do on our own and we need to live by grace each and every day. It is God's grace that will enable us to fulfil our calling.



Embracing Our Uniqueness

We are all uniquely and wonderfully made. We are God's handiwork created in His image. We are a tapestry of temperament, personality attributes and character traits as well as experiences, hopes and dreams. Getting to know ourselves better means recognising our natural strengths, talents and skills; understanding how we are wired, what our personal values are and what inspires us. This enables us to identify what we need as individuals to thrive and will be key to sustaining our ministry in the long run. This means we shouldn't compare ourselves to anybody else.



The Importance of Self-Awareness

In our enthusiasm to fulfil our vocation, it is easy to fill each day with both people and tasks. But, all the time, the reality of who we are will be informing what we say and do, and how we react. So a key practice of getting to know ourselves better is developing self-awareness. Being self-aware is not being selfish but is the foundation upon which our awareness of others is built. Consequently insight into what makes us tick gives us insight into what makes others tick and our relationships with others will begin to improve as a result.



Vulnerability and Weakness

To become self-aware means risking being vulnerable. To be vulnerable is choosing to be open, honest and emotionally available to ourselves and others. Vulnerability is vital in allowing ourselves to have positive experiences and to be refreshed, and it is fundamental to being able to admit when we simply are at the end of natural resources. We need to be vulnerable if we are to get the most out of our lives.

Self-awareness allows us to better understand our strengths and weaknesses. Our strengths are areas to develop and nurture. We can also grow in the areas where we are less strong, developing and learning new skills, but it is important to recognise the areas where we have little natural aptitude. Knowing our strengths and weaknesses helps us to know who else we need in the team.



Defining Success

The cultural norm in our society and era is one where overworking is almost expected, 'success' is measured by outputs, targets are expected to be met or exceeded, financial reward depends on productivity, and job security depends on performance.

The reality is that, sometimes, we will do a great job and feel great satisfaction. At other times, we will mess up, let someone down, or simply make a mistake. We can reframe "success" through the story of the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus asked his disciples to do something beyond their resources and ability.

Their "success" is measured not by their ability to perform the task, but by their willingness to risk the total vulnerability of saying to Jesus, even in the presence of great need, "We cannot do that." It is the power of this admission that opens the way to the feeding of the multitude.

Success is redefined, or even replaced, by having the courage to be vulnerable.



Whenever we are faced with challenges and difficulties these five principles may be able to help.

Our Practical Approach to Wellbeing

Wellbeing is one of those words which encapsulates a desirable condition we would all like to experience. It is also a term we relate to differently depending upon what we are like as individuals, our circumstances and what we have already been through in life. But in general terms wellbeing refers to a combination of how we feel physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and socially; more simply it is how we feel about ourselves and our lives.


The realities of life mean we will all experience times of stress, conflict, pain and suffering, whether in our private lives, our working lives or both.

This is why developing and establishing healthy patterns and habits of personal self-care and good ministerial practices during the 'easy' times is essential. Those established patterns, habits and good practices can help sustain us through the difficult times.

Because our personal and ministerial circumstances are unique we all need to develop our own patterns and habits of personal self-care which fit with our home and work lives.

Our home life can pull us in many different directions: we may be single, married, retired; we may have a partner who does or doesn't work; we may have school age children at home or provide childcare for grandchildren; we may have aged parents to care for or have someone who relies on us for their health care needs.

As ministers, some are stipendiary, others are self-supporting and may be in fulltime or part time work, some ministers are workplace chaplains whilst others are volunteer lay ministers some of whom are working and some are retired.



“If we can learn early on that care of self enables rather than detracts from serving others, we will have learned a key sustaining practice.”

Reverend Paul Swann

Page 18, Church Times, 9th October 2020

Whatever our circumstances, when we have a lot on our plate, our need for **pastoral self-care** may feel counter-intuitive.

But when self-care continually slips down our “To Do” list, something deep inside slowly dissipates and that something is usually our vitality (joy). We begin to affect those around us and we can find ourselves a long way from living the full and satisfying life God desires for us.



We also need to understand that ministry is about people and relationships. It is common in ministry for there to be times when relationships are strained, when behaviours are difficult or challenging and when there is conflict in teams and congregations for any number of reasons. During such times it can be difficult to realise we're still doing a good job and we must take care not to let these 'normal' workplace tensions unduly affect us.

However at some point we may find ourselves facing some very difficult and challenging issues and we may also find we've already sacrificed most or all of our self-care and good practices to the doing side of our home life and our ministry. This means we don't have much left in the tank when faced with situations that knock us sideways.

Trying to recapture our patterns and habits of personal self-care and good ministerial practices during such times can be incredibly difficult and it's best not to lose them in the first place.

The approach the Diocese of Exeter is taking to wellbeing is **firstly** to encourage us all to develop and establish healthy patterns and habits of pastoral self-care and good ministerial practices right from the beginning.

Secondly, we seek to help those longer serving ministers recognise if they have developed unhealthy patterns and habits which are causing them to neglect their self-care or if they have let their ministerial practices slide and encourage them to make the appropriate changes.

No matter how old we are or how long we have been in ministry it's never too late to start to develop new healthy patterns and habits of self-care or to review and change our ministerial practices.

We hope that as we all work together to promote and establish a culture of wellbeing across the Diocese it will enable us all to live well in ministry.



“I started running at 61 years of age. Running gives me such a boost; I feel more alive and have more energy and it helps me to think more clearly. After a while I felt confident enough to join a running club. We meet weekly and I love the opportunity to do something with people who don't talk about church all the time. I so wish I had started sooner.”

Male Stipendiary Minister, 2021

Establishing a Practice of Pastoral Self-Care

Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Our physical and mental health are very closely linked and there are some simple ways we can improve our physical and mental wellbeing in our day-to-day lives. It requires us to make a conscious choice to look after our wellbeing by making time and taking action. Small changes can make a big difference.

Make time to Connect - with the people around you, they are the cornerstones of your life; invest time in developing relationships; allow others to support you. There is always a limit to what we can deal with on our own.

