

**Handbook for Worship Leaders
in the
Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway**

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(2023)

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Note from the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway

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Note from the Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway.

This short book has been prepared for lay Worship Leaders in the diocese serving within their local congregations. I commend it to you as an introduction to the skills required of those who lead our worship, but it is more than that. It will help Worship Leaders to develop their own spiritual lives through daily prayer and Bible reading and develop confidence in leading public worship. With its helpful suggestions for further reading I commend this book to you as an aid to your important ministry.

+Kevin, Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway.

Preface

This short book is written to accompany the short study course provided each year by the Diocese of Glasgow and Galloway for those who are authorized by the Bishop as worship leaders in public worship in our churches. It is not intended to be comprehensive but a start in reading and preparation for this ministry. Leading worship is a privilege for which we should prepare carefully and sensitively, recognizing that we need to be familiar with the use of the calendar and lectionary, offering a Service of the Word, the use of the reserved sacrament, preparing prayers of intercessions, and so on. In addition to such practical things, we must prepare ourselves by private prayer and devotion, for public and private prayer necessarily go together. This little book has been written as a brief guide, and much more could be said. Learn to use the resources that are available to you - your local clergy, the website of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and so on. We are also available if you want to get in touch and we are always glad to hear from you. Perhaps you also have suggestions for further reading, or comments from your own experience that we could include in later editions of this book. We hope that you will find these pages useful as a starting point in your ministry.

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1.Introduction

Leading Public Worship

The Christian life begins and ends in the worship of God. At the end of St. Luke's Gospel the first thing that the disciples do after Jesus has ascended into heaven is return to the temple in Jerusalem and worship with great joy, 'and they were continually in the temple blessing God.' (Luke 24:53).

Those of us who are called to continue and to lead the church's worship in our own time and place thus inherit a great privilege and the importance of that office should never be underestimated. Whether it is to lead a group of two or three or a church full of people makes no difference to what is our duty and our joy.

Though we are one with the disciples of Our Lord, singing one unchanging hymn of praise, we should also be very aware that at the same time we live in a world that is continually changing and the church must serve each new generation with a sense of newness and, above all, inclusivity. *All* are welcome in our church and churches and as worship leaders we need to be sensitive to the needs of all our fellow worshippers, young and old. In the pages that follow we shall be thinking about such things as the language we use, the hymns we choose and being aware of people with special needs and conditions. (There may, for example, be people in the congregation grieving or experiencing particular sadness and we should be sensitive to this.)

What follows in this booklet is a mixture of practical advice and some guidance about your own spiritual life and reading. Being a worship leader is much more than simply turning up to church on a Sunday morning. It is of the utmost importance that you prepare carefully, and also prepare the church so that there is a proper atmosphere of calm before any service. Using the lectionary (and something of its history), preparing prayers of intercession, preparing the altar and books will all be given attention. But the most important thing to prepare is yourself, not least so that when unexpected things happen (and sooner or later they will) you can take them in your stride. Ultimately there is no distinction between public and private worship and prayer, each requiring the other. At the end of the booklet there is a list of suggested reading. These titles are only suggestions and feel free to ask your clergy at any time for more help with spiritual reading and guides.

Further things to think about and discuss.

1. Imagine that you will be leading worship in your church tomorrow morning. Once you have made sure that all practical preparations have been made, such as biblical readings organized, intercessions prepared, and so on, how do you prepare yourself both mentally and spiritually? Perhaps this could be discussed with other worship leaders.
2. It is 9.30 on Sunday morning and the rector phones you so say that he or she has been taken ill and cannot come to Church. The service begins at 10.00 a.m. and people have already started arriving. How do you deal with this situation?
3. Sometimes leading worship is the last thing you want to do. Perhaps you feel cross or bad tempered about something, your family is making particular demands on you, or you are just tired and out of sorts. How do you overcome such things (which happen to all of us at one time or another)?

The Welcoming Community.

Welcoming all ages.

