

## *Canadian Anglican Cursillo*



### **HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CLERGY**

Now you are the Body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it...

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One of the greatest revolutions in the Church in the past century is the awareness and acceptance of the idea of "mutual ministry" the sharing of the work of the gospel between clergy and laity. As St. Paul describes in his letter to the Corinthians, ministry is not something exercised by an individual, but is the work of a community of men and women and children who seek to do the will of God. Much of the old model, one based on the idea that all ministry rests in the hands of one person, has disappeared and been replaced with the vision of pastoring by all the people of God. The pastor's role is now seen by the majority (at least on paper), as being an enabler, an encourager, and a trainer whose work includes that of "equipping the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

While there is an abundance of material available on the issues of clergy care this paper offers a concise guideline for supporting your local clergy, using the acronym, PASTORED:

**P - PRAY.** Pray each day for your priest to be held up and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Pray that your pastor will be strengthened and given all that is needed to be an effective shepherd. Pray also for the Diocesan Bishop to be

guided by the Holy Spirit for the health of the diocese and the well being of all members of the diocesan family.

**A - ACCEPT.** Accept your pastor as a person, recognizing that your clergy are as mortal (and flawed) as you are. Do not build pedestals of piety or unachievable expectations. Recognize that the fact that there is life beyond the "ministry" and support their need to place family and personal friends high on the priority list.

**S - SUPPORT.** Be supportive of your clergy. Offer encouragement and praise when deserved; admonish with love when necessary; and always remember Colossians 3:15.

**T-TITHE.** Offer a tithe of your time and talents for the work of the gospel in partnership with your clergy; and offer it within the spirit of 1 Corinthians 12 for the building up of the Kingdom to the glory of God.

**O - OFFER** Offer your support in tangible ways. Letters of support and encouragement are always appreciated, especially when they are sent "for no reason" other than to let your clergy know that they are in your prayers. Letters may also be written to the spouse and/or children of the clergy-

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quite often, they feel the isolation which is a part of being clergy and may even resent the time absorbed by the parish from family time.

**R - RESPOND.** Respond to requests from your clergy for assistance or help. Sometimes, the burden becomes almost unbearable and the clergy turn to their brothers and sisters in ministry for helping hands. Whenever possible, offer your gifts of time, talents and energy for the work of the Lord in your parish and beyond.

**E - ENCOURAGE.** Many is the time when your clergy will be discouraged about the movement of the Spirit. Your occasional telephone calls (for no particular reason) or notes of encouragement may be the thing to turn the corner and see the light of the Spirit working.

**D- DISCIPLE-ING.** One of the greatest gifts the laity can offer their clergy is in the area of Mentoring, or Disciple-ing. By this we mean offering to share your time with your pastor in study and prayer or simply in conversation. The "work" of clergy is often isolated from the rest of their life and often

clergy operate in vacuums-your offer of "presence" will be a blessing.

These are but a few simple things we can do to be supportive of our parish clergy. One of the' neatest dangers of the ordained ministry is the aloneness which often accompanies efforts to be faithful to the gospel imperative in St. Matthew 25. By visibly showing your love, care and concern for your pastor, the ministries engaged in by that individual will be strengthened and renewed and TOGETHER, we will continue to build that world for which Jesus was born, lived and died.