Make time to Learn - anything from doing a crossword to developing a new skill; rediscover an old interest or study on a course. Set challenges you'll enjoy and which will help you grow in confidence.

Make time to be Active - find a physical activity appropriate for you. Step outside, go for a walk or run, play a game, take up a sport, do whatever you enjoy and that makes you smile.



SEE Resources Page 54-58 for physical and mental health signposting

Take time to Notice - the world around you, be curious, stop and see what's in front of you, notice the people where you live, find what's beautiful, savour the moment.

Take time to be Kind - carry out acts of kindness for friends or strangers, volunteer or join a community group. Encourage or thank someone, give a compliment, share good news, celebrate peoples' achievements.



Being Physically Healthy...

...means our bodies matter. Our physical energy is our source of fuel even if our work is mostly sedentary. It lies at the heart of alertness and vitality and it also affects our ability to manage our emotions, sustain our concentration, think creatively and even maintain our commitment to our mission and ministry.

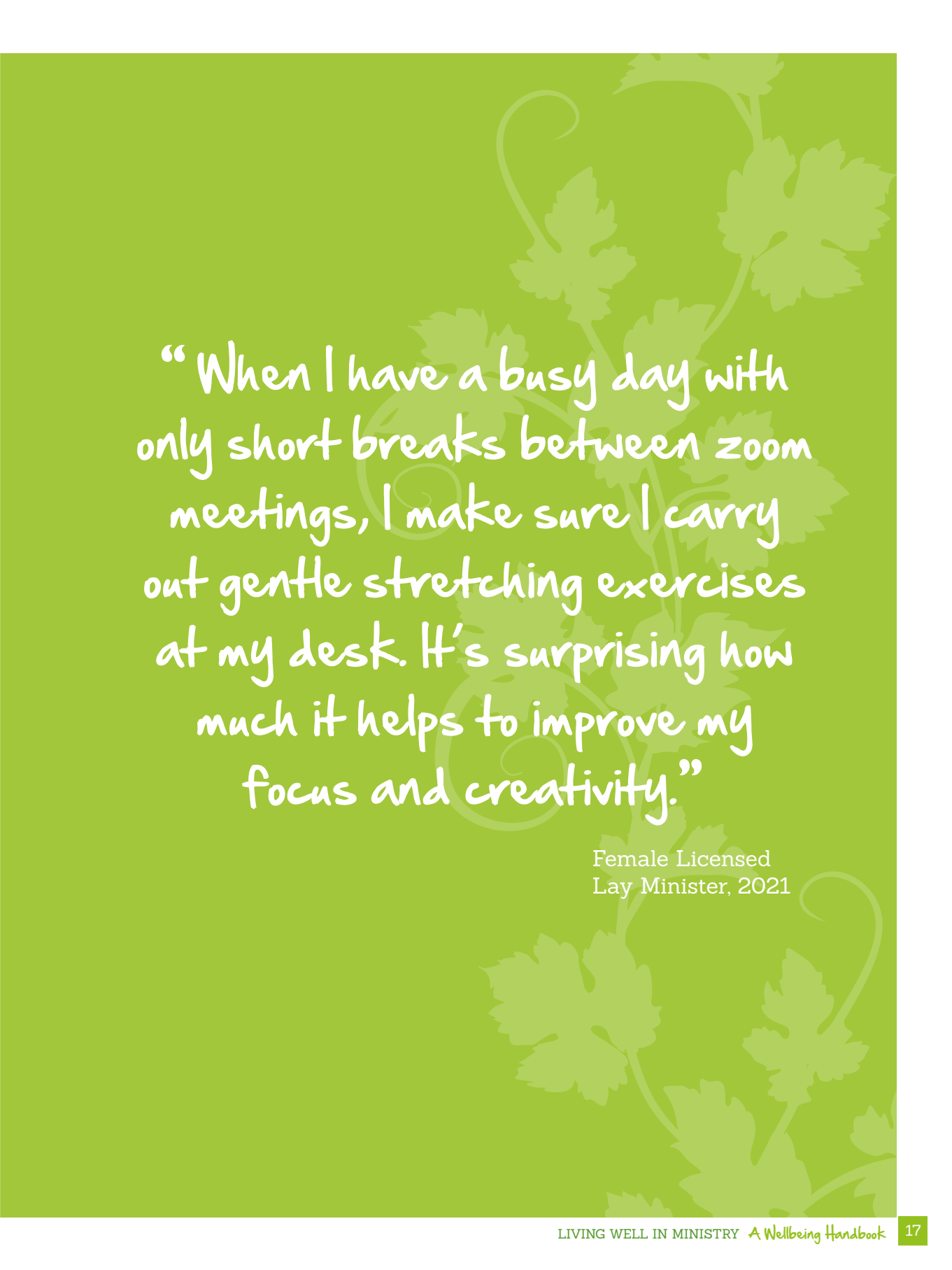
The four areas to pay attention to are **Sleep, Diet, Exercise and Good Physical Habits**. Here are some things which other ministers in the Diocese have found helpful:



- ☐ Get enough quality sleep
- ☐ Eat well, make time for proper meal breaks every day
- ☐ Monitor your computer screen time and take regular breaks
- ☐ Watch alcohol intake
- ☐ Limit amount of caffeine
- ☐ Take regular non-work time

- ☐ Spend time in a place you can relax
- ☐ Build exercise into your day and make it fun
- ☐ Take a vigorous walk and fresh air every day
- ☐ Spend time each week on hobbies
- ☐ Make things/fix things
- ☐ Tidy up your living space

What would you add to the list?



“When I have a busy day with only short breaks between zoom meetings, I make sure I carry out gentle stretching exercises at my desk. It’s surprising how much it helps to improve my focus and creativity.”

Female Licensed
Lay Minister, 2021

Being Mentally Healthy...

...means doing the things we enjoy and enjoying the things we do.