Although many congregations are quite settled and it is not hard to predict who will be in church for any particular service or act of worship, you never know who might turn up or their reason for being present. It may be a family visiting or on holiday for a week or two, someone seeking comfort at a time of distress such as bereavement, a couple thinking about getting married, or just someone curious to know what goes on in church. It might be 'just' a traveler on the road looking for somewhere to get out of the rain and sit down for a while. Whoever it is and whatever the reason for their presence they are to be welcomed sensitively, helped to use the books or service sheets if necessary, and then perhaps given some space for themselves. They may not always stay to the end but do not let that worry you. If there are young children they may be restless and their parents are perhaps embarrassed by this. Try to show that it is alright and you are not upset by this.

If you know that people of widely different ages are going to be present, make allowances for that. Being adaptable is part of the job of a worship leader.

It is important, too, to remember those in your congregation or community who are for one reason or another unable to be present in church. They may be housebound, ill or in hospital or perhaps just away on holiday. It is a good idea before a service begins to spend one or two moments calling them to mind for they are still part of the congregation even though they may not be bodily present and may very well be praying with you in their own home.

Being sensitive to different needs.

Even when the congregation is small, the atmosphere at a service of worship can be complex and many layered. As we prepare our readings and prayers we need to be sensitive to this. We do not always get it right and sooner or later everyone who leads worship will find themselves being criticized by someone! When this happens, take criticism graciously, even when it seems unjustified. We all have our likes and dislikes

and sometimes we may need to put these aside to accommodate the needs of others.

Some services, and certain times of the year, draw in people who are not regular church goers and perhaps feel awkward or embarrassed that they do not know what to do, when to stand or sit, how to use the books and so on. It is important that they are made to feel as comfortable as possible and we can help them with books and service sheets properly prepared and presented. Let us take an example of this. There is a child being baptised at the Sunday morning eucharist and large numbers of the family will be present, many of them quite unfamiliar with what goes on in church. You are to say the prayers of intercession (about which more will be said later), so prepare them with these people in mind. What sort of things does this suggest to you?

Welcoming the Stranger.

At the beginning of Isaiah we find Yahweh having some strong words to say to his people. He tells them that he is tired of them making such a fuss about what goes on in the temple in Jerusalem, all their 'solemn assemblies' and even their 'many prayers.' In short, they are obsessed with worship while at the same time they forget the basic decencies of kindness and hospitality. And so, Yahweh tells them, he will 'hide his eyes from them' until they learn to welcome the stranger, 'seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan and plead for the widow.' (Isaiah 1:17). It is a lesson we should all take to heart. If worship and the praise of God lie at the very heart of our humanity then its spirit is also expressed in our welcome to the stranger and familiar friend alike. In recent years the Scottish Episcopal Church, through its synodical structures, has a good track record of being a welcoming community. It is easy for any of us at times to settle into familiar ways and feel a little put out when these are disturbed. And we should never forget that we are not just a gathering of friends but also the Body of Christ which is endlessly welcoming to friend and stranger alike.

Further things to think about and discuss.

1. Imagine that there is a family baptism in the context of the regular Sunday morning

eucharist at your church. The church is full of new people - all the aunts and uncles, grandparents and children - excited and feeling rather out of place. How do you help them to feel more at home and part of a service which is more than the baptism that they have come to attend? For example, you might try and make sure that all the small children can see what is going on or even help in a small way.

2. Now and then someone can turn up and behave in a rather disruptive way. How do you deal with this?

3. Children can be noisy or decide that it is time to explore the building in the middle of a service, and although many people take this in their stride some find it very distracting. It can also be very embarrassing for young parents as they try to manage their children. Comments like, 'we were never allowed to behave like that' are *not* the most helpful in such situations! How would you manage this?

The Eucharist and the Service of the Word.

The Eucharist: the role of the Worship leader in the administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament.

Since the earliest days of the Church the Eucharist has been the central act of Christian worship. The reservation of the Blessed Sacrament has also been long part of the tradition and practice of the Church. Justin Martyr provided a detailed account of Christian worship in the second century and recorded that the consecrated bread was taken to the sick who could not attend the liturgy that they might make their communion.

Today, it is recognized that there may be times when a service of Holy Communion is to be offered, yet there is no priest available for the celebration of the Eucharist. Increasingly Worship leaders are being called upon to lead the administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament.

In 1997 the Scottish Episcopal Church produced a liturgy of administration of Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament by a lay person. This publication offers helpful guidelines (see below) to serve situations in which a congregation is without the ministry of a priest to preside at the Eucharist, yet wishes Holy Communion to be at the centre of its act of worship on a Sunday or other major feast or festival.

Whatever the circumstances, whenever this service is used, the relationship of the Administration of Holy Communion to the Eucharistic celebration of which it is an extension needs to be explained and made clear, so that it is not experienced as either a pale imitation of the Eucharist or as a kind of lay-led alternative to it.

Although the basic structure of the Scottish Liturgy 1982 is followed in this liturgy, there are important differences: the lay minister says "us" rather than "you" in the prayers for absolution and blessing; the lay minister does not lead the service from the altar or table; and there is no Eucharistic Prayer.

In this liturgy of the Administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament, the Eucharistic Prayer is entirely replaced by a Prayer of Preparation for Communion in different optional forms, which are very different in style, content and purpose from a Eucharistic Prayer. This is important, because the practice of using one of the 1982 Eucharistic Prayers but omitting the Narrative of the Institution (the words of the Lord over the bread and wine) and the Epiclesis (the invocation of the Holy Spirit on the elements) is confusing. That practice appears to say that only some parts of the Eucharistic Prayer are about consecration, and are therefore more 'priestly' than other parts, and that by omitting them a service without a priest can still be as like a Eucharist as possible.

This liturgy, by contrast with such an approach, does not seek to apologise that Communion from the Reserved Sacrament is not the Eucharist. Instead it tries to affirm the relationship between them both, and not to conceal the difference. The liturgy of Administration of Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament seeks to make it clear that it is not in itself a further celebration of the Eucharist, yet enables a worshipping community to participate in Holy Communion 'by extension' from the Eucharist, and to continue to shape its Sunday worship, when necessary, in harmony with the Eucharistic life of the whole Body of Christ.

Guidelines for the liturgy, of Administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament 1997.

1. This liturgy is intended for use in a congregation when a priest cannot be present.
2. Before the service begins, the sacrament is placed either in the aumbry / tabernacle or on the altar, covered with a white cloth. (never a burse and veil).
3. The Worship Leader conducts the Service of the Word from a stall in the choir, or from some other convenient place in front of the congregation.
4. When the Service of the Word is concluded, the alms may be received in silence. From the congregational side of the altar the consecrated bread is placed on a paten or

in a ciborium and the consecrated wine poured into a chalice and then placed on a corporal which has been spread on the altar. The lavabo (washing of hands) is not used and the Worship Leader should not go to the usual place of the priest.

5. The Worship Leader stands in front of the altar facing the people and says:

Either

"We remember in prayer those who celebrated the Eucharist at.." (here naming the congregation and the service at which the elements were consecrated), "with whom we now share in communion through this consecrated bread and wine.

(Only used when the Sacrament has been brought from a Eucharist that has been celebrated by a different Eucharistic community such as a neighbouring congregation within the same Charge which celebrated the Eucharist earlier that day.)

Or

In fellowship with the whole Church of God, with all who have been brought together by the Holy Spirit to worship on this day, and who have celebrated the Eucharist, let us rejoice that we are called to be part of the body of Christ.

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one Bread.

6. The Worship Leader then goes to stand in the midst the congregation to lead one of the three thanksgiving prayers given below, concluding with the Lord's Prayer.

7. At this point the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) or another communion song may be said or sung.

8. The Worship Leader goes to the altar and receives communion before administering to the congregation.

9. When all have received, the ablutions (cleansing of the vessels) are done at the credence table. The ablutions are done in the usual manner. The remaining Reserved Sacrament is reverently replaced in the aumbry / tabernacle or is consumed by the Worship Leader.

10. The service concludes with a post-communion prayer and the Dismissal

11. In place of the Blessing, the Worship Leader may say the following:

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us.

The Lord lift us his countenance upon us and give us peace.

12. If desired, a doxology may precede the Dismissal: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation for evermore." Amen.

Further things to think about and discuss.