Here are some things which other ministers in the Diocese have found helpful:

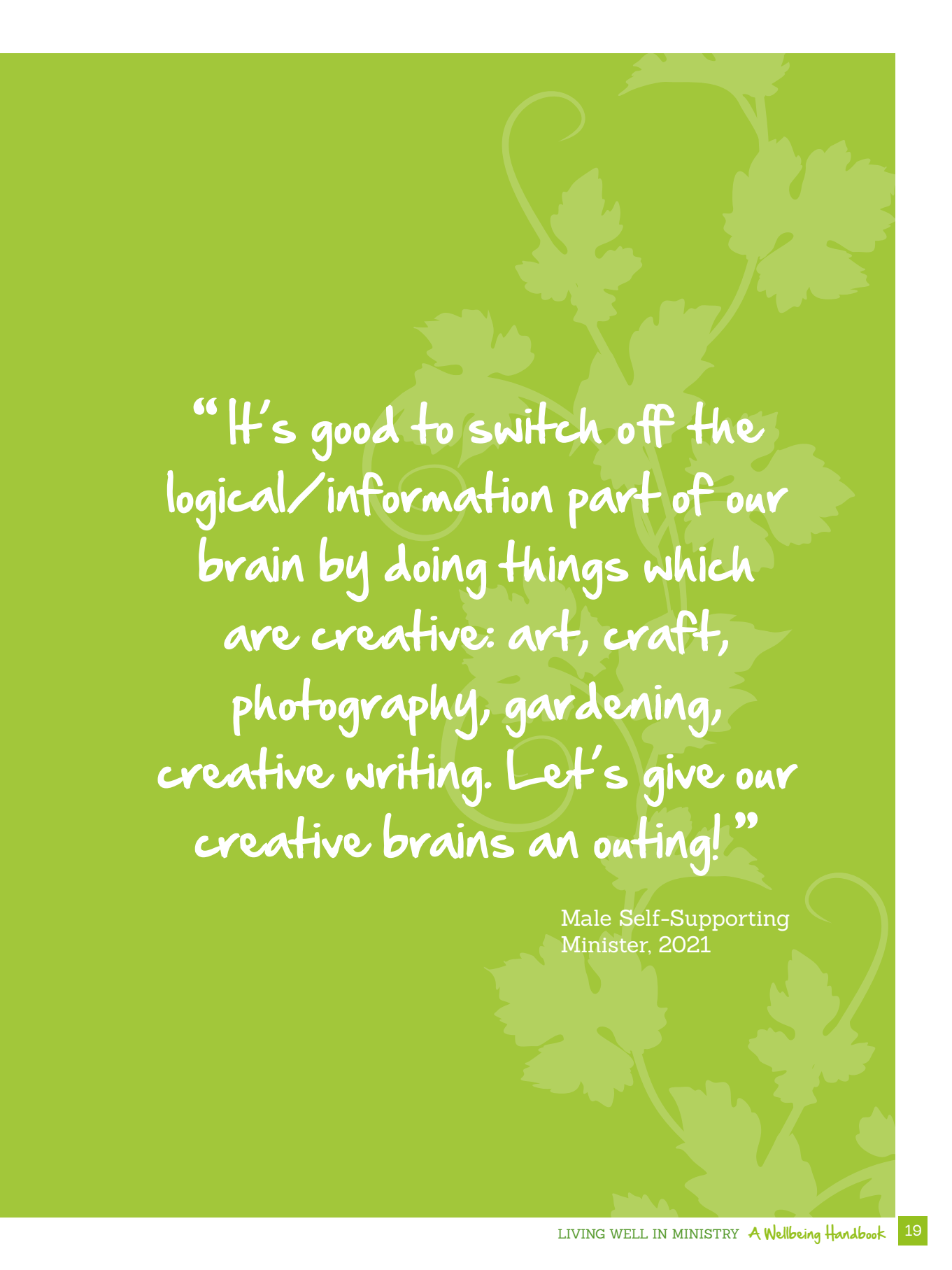


- ☐ Stop working and switch off mentally, especially before bed
- ☐ Turn your phone off!
- ☐ Limit how much TV you watch/ cut out trash TV
- ☐ Limit the amount of time you spend on emails/call people instead
- ☐ Spend time with people and have conversations (not about work)
- ☐ Talk to strangers when out and about and smile more
- ☐ Keep on top of things at home, be tidy, pay bills on time
- ☐ Keep your personal living space free of work things
- ☐ Frequently do something you enjoy no matter how small
- ☐ Engage your mind differently: watch some sport, listen to music, or read a book etc.
- ☐ Make time to be creative: gardening, cooking, writing, photography, singing, dancing

What would you add to the list?



There may be times when we feel close to being overwhelmed - that's ok. You might want to seek help from a colleague, make use of a counselling service or take time to recharge. Depending upon the circumstances Bishops and Archdeacons are able to grant a special period of leave during especially challenging times. If you ever find yourself in this situation, please contact them as soon as possible.



“It’s good to switch off the logical/information part of our brain by doing things which are creative: art, craft, photography, gardening, creative writing. Let’s give our creative brains an outing!”

Male Self-Supporting
Minister, 2021

Financial and Material Wellbeing



Our individual financial and material circumstances vary hugely, but it's an area which has a significant impact on a minister's wellbeing. How we view money and the material world matters and a lack of financial peace can seriously impact other areas of our lives. Some ministers receive a stipend, others offer ministry for no remuneration; many ministers live in tied accommodation and some have a house to retire to and some don't.

The biblical foundation to our financial wellbeing is stewardship (or management). Here are some simple tips for managing our spending:






- ✿ Assess where you are financially – if you regularly spend more than your income then know by how much.
- ✿ Develop a budget or a clear idea of what you can reasonably afford to spend in any given week, or month and don't exceed it.
- ✿ Do everything you can to get out and stay out of debt.
- ✿ Don't be embarrassed to seek advice and get a debt reduction programme together.
- ✿ Avoid impulse spending and allow cool off time before making big purchases.