1. Think about how you would explain to a person receiving communion from the reserved sacrament either in church, at home or perhaps in a care home, how this is in no way a lessening of the sacrament even though a priest is not present.

2. This history of the reserved sacrament is very ancient. Using the resources of the SEC website and the internet find out about it yourself and perhaps make notes on it.

The Service of the Word:

The roll of the Worship leader in offering the service of the word

The origins of the service of the word lie in early Jewish Sabbath day worship. When Jesus worshiped in the synagogue, he joined in liturgy largely based on the reading and exposition of Scripture, and the saying or singing of Psalms – in short, a ‘Service of the Word’. Early Christian gatherings for worship were also based on this pattern,

eventually combining with the Eucharist to provide the familiar shape of the Eucharistic liturgy of Word and Sacrament. At the heart of the service is the Proclamation of the Word. This must not be so lightly treated as to appear insignificant compared with other parts of the service. As a service of the word, the liturgy uses texts from scripture, such as the Psalms, as the basis for responses, prayers of penitence, praise, and other elements.

The service of the word, together with all its optional resources, can be found online in the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) website.

The pattern for this act of worship is as follows:

Preparation:	<i>Gathering and Greeting</i> <i>Penitence and forgiveness</i> <i>Praise</i> <i>Collect for the day</i>
Proclamation of the Word:	<i>Reading(s) from Scripture</i> <i>Sermon or other exposition of the Word / Reflection</i> <i>Affirmation of Faith</i>
Prayers:	<i>Intercessions and the Lord's Prayer</i>
Conclusion:	<i>Offering</i>

Extensive notes are included in the service of the word booklet on each section of the pattern above. These should assist you in selecting and placing the various elements of the service as appropriate to your circumstances and the liturgical season. This liturgy provides a helpful framework in which you might be creative in your preparation of leading a worshipping community.

The service of the word may seem largely irrelevant to you if it is something that your congregation would not normally plan to offer but it remains important that you familiarize yourself with it nonetheless.

Many, ourselves included, felt the same way until the unthinkable happened with the coming of the recent pandemic and closure of church buildings and other public spaces. In a situation where the usual forms of Eucharistic worship became impossible the service of the word offered an essential resource to facilitate non sacramental online worship.

Some things to reflect on and to discuss:

1. Have you ever participated in a service of the word? In what ways might this be a helpful liturgy both for the congregation and the lay person leading it? What could be its challenges?
2. *The Service of the Word* booklet can seem overly complex in its format. In preparing to offer a service of the word, how might you be able to simplify the structure as it is presented to the congregation?
3. How would you summarize the most important aspects of a Service of the Word. What would be the 'key words' in your response to this?

4.

Scripture and the Use of the Lectionary.

The history of the Lectionary.

The lectionary has its roots not in the Christian Church but in the Jewish synagogue providing fixed reading for the great festivals and following the principle of *lectio continua* ('continuous readings') for ordinary Sabbaths. It is generally thought that the gospels began as lectionaries placing narratives of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ in order, to be read across the course of a year.

The earliest lectionaries that we have date from the fifth century CE and the chapter divisions we have in our Bibles have their origins in the mid-sixteenth century to structure lectionary readings designed to ensure that the Bible is read more or less as a whole through the liturgical year. The readings that we now have in our services also have a theological shape to follow the Christian year from Advent to Advent.

The lectionary is important for a number of reasons. It means that not only on a weekly but on a daily basis we are all reading the same passages of scripture, contributing to the one voice of praise offered up by the people of God. It is also a way of teaching the people through the scripture the beliefs of the Christian faith. This is why sermons are, more often than not, based on the Bible readings of the day or week. Finally, it ensures that over a period of time more or less the whole of the Bible is read or heard in church. As we begin the new Church Year in Advent so we turn to a new gospel which is then followed in the subsequent weeks on each Sunday.

Using the Lectionary.

In 1996, the Scottish Episcopal Church published the *Calendar and Lectionary*, and this is now available in printed form or online through the SEC website. It is based largely on what is known as the *Revised Common Lectionary*, which is ecumenical and essentially the lectionary used in *Common Worship* in the Church of England. Material is also drawn from the *Canadian Book of Alternative Services*. Our Lectionary is thus also an instrument whereby Christians divided by denomination are drawn together in their worship.

In order to follow what comes now you should have before you either a copy of the *Calendar and Lectionary*, or look it up online at the SEC website. First, you will notice that it is divided into pages which are white and some which are coloured blue. These latter are the readings for festivals, saints days and special occasions. For now, and to establish the principles of use, keep to the white pages and turn to the page with simply **The Lectionary** printed on it. Turn over and you will find a double page entitled **Week of 1 Advent**. These are the readings for the first week of the Christian year. They are divided across the page into three sections, marked A, B and C. This is because we use a lectionary that covers a three year cycle of readings. Once year C is complete we return again to year A. Moving down the double page there is also a threefold division. The first section provides readings for the Sunday which begins in the week of 27th November to 3rd December (the first week of Advent). The second section provides readings for the daily Eucharist, and the final section provides readings for daily prayer. In this last section, readings are divided in two and can be used quite flexibly.

But let us suppose that you are setting up the church for Sunday morning - or perhaps you have been left in charge of printing the service sheet for Sunday. (This might also involve finding a Collect for the week, which you will find in the booklet entitled *Calendar and Lectionary Guide*, published each year and also on the SEC website). Assuming we are in Year A, we find that the Lectionary provides us with the reading from the Old Testament (Isaiah 2:1-5), a Psalm (122), an Epistle (Romans 13:11-14), and a Gospel (Matthew 24:36-44). Not all congregations use all of these but at least the Epistle and Gospel should be used.

If you are unsure about this process, practice with readings for other Sundays, or ask advice from your priest. For example, find the Sunday Eucharist readings for Epiphany 2 (14-20 January), Year B.

The Bible in Worship.

Once again, following the practice of the Jewish synagogue, from the earliest times in the Christian Church, the Bible was central to its worship, though readings from non-scriptural source might be added as well. Apart from the Gospel readings, the Book of

Psalms was at the heart of Christian devotion. In the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, dating back to 1549, the 'daily office' required for all ordained clergy meant that the entire Psalter was said every month through morning and evening prayer - thus repeated twelve times a year.

There is evidence of the Bible being read in the mid-second century at Christian worship, both from the prophets and from the 'records of the apostles', the readings lasting 'as long as there is time.' (Justin Martyr). The readings are followed by expositions and explanations - that is, sermons. Most of the early prayers of the church seem to have been modeled on biblical prayers and texts, though we should be careful to remember that it was many centuries before the 'New Testament' of our Bible settled down into its present form.

A final practical word. If you find yourself responsible for preparing and printing the service sheet for Sunday or a special service, make sure that the text of the readings that you print matches the text that is read at the service by the reader. It often happens that different versions of the Bible are used and this can be very distracting for people trying to follow the reading on the service sheet.

Further things to think about and discuss.

1. Sometimes the lectionary provides readings from the Bible that you might find difficult to cope with - for example passages in the gospels that deal with the question of divorce, or readings from the epistles of St. Paul about the role of women in a very patriarchal family. How do you deal with this?
2. It is a good thing to spend sometime each day reading the Bible. For some the lectionary readings are simply too much or too complicated. How do you set about establishing a pattern of Bible reading that suits you?
3. The ministry of worship leaders is not one of preaching and the Bishop does not license you to do this, but how might you offer a reflection or some other exposition of the word?
4. You may find that you are called to lead Bible study or a time when lectionary passages are discussed and perhaps need some explanation. How do you set about equipping yourself to do this?

5.

**Leading Prayers and Preparing
Prayers of Intercession.**

Introduction.

Before you begin this chapter it might be a good idea to have a look at Grosvenor Essay 12, *Prayer and Spirituality*, on the SEC website. However, much of what is there is repeated in another form in the section so this is not compulsory! But it does give a brief outline of prayer in the Anglican tradition and the close relationship between public worship and private prayer. Here we will give some close attention to the nature of intercessory prayer and preparation for those leading it in public worship.