SEE Christians Against Poverty for debt management advice.
capuk.org

SAVINGS: There are five distinct purposes for savings: for emergencies, for our needs, for the future, for our wants and for giving. If we don't have money we can't give money and being generous is known to contribute to our sense of wellbeing. Generosity not only helps others but is key to our own flourishing.
Could you revisit your spending and begin to save a little?

Other factors which come into play include:

-  Whether or not we have a working partner.
-  The age and needs of dependent children.
-  The age and needs of elderly parents.
-  Whether we will rely on a clergy pension in retirement, or can also rely on workplace pensions.
-  Whether we have savings, and any income from these.

Other ministers have noted how important it is to:



- ☐ Claim full working expenses from the benefice
- ☐ Have adequate and well-maintained accommodation (if in tied housing)
- ☐ Know how and when to access financial advice
- ☐ Get help with the tax return



Sometimes a minister may struggle financially because something unexpected has occurred. In such cases we have a discretionary fund through which we may be able to help with some immediate short term assistance. There may also be help available from the Bishop of Exeter's Clergy Fund. Please let your Archdeacon or the Warden of Readers know if you are facing such a crisis – **if they don't know they can't help.**





For financial advice all ministers have access to a 24 hour helpline through the **Individual Assistance Programme (IAP)**, see Page 54.

SSMs may contact the Bishop's Officer for Self Supporting Ministry and LLMs may contact the Warden of Readers for advice.

SEE the *Clergy Handbook* for financial guidance and signposting and the Diocese of Exeter website for information about:

GRANT MAKING TRUSTS - There are a number of local and national trusts that support ministers to undertake study or in times of financial hardship. For more information including a detailed grants booklet go to the diocesan website:
exeter.anglican.org/ministry/clergy-hr/sources-grant-funding

For Retirement Support:

exeter.anglican.org/ministry/clergy-hr/retired-clergy



Relationships and Wellbeing



It is important to protect and cherish our private lives and to make sure they are not sacrificed on the altar of service.

Each of us needs to develop a pattern for maintaining life-enhancing, supportive relationships that works for us. Some of us are single and need to be able to keep in touch with friends, who may live at a distance. Some are married, or in civil partnerships, and our partner may themselves have a busy working life. Some have children, at different stages of life, who need different degrees of attention and support. Some of us may be struggling in our relationships.

We probably all know the feeling that we don't see enough of old friends, and if we rarely have more than one day off consecutively, it is hard to get away to do this. And we all know that relationships, whether with family or friends, suffer if they are not fed with attention, presence, communication and time.



It is good practice to take two consecutive days off at least once a month, so that you can go away overnight, or just to stay at home and have a slightly longer time off duty.

Here are some things other ministers do to help them develop and maintain their relationships:



- ☐ Take time (including occasional weekends) away to visit family/friends living in different parts of the country
- ☐ Always take a regular day off
- ☐ Be present to those you spend time with, let the phone go to voicemail
- ☐ Call people for a chat
- ☐ Meet up with people for exercise or doing a hobby
- ☐ Spend quality time with someone you care about
- ☐ Be on time and don't keep rescheduling meet ups with friends
- ☐ Go to the theatre, concerts, sporting events, social gatherings with friends
- ☐ If you have a partner, schedule a weekly date night

THINK Healthy Conversations: A simple checklist for making sure our conversations with others are as constructive and healthy as possible. Is what we say....

Thoughtful, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, and Kind?



Look out for destructive behaviours that can form when stressed.



EXTRA HELP: We recognise ministry brings its own stresses and ministers are not exempt from the other problems of everyday life arising from family and personal circumstances. It is not always appropriate to seek support from a colleague or senior person, and for many years the Diocese has provided short term professional counselling.

See Page 46 Pastoral Support provided the Diocese of Exeter for information about the help that is available to ministers and their families.

For Relationship Support see the *Clergy Handbook* which includes information about:

Housing Accommodation Needs Arising from Clergy Marriage Breakdown (CMB).

Bishop's Visitors who are appointed by the Bishop to work with the clergy spouse after a marriage breakdown. Ministers should contact the Bishop's Chaplain for further information.

For Domestic Abuse the Diocesan Safeguarding Team will provide independent, unbiased, sensitive and discrete advice and support to anyone experiencing or concerned about domestic abuse.

exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding

exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding/safeguarding-team

Wellbeing Check-Up

Take a moment to answer these questions honestly then make a diary note to return to this page in a month or two to see what has improved.

DON'T
SKIP THIS
SECTION.

How do you feel about your ministry? Is this as you want it to be?

When and how often are you able to shut off from work completely?

What are the things that nurture and sustain you at these times?

Do you have a long-term health concern that affects your quality of life? What adjustments could be made to help you?

How well do you sleep, and is it enough?

When did you last turn off your mobile phone for 24 hours, or longer?

Do you take time to eat regular and healthy meals and take regular exercise? If not, what would help you to start?

Do you communicate with those you love about the things that really matter?

What is your pattern for spending time with those you are close to?

If you live alone, how often do you set aside enough time to visit family and friends?

Is your housing adequate for your (and your family's) needs?

Is your accommodation a source of stress? Are there simple adjustments you could make?

If you live in church housing, which parts of your home remain private and are never used for ministry? Is it time to establish some boundaries?

If you live in church housing, have you started to make provision for your retirement?

Is your income adequate for you to maintain an acceptable quality of life?

Are your expenses for ministry fully reimbursed?

How is your training and retreat provision funded?

How confident do you feel in managing your household budget?

Have you got sufficient financial cover for critical illness or unexpected life events?

Who is in your private support network and could they help you to achieve any changes that are needed?



It's hard to make lots of changes. Is there one small change you could make today?



Spiritual and Vocational Wellbeing



The importance of our relationship with God is emphasised throughout the Bible and it is clear our spiritual wellbeing is of central and critical importance to every other area of our lives. Our spiritual wellbeing is sustained by a healthy prayer life; along with appropriate spiritual rest and replenishment through time spent alone with God. This is foundational to everything else we do.