Like so much else in our worship, the prayer of intercession has origins in the Jewish tradition of *berakoth* which has at its heart an expression of praise or thanks to God. In the earliest Christian records intercession was part of the liturgy of the Eucharist, the apologist Justin Martyr writing of the offering up of 'sincere prayers in common for ourselves for the baptised person, and for all other persons wherever they may be.' At the beginning it seems that they had their origins in what were known as the *diptychs*, that is the practice of offering up the names of members of the church who had made offerings in their lifetimes at the beginning of the Eucharist. This then grew to include those who were still alive, and finally the names of saints and martyrs. The point was that all were included in the offering of the Eucharist - the church on earth and in heaven.

In the later Middle Ages, when the Mass was said by the priest in Latin, intercessory prayers were offered by the people simultaneously with the recitation of the great Prayer of Thanksgiving, and these would include prayers for the monarch and nation, for the church, for family and friends, for those in need such as illness or prison, for good weather, for travelers and so on. After the Reformation in the fifteenth's century, the prayers of intercession were placed between the sermon and the Eucharistic prayer - which is where they are set in our own liturgy.

It is important to be clear what we are doing as we offer up, as a church, our intercessions to God. They are precisely that - prayers offered to God, ensuring that as we come to the great offering of the Eucharist all things are placed before God and into God's hands. They may consist of thanks, of expressions of concern for the well being

of others, and ensuring that we, as a church, bring before God the needs of all people, those whom we know and the many unknown to us. What is quite clear is that the prayers of intercession are *not* a news bulletin reminding God, so to speak, of things that God might have forgotten, *nor* are they a prompt to God to look after a particular sick person and make them well. They are an offering to God of all things in life that are then included in the great Eucharistic offering. When it comes to the care of the sick for whom we pray, God's instrument for that care might well be ourselves as the People of God.

Some Practical Comments on Preparing Intercessions.

1. Makes sure that you have the names of those in the congregation and community who have a particular reason (happy or sad) to be mentioned: birthdays (where appropriate), illness, bereavement, and so on. Also use the diocesan cycle of prayer (ask your priest if you are uncertain where to find this) which will pray in turn for different charges and people in the diocese.
2. Try as far as possible to build the prayers around the theme for the Sunday or the festival being celebrated. Intercession should not be a kind of condensed form of the week's news. It is rather a brief gathering of all things before God, and a participating in the intercessions of Christ himself 'who ever liveth to make intercession' (Hebrews 7:25). Intercession is a recognition that we truly see the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, that is, 'under the aspect of eternity', or 'from the perspective of the eternal'
3. As Jesus himself taught us in his Sermon on the Mount, saying long prayers is not in itself a virtue. Keep the intercessions brief and to the point, and it is often good practice to give times of silence. For example, you might suggest that people, silently or aloud if they prefer, include the names of those people who especially need our prayers. Often just a single name - John, Mary, etc - both makes this personal and protects a person's identity. Remember that you are simply leading the prayers which are of the whole congregation, and ultimately of the whole church. Part of prayer might also be times of silence and listening.
4. Intercession is offered to God - it is not an exhortation of the people. As far as possible avoid the phrase, 'Let us pray for....' Rather begin with something like, 'We offer to you and to your care....'

Final words on prayer.

The prayers of intercession come when they do in our liturgy for a very particular reason, forming part of the ‘shape’ of the liturgy. In our 1982 Scottish liturgy, they form part of a careful narrative that takes us finally to the Great Thanksgiving as our sacrifice of praise. And so we begin our worship with the shout of praise that we call the Gloria, said but always sung if possible. Then we listen to readings from Scripture and them them expounded (we hope) in the sermon. After that we make our common confession of faith in the words of the Creed; we offer our prayer of intercession drawing all things together before God; we make our confession and are absolved; we make our peace with our neighbours. Then - then we are truly the holy people of God, ready to begin with the great Prayer of Thanksgiving.

Finally, in all prayer, whether personal or public, intercessory or penitential, it is important to have times of silence. Prayer is as much a listening to God rather than simply speaking to God. It is more like a conversation than a monologue. There are many kinds of silence. There is the silence of emptiness which can be terrible. There is also the silence which is the fullness of language and praise and this can be truly wonderful.

There is an ancient tradition in the church, often associate with the eremitic tradition known as *hesychasm*, which employs a short prayer that is repeated many times, excluding all superfluous language and words and simply helping us to concentrate on God without distraction. It needs practice but it can be very effective, making us still before God. One of the most ancient of these is known simply as the Jesus Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Try repeating these words slowly, allowing them to empty the mind of all the busyness of life, so that they become a listening as much as a speaking.

Choosing the right hymns.

Hymns are a very important part of Anglican worship. They may be sung very simply

and be powerful even when the congregation is small, there is no choir and perhaps even no organ or piano. Hymns sung *a capella* (unaccompanied) can be as pleasing, and certainly as pleasing to God, as much more elaborate performances. Singing is a very ancient part of worship and, like everything else we are discussing, should be thought about carefully.

It may be that you are called upon from time to time to choose hymns for the next Sunday. Most hymn books are organized to help you, with hymns for the seasons of the Church's year and for particular occasions. Some hymn books, like *Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New* give very detailed guidance Sunday by Sunday and for great festivals and holy days. Choosing the right hymns depends very much on your congregation, and they are very important to people. It is probably a good thing to find a balance between always choosing the same hymns from a very limited number, and at the same time not choosing hymns that no-one knows at all. If it is possible it is good practice to introduce a new hymn with a brief practice before the service begins so that people are familiar with it when the time comes. There are times of the year, perhaps above all Christmas, when people love to sing the familiar hymns and carols that they have grown up with. But, as with every else in preparation for worship, take time and care over the hymns you choose by linking them to the scriptural readings and theme for the Sunday. Try to be sensitive to mood of the season and the congregation.

Further things to think about and discuss.

1. What do you think are the main points that make for good intercessions in public worship?
2. Do you find silence in public prayers helpful? If so, why?
3. Why are hymns so important in church?

6.

Rule of Life

Private and Public Prayer.

If we are called to be leaders in public worship we need to be careful also to nurture and take care of our own private prayers and devotions. Liturgy (public worship), prayer and spirituality are bound together, and the public worship of the church has traditionally been regarded as the foundation for personal prayer. The opposite is also true.

Each of us according to our means and time should try and establish a pattern of daily prayer and Bible reading. It does not have to be long and while it is helpful to try and find a regular time, do not become a slave to this or worry if other things get in the way and you miss days sometimes.

There are excellent resources on the the SEC website to help you in this daily round of prayer. If you need advice about this ask your priest. Many years ago David Jasper (along with his father Ronald Jasper and a Roman Catholic priest called Peter Coughlan) wrote a little book called *Pray Every Day*. It is still available on the internet for a very small sum of money (45p!). It is just one of many such books that can help shape a 'rule of life' - nothing elaborate but simply the result of a decision to shape each day around a time of prayer, Bible reading and reflection. After a while you will find that this becomes a habit and the day seems a bit odd without it. There is nothing wrong with good habits for they help to shape the kind of people we are.

Always remember, the public and private prayer require each other, and the one without the other is impoverished.

Further things to think about and discuss.

1. Think about when is the best time of day to set aside time for quiet prayer and reflection. What is a reasonable amount of time each day? Don't set yourself targets that you cannot sustain.
2. Is this a time when you prefer to be on your own, or with a friend or partner?
3. Reading does not always have to be scriptural. Which books would you find most

useful to have with you in your daily prayers?

7.

Conclusion:

The Worship of God, our Duty and our Joy.

The traditional language of our 1970 Eucharistic rite includes these words, 'although

we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord’.

The worship of Almighty God is, then, our duty. The word ‘worship’ finds its root in the word ‘worth’. God is worthy of our worship and so it is our duty to offer this. Duty can seem to be a cold or unfashionable word but, in the context of our offering of worship, it is a most appropriate one. It is the due owed to God who created us, loves us and seeks a living relationship with us all. This is true of all believers. It does not depend on our mood or circumstances, but rather forms the basis of that foundational relationship between the Church and the God we seek to know and to serve.