Being ‘in Christ’ is what connects us with our calling, gives us a sense of purpose and keeps us going when things are tough. We all need to know that we are loved by God, that we are okay, and it is important that our sense of wellbeing does not depend on the approval or affirmation of others.



“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet”

Frederick Buechner

As we seek to understand what might be affecting our spiritual wellbeing, we should take notice of where these things are in our lives:

Hopefulness:

our sense that God is present and active.

Purposefulness:

our sense that God will reveal his purposes for us.

Authenticity:

our sense that God has made us and called us as we are.

Security:

our sense that our lives are “hidden with Christ”.

When we seek to understand how we feel about our vocation we may find that our vocational wellbeing comes from:

- ✿ Finding energy in our ministry, noticing what is life-giving and seeking to do more of this.
- ✿ Being aware of what is draining, finding support in these aspects of ministry, and ensuring that these areas do not outweigh all that gives us life.

LOSING OUR VITALITY We can lose our spiritual vitality and enjoyment of life when we end up doing less and less of the things we enjoy doing for God (and for ourselves and others) and we stop doing the things which inspire us because we don't think we have time for them amongst all the things we think we have to do. Can we find ways of doing enough of what we find life-giving and find a better balance in our lives?

Spiritual Check-Up

Ask yourself the following questions and make a note of your thoughts.

DON'T
SKIP THIS
SECTION.

How would you describe your relationship with God?

Think about what is energising you now?

Think about what is draining you now?

How much of your time spent in ministry falls into either of these two areas?

What needs to change in the way you spend your time in ministry?

What do you have the power and the responsibility to change?

What requires other people to change?

Who do you need to talk to about this?

Notes



Consider discussing any issues this check-up raises with your spiritual director or another appropriate person.

Developing and Maintaining Spiritual and Vocational Wellbeing...

...we encourage all ministers to care for their spiritual and vocational wellbeing.

Good practice is:



- ☐ Developing a healthy and sustainable rhythm of prayer, work and rest
- ☐ Reflecting on what will sustain you in your life and roles, seek out and use appropriate resources
- ☐ Remaining alert to the continuing invitation of God to explore your calling
- ☐ Being part of a small peer group committed to transparent sharing, prayer, and support which can be a lifeline
- ☐ Having a spiritual director to help you discern where you are on the journey, and where God is at work
- ☐ Acknowledging the needs and legitimate claims of your families and friends
- ☐ Accessing trained counsellors and therapists when needed
- ☐ Having a point of accountability to ensure that God is honoured in the way you inhabit your role



SEE Page 54 for more information about spiritual directors.

CLERGY Careers and Transition Service (run by Church House) provides a safe, confidential space for ministers who find themselves at a vocational crossroads, or who are seeking development by opening up access to a network of practitioners. ordained ministers should contact their Archdeacon for further information.

For further help and guidance on spiritual growth:

exeter.anglican.org/ministry/spiritual-growth/



Establishing a Culture of Wellbeing in Ministry.

Thriving in Ministry



Christian ministry, in all its forms, is demanding and diverse. It is a very public role, and the pressures are often felt by ministers' partners, children and wider family and friendship networks. A large part of the work is unseen by others. It can be hard to regulate working hours and to know whether you're 'at work' or not.

For many of us, work and home space are often shared. For some, ministry is offered alongside other roles, work and family commitments. Even in retirement there are those among us who continue to exercise a ministerial role with great generosity.

As we have covered all the basic aspects of wellbeing, we can now take a more in-depth look at wellbeing in ministry.

A significant piece of research has been carried out by the Living Ministry Project which has identified six principles as being key to helping ministers **THRIVE**:

Tune your life to healthy rhythms

Handle expectations

Recognise times of vulnerability

Identify safe spaces to be heard

Value and affirm

Establish healthy boundaries



The Living Ministry project has a wealth of information and support including a free THRIVE booklet by Liz Graveling which can be downloaded from the resources section via the link below:

[churchofengland.org/resources/diocesan-resources/ministry/ministry-development/living-ministry](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/diocesan-resources/ministry/ministry-development/living-ministry)

We recommend all ministers read the *THRIVE* booklet. It is an excellent tool for ministers to reflect on their own wellbeing and is also useful for anyone with responsibility for supporting the wellbeing of others.

We all need to develop a pattern for ministry that works for us. Here are some things we can do to care for our ministerial health and development:

- ✿ Make opportunities for your ministry to be creative, learn new things.
- ✿ Play to your strengths as often as possible.
- ✿ Delegate your areas of weakness as much as is practicable.
- ✿ Take regular and sufficient time for study and continuing to develop your ministry.
- ✿ Set clear boundaries, say no more often and be clear about time off.
- ✿ Have access to a reasonable level of competent and regular administrative support.
- ✿ Make time to get out of the parish or go for a long walk.
- ✿ Talk to supportive colleagues.
- ✿ Meet regularly with a safe and trusted person or mentor who will be honest with you.



As a result of the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant, three very useful booklets have been produced to help ministers and all those involved in the wider life of the church reflect on the impact of their actions on the wellbeing of ministers and their families. Download the booklets via the link below or see Page 54.

exeter.anglican.org/ministry/clergy-hr/welfare-and-wellbeing

SEE Resources Page 54 for signposting to key documents for licensed lay and ordained ministers.

Use the following link for more information regarding ministry in the Diocese of Exeter; exeter.anglican.org/ministry

Times of Rest...

...depending on the formalities of the way each minister exercises ministry, provisions for rest and annual leave feature in several documents, such as Statements of Particulars, Role Descriptions, Learning or Working Agreements.



- ☐ Do you know what provisions are in place for you?
- ☐ Are you making the most of them?

Good practice is:

- ☐ Making sure you take at least one 24-hour period of rest from ministry on a regular day each week
- ☐ Working an average of no more than 48 hours each week, in line with standard working times regulations
- ☐ Taking your full annual leave entitlement of 36 days, including 4-6 Sundays (pro rata)
- ☐ Taking an annual retreat of approximately 5 working days (pro rata)



“I bought a separate work phone and at night I put it on to charge in my study and shut the door. It helps me to separate my work life from my private life and it was the best decision I ever made.”