To lead God’s people in offering public acts of worship is both a great privilege and responsibility. Much has already been said about the necessity of preparation for each service but it is also important to say that the Worship Leader not only leads the people in the Liturgy but also models to them what a worshiper looks like. Preparation can help with this in that it reduces the dangers of getting flustered and nervous. It is important to be calm and, by our actions and demeanour, show others what it is like to pray together and simply to be in God’s presence. To be this type of leader in worship we will free the congregation from being nervous on your behalf and from being distracted from our common offering of the worship and praise of Almighty God.

If duty is important to remember it is also equally balanced with joy. The Church meets each Sunday because each Sunday is a mini Easter Day. This holy first day of the week reminds us of the first day of creation and the day of new creation through the mighty and joyful resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. This is the source and context of all our worship as a Christian community. It is a transforming encounter with the living God; one that opens us to become more like the One we praise by becoming a people of new life and new beginnings. The joyful truth of Christ’s resurrection motivates us to be co-workers with our loving God as together we ‘Go in peace to love and serve the Lord’.

Bibliography

The following suggestions for reading and worship preparation are simply that - suggestions. Your priest will be able to suggest much more, and especially books that may be relevant to your own place of ministry whether it be urban, rural, city or country.

1. For many years the Scottish Episcopal Church has been producing a series of booklets called Grosvenor Essays. They are short and readable. They are all freely available online at the SEC website. We particularly recommend No 12, *Prayer and Spirituality*. Also useful are a number under the general title 'Thinking the Nicene Creed' which will help you think a little more about central Christian doctrines such as the incarnation (Essay 7) and the resurrection (Essay 6). You might also find Essay 13 a useful discussion on the theology of authority in the ministry of the church. It has a useful section on lay ministries.

In addition there are many resources online at the SEC website, including daily prayer and offices.

2. Christian Faith and Spirituality.

Those who are called to be worship leaders need to think carefully about the nature of the Christian faith that is embodied in our worship. There is an excellent short book by Archbishop Michael Ramsey entitled *Introducing the Christian Faith*. It was first published in 1961 but remains one of the best simple outlines of our faith. Michael Ramsey was one of the great teachers of the church in the twentieth century and wrote many short books that combine simplicity with wisdom. In particular we recommend his book simply entitled *Holy Spirit* (1977). His books are still readily and cheaply available.

More recently our own Bishop Robert Gillies, formerly bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney has published an excellent book entitled *The Promised Dawn* (2023). It is based on an Advent course that he has led and focuses particularly on the minor prophets of the Hebrew Bible, combining biblical wisdom with reflections on Bishop Gillies' own pastoral ministry in the church.

Another excellent book is Susan H. Jones' *Listening for God's Call* (2014) which offers a number of short and accessible introductions to some of the key themes in Christian theology and life. Once again, it is easily and cheaply available.

3. Leading Worship.

For a number of years we have been recommending Richard Giles' *At Heaven's Gate* (2010), a wise and practical introduction to leading worship in church. So far nothing has quite taken its place.

One of the most widely read teachers of prayer and spirituality in the Celtic tradition was Richard Adam. He was for many years Vicar of Holy Island off the Northumberland coast and he died in 2020. You might start with Adam's *Tides and Seasons: Modern Prayers in the Celtic Tradition* (1989) or *The Edge of Glory* (2011).

Useful books preparing intercessions and prayers in public worship:

John Pritchard, *The Intercessions Resource Book* (2018).

Graham Turner, *Alternative Collects: Prayers to a Disruptive and Compassionate God* (2018).

Steven Shakespeare, *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* (2008).

Rob Kelsey, *Praying for the Earth: Remembering the Environment in our Prayers of Intercession* (2021)

4. Rule of Life.

Robert Atwell, *Celebrating the Seasons* (1999). This book is a little pricey (£30) but perhaps a good present for Christmas or birthday? It is a treasure trove of spiritual classics based on daily readings - including St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, Julian of Norwich, Evelyn Underhill, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and many others.

The SEC website provides offices for daily prayer and devotion.

An absolute classic of our times by one of the most remarkable teachers of prayer and spirituality in the twentieth century is *Evelyn Underhill's Prayer Book* (2018).