Female Stipendiary Minister, 2021

Review Your Patterns of Work...

...of course, there is often no such thing as a normal week or month, but it is a good idea to keep an eye on how your hours average out over a week or a month.

The Affirmation and Accountability report, published in 2002 by the Society of Mary and Martha suggested an upper limit of 50 hours and a lower limit of 38 hours a week for full-time ministers.

IN A CHAPLAINCY OR WORKPLACE MINISTRY? Ministers working in chaplaincies or workplace contexts, as well as ministers combining ministry with additional work and other roles, are encouraged and expected to form a clear Working Agreement with their incumbent. This should recognise the good practice points above to develop a rhythm of prayer, work and rest which is appropriate and sustainable for the individual.



Start keeping a note of the hours you work and see if this in line with the recommendations below.



Look at the points on page 39 and reflect on your past year:

Which of these did you manage to incorporate into your work patterns?

Which of these fell by the wayside and why?

Do you need to talk to someone about the hours you are working?

What do you need to change in order to better meet the good practice points?



Think about how you might start to make the necessary changes.

Journaling...

...if you have had a particularly stressful, confusing or draining day try the following technique to practically reflect on your day.

Ask yourself the following questions:



- ☐ How did I spend the day?
- ☐ What significant conversations did I have?
- ☐ Did I meet God in the ups and downs?
- ☐ What drew me towards God?
- ☐ What drew me away from God?
- ☐ Did I recognise my habits and patterns during the day?
 - ✿ Which positive ones would I seek to reinforce?
 - ✿ Which negatives ones could I lay down with God's help?
 - ✿ What new habit or pattern do I want to develop?
- ☐ What else did I notice about today?
- ☐ What are my plans and prayers for tomorrow?



Ministry Check-Up

Ask yourself the following questions and make a note of your thoughts. Consider if you can begin to address any of the issues this check-up raises in your Ministerial Development Review (MDR) and Learning plan or Licensed Lay Ministry Review (LLMR).

DON'T
SKIP THIS
SECTION.

Do you have a spiritual director, and are your meetings fruitful and helpful?

Have you identified any areas related to improving your wellbeing in your MDR?

Have you identified three areas you want to grow in for your Learning Plan? You can include issues relating to wellbeing.

When was your last annual retreat? When will you begin planning the next one?

Do you have a supportive, trusted and appropriate network of people to confide in? Who are they?

Do you attend Deanery Chapter regularly? Is it supportive and helpful?

Is your pattern of prayer sustaining you? If not, what do you need to change?

How much time do you allocate each week for reading and study? Is it enough?

Do you have effective administrative support (paid or voluntary)?

How effective is your time management? What can you do to improve it?

Are you clear about when you are on duty and off duty?

If you work in a team, do you meet regularly for prayer and mutual support?

Notes



SEE Page 54 signposting relating to some of the areas covered in this check-up.

Pastoral Support Provided by the Diocese of Exeter

The Diocese of Exeter seeks to provide support to ministers, their spouse and families in a number of ways. An MDR or LLMR may be an appropriate opportunity to identify what additional support you may need and to consider drawing on some of these resources.

The provision detailed below is available to ministers and their families. Please see the website for more details.



COACHING is a conversation at the end of which we should feel that we have been listened to and that we know something that we did not know before. It helps us think clearly about the issues we face and how we might move forward. Whilst the approach is simple, it is very powerful; sometimes one session is enough whereas on other occasions three or four sessions may be offered.

There is no charge for this service so if you would like to give this a try, please contact Philip Sourbut and he will find someone to work with you. Email philip.sourbut@exeter.anglican.org or telephone 01392 294903.

CONTINUING MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT (CMD) - The Mission and Ministry Team offers an extensive programme of CMD events all of which are currently online. The current brochure may be found via the link below which also signposts other events.

exeter.anglican.org/ministry/ordained-ministry/continuing-ministerial-development-clergy/



COUNSELLING is available for ministers and their immediate families, as well as lay workers and diocesan employees. The service is entirely confidential and can be accessed anonymously through self-referral. The Diocese of Exeter will normally meet the full cost of counselling accessed through the scheme.

exeter.anglican.org/resources/wellbeing/wellbeing-for-clergy-and-staff/

For further details and information on how to self-refer, please view the service leaflet via the link below:

exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CMCS-Leaflet-DofE-4-December-2019.docx

INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (IAP) is a new service provided by an external company which gives ministers and their families access to a 24-hour helpline to support them through any of life's problems. For more information use the link below:

exeter.anglican.org/resources/wellbeing/wellbeing-for-clergy-and-staff/

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE GROUPS for ordained ministers have been running in the Exeter Diocese since 2007 and feedback by those who use them consistently show that they are a highly valued and effective form of ongoing ministerial development and pastoral support.

Please contact Philip Sourbut if you would like to express an interest. Email philip.sourbut@exeter.anglican.org or telephone 01392 294903.

exeter.anglican.org/ministry/ordained-ministry/reflective-practise-groups/



SABBATICALS – The prime purpose of a sabbatical is to provide a three month period away from the pressures of everyday ordained ministry in order to take time for personal study and development. The sabbatical policy and application form can be found on the website via the link below:

exeter.anglican.org/ministry/ordained-ministry/sabbaticals/

SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT - A Spiritual Director is an individual who accompanies someone else on a journey to a deeper relationship with God. They provide a confidential listening ear as well as prayer, encouragement and guidance in the life-long journey toward spiritual maturity. They offer a safe space to explore questions and difficulties and offer companionship during a period of discernment or change.

If you are looking for someone to accompany you on your spiritual journey, please get in touch with the Spiritual Direction Referral Service. Email spiritualdirectionexeter@gmail.com or phone 01395 272243.

For further details please refer to the leaflet via the link below:

exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Spiritual-Direction-Leaflet.pdf

How to Choose/Recognise a Safe and Trusted Person...

...part of making the most out of any counselling or other professional help you receive is to know the person you have decided to trust with personal and sensitive information about yourself is operating in a healthy and safe way.

Below are several qualities to look for in a safe person; this would include your spiritual director, any colleague you chose to confide in and any professional counsellor or therapist.

Whoever you choose to work with should evidence many of these:

- ✿ Strong commitment to Christ, helps your commitment to Christ deepen.
- ✿ Believes in you.
- ✿ Around them you feel comfortable; they let you be on the outside who you are on the inside.
- ✿ Approachable, vulnerable, humble.
- ✿ Wise and discerning.
- ✿ Not critical or judgmental.
- ✿ Consistent, a promise keeper.
- ✿ Trustworthy, can keep confidences.
- ✿ Around them you don't feel like a child with a parent but feel you are equals.
- ✿ Won't try to make you someone you're not; appreciates the real you.
- ✿ Asks good questions, effectively reflects back what they hear you say, and seeks to understand.
- ✿ Not a cliché giver, doesn't over-spiritualise.
- ✿ Can and will challenge you to get outside your comfort zone.
- ✿ Not afraid of your anger, tears, or other emotions.
- ✿ Likable to be around.
- ✿ Willing to confront with love and grace, doesn't flatter.
- ✿ Helps you become a better person.
- ✿ Doesn't have a lot of expectations of you, just lets you be.

In essence, a safe person is one who truly listens, occasionally offers advice, and consistently supports and strengthens you.

Pastoral Support from the Bishops and Senior Staff

We want to see a covenantal relationship between bishops, ministers and benefices, in which all work together to make wellbeing a reality for those who minister, enabling them to thrive physically and mentally, financially and materially, in their relationships and in their ministry.

Senior Staff are committed to modelling healthy rhythms of prayer, work and leisure. They also want to support and encourage ministers in self-care through diocesan structures and resources by:

- ✿ Challenging the culture of expectation of clergy overworking and limitless availability wherever it is encountered.
- ✿ Providing training, support, development opportunities and other resources for ministers in accessible and timely ways.

Post Appointment Support...

...the support we aim to give to newly appointed incumbents and guidance about who takes responsibility for arranging what is laid out in the *Bishop's Guidelines*.

The contact details of the Bishops and Senior Staff along with all the Diocesan employees can be found via the online directory.



exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/diocesan-staff/

Most Diocesan employees work in the Old Deanery. They have a wealth of experience, skill and advice to offer and ministers are strongly encouraged to make good use of them whenever they need to.

There is a table in the *Bishops Guidelines* which summarizes the support which is available from diocesan employees.



SEE Resources Page 54 for signposting to key documents for licensed lay and ordained ministers.





And Finally...

God's plan for our wellbeing centres in Jesus, the very source of our peace and wellbeing. However, we need to be prepared to take action and to make sure we introduce healthy patterns. We need to be prepared to establish good habits of self-care and maintain good ministerial practices that line up with God's approach to living healthy, balanced lives.

We realise a Handbook such as this can't possibly cover every wellbeing issue we may face but we hope everyone will find the guidance, tips, check –ups and signposting to a wealth of resources useful.

The Handbook is a resource we can return to, to check we are maintaining healthy patterns, habits and practices or which we can use to help us identify when we have begun to neglect our self-care or unhealthy patterns and habits are taking hold.

If working through this Handbook has brought to light areas of wellbeing which need to be looked at more closely or where significant changes need to be made please reach out someone you trust and talk about it; don't ignore the issues or bottle things up. If the issues are serious then seeking timely skilled and knowledgeable outside support can be vital.

When all is said and done the key to wellbeing is always to return to Jesus and God's grace; remember the five key principles of our wellbeing framework and to do what we can to help ourselves and others to live well in ministry.

Key Documents and Signposting for Ministers

- ✿ Diocese of Exeter Clergy HR
exeter.anglican.org/ministry/clergy-hr/

For more signposting on all matters relating to Clergy HR including links to download the *Bishop's Guidelines* and the *Clergy Handbook*.

Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy:
churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/guidelines-professional-conduct-clergy/guidelines

Download the *Five Guiding Principles*:
churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/5%20Guiding%20Principles.pdf

- ✿ Signposting for Self Supporting Ministers
exeter.anglican.org/ministry/clergy-hr/ssm-ministry/

- ✿ Signposting for Licensed Lay Ministers: Readers Working Agreement Notes and Reader Regulations.

exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Readers-Working-Agreement-Notes-and-Form-Rev-July-2011.doc

exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Bishops-Regulations-2000-exeter-Nov-2005.pdf

- ✿ Diocese of Exeter Wellbeing
exeter.anglican.org/resources/wellbeing/


- ✿ National Clergy HR and Resources
churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr


- ✿ Information on the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant and the three supporting documents:
churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/supporting-clergy-health-and-wellbeing/covenant


Additional Wellbeing Signposting


In this section you will find additional signposting relating to the seven chapters of the Handbook.


Christian Charities:


 **Conservation Foundation**
conservationfoundation.co.uk/projects/the-green-health-awards/
Gardening on church-owned land for those experiencing loneliness or mental health issues.

 **Kintsugi Hope**
kintsugihope.com
Helps to create environments where mental and emotional health is understood and accepted with safe and supportive communities for everyone to grow and flourish.


 **Mind and Soul Foundation**
mindandsoulfoundation.org
Seeks to share the best of Christian theology and scientific advances helping people to meet with God and recover from emotional distress. It engages with the local church and mental health services.


 **Renew Wellbeing**
renewwellbeing.org.uk
Offers training and support to churches to open simple, safe and sustainable places where it's 'ok not to be ok.'


 **Sanctuary**
sanctuarymentalhealth.org/uk
The Sanctuary Course is a free online resource for raising mental health awareness. Sanctuary UK offers resources and training to support a whole-church approach to mental health and wellbeing.

 **St Luke's**
stlukesforclergy.org.uk
Provides health care support for clergy and their family members when they are experiencing ill health; as well as wellbeing training resources.

Devon Charities:


 **Devon Carers**
devoncarers.org.uk
For those caring for people with mental or any other health problems.


 **Devon County Council**
devon.gov.uk/care-and-health/mental-health/
Helping people with mental health needs to find support.


 **Devon Partnership Trust**
dpt.nhs.uk
Provides a range of NHS services to people with mental health and learning disability needs in Devon.

*They have produced a booklet called *Taking Steps Towards Living Well*:
recoverydevon.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/5_ways_self_help_booklet_print_version.pdf


 **Devon Farming Community Network**
A comprehensive list of mental health resources for the whole county:
d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f1eece228740/content/pages/documents/1549564824.pdf

 **Recovery Devon**
recoverydevon.co.uk
Offers links to resources, groups, events, some funding opportunities and a wealth of information on the website.

 **pinpointdevon.co.uk**
Find care and support services, residential homes, advice services, community groups, activity clubs, registered childcare and family support.

 **Alcoholics Anonymous In Devon**
devonaa.org.uk
aasouthdevon.org/
Due to the geographical area of Devon the county has been divided into two areas, Devon Central and South Devon. Each area has its own Health Liaison Officer.

Church of England Resources:


 **Supporting Good Mental Health**
churchofengland.org/resources/mental-health-resources/supporting-good-mental-health?mc_cid=9a7f36c4a4


 **UKME Mental Health Tool-Kit** provided by the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Department:
churchofengland.org/resources/mental-health-resources/uk-minority-ethnic-mental-health-toolkit


National Mental Health Charities:


 **Mental Health Foundation**
mentalhealth.org.uk
Works to prevent mental health problems by community programmes, research, public engagement and advocacy. The website has a wealth of useful and reliable information.


 **Mental Health Matters**
mhm.org.uk
Help people achieve good mental and physical wellbeing and live life to the full. Provides self-help guides and online self-help courses.


 **Mind**
mind.org.uk
National Charity offering comprehensive information on all aspects of mental health. There is a helpline for information which can also be used by those who need someone to talk to and a network of local services.

 **NHS**
nhs.uk/mental-health/nhs-voluntary-charity-services/charity-and-voluntary-services/get-help-from-mental-health-helplines/
List of mental health charity helplines. Also provides access to local NHS emergency helplines.


 **Rethink Mental Illness**
rethink.org
Advice and information on mental health illness with signposting to mental health services and support groups.

 **Samaritans**
samaritans.org
A safe place to talk at any time.


 **SANE**
sane.org.uk
Provides emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including families, friends and carers. Offer helpline, text care and support forum for over 16s only.


 **Support after Suicide**
supportaftersuicide.org.uk
A network of organisation that support people bereaved by suicide.

Young People:


 **TalkThrough**
talkthrough.org.uk
TalkThrough offers a combination of resources that aim to equip youth workers, parents, churches and schools to attend to wellbeing issues.



Renew Wellbeing is working with TalkThrough to develop training for renew spaces for children, youth and families.

 **Youthscape**
youthscape.co.uk
A Christian youth charity offering resources and information from a faith informed perspective.

 **YoungMinds**
youngminds.org.uk
An organisation offering resources and opportunities for young people to share their experiences of mental health.


Children with Learning Disabilities:


 **Contact**
contact.org.uk
Run a free helpline for parents and carers with a disabled child aged from birth to 25, living in any part of the UK. Plus other support.

 **NHS Devon CCG**
devonccg.nhs.uk/health-services/learning-disabilities
 **Children and Family Health Devon**
childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk/
Provide support for a child or young

Financial and Material Wellbeing:

 **Citizens Advice**
citizensadvice.org.uk
Providing help and guidance about consumer rights and protections and other advice.

 **Ecclesiastical**
ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice/
Providing independent financial advice.

 **Gamblers Anonymous**
gamblersanonymous.org.uk
For help with gambling addiction.

Relationships and Wellbeing



Relate

relate.org.uk

Provides a range of services for couples and family relationships with offices throughout Devon.



Association of Christian Counsellors

acc-uk.org/find-a-counsellor/search-for-a-counsellor.html

Facilitates the provision of quality counselling, psychotherapy and pastoral care by Christians. The 'find a counsellor' facility helps locate therapists by geography.

Qualified Psychiatrists, Therapists and Counsellors (non-Christian)



Royal College of Psychiatrists

rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health

The mental health information section of their website offers useful resources for patients and carers:



The Spirituality & Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the College has a

useful archive of papers, available at:

rcpsych.ac.uk/members/special-interest-groups/spirituality/publications-archive



bacp.co.uk/about-therapy/we-can-help/

National accredited body of counsellors and psychotherapists.



psychotherapy.org.uk

UK body for registered psychotherapists.



counselling-directory.org.uk

another directory to find support.

Spiritual and Vocational Wellbeing



Sheldon Hub

sheldonhub.org

The Sheldon Hub is a safe place for people in ministry to meet, share and support each other. It is secure and free to use. It provides mental health and well-being resource for those in ministry.



Sheldon Retreat Centre

sheldon.uk.com

A retreat centre specialising in wellbeing in ministry.

Thriving in Ministry:



Devon Churches Rural Forum

devonchurchesruralforum.org.uk/

Through meetings, working groups, the website and newsletter the Devon Churches Rural Forum provides both physical and virtual meeting places for anyone interested or involved in rural life and ministry in Devon.

Circle us Lord
Whose centre is everywhere and
circumference is nowhere

Circle us and keep
Trust within, anxiety without
Grace within, greed without
Hope within, fear without
Good within, evil without
Humility within, pride without
Love within, control without
Wisdom within, folly without
Life within, death without
Healing within, disease without
Peace within, strife without
Amen

Anonymous



**DIOCESE
OF EXETER**
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
IN DEVON



Whilst all aspects of wellbeing are interlinked, the Handbook looks at the different aspects of wellbeing in turn providing guidance, tips and suggestions others in the Diocese have found helpful, along with some questions to aid personal reflection