

Mutual Ministry Review

Prayer

O gracious and loving God, you work everywhere reconciling, loving and healing your people and creation. In your Son and through the power of your Holy Spirit, you invite each of us to join you in your work. We ask you to form us more and more in your image and likeness, through our prayer and worship of you and through the study of your Scripture, that our eyes may be fully opened to your mission in the world. Then, God, into our communities, our nation and the world, send us to serve with Christ, taking risks to give life and hope to all people and all of your creation. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Mutual Ministry Reviews¹

What is a mutual ministry review (MMR)?

A mutual ministry review is a discernment process in which the leaders of the congregation ask who God is calling this congregation to be, how this congregation is presently responding to God's call, and how this congregation is going to respond to God's call. The MMR is an effort to discern God's will for the church and call for all ministers (lay and clergy) to be accountable for it.

Why conduct a mutual ministry review?

A mutual ministry review offers opportunities (i) for the clergy, the vestry, and the parish community to assess how effectively they are fulfilling their responsibilities to each other and their ministries, (ii) to celebrate the ministries of the congregation, (iii) to identify areas for growth and development, and (iv) to identify ways to enhance the various ministries of the church and all its people.

A complete mutual ministry review process will provide

- an effective *evaluation* of what is going well and what needs attention (especially in terms of how well we are living our into our baptism and becoming disciples);

¹ The following mutual ministry review process is from Jim Gettel, *Where Jesus Leads: Helping Christian Communities to Follow* (Deep River Books, January 2017).

- a shared *vision* of where God is calling the congregation; and
- a *strategy* that produces clear priorities and objectives for the congregation, specific goals for achieving them, and an understanding of the shared expectations, formation, leadership, and resources needed to accomplish them.

What is the theological basis for mutual ministry review?

The church can become the body of Christ in the world if we “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love” (Ephesians 4:15–16). For the church to become more of the body of Christ, each person needs to bring and use their special gifts in the community (1 Corinthians 12). Because all of the members of the body are interconnected, the work of the body is “mutual ministry,” and we share responsibility to observe and review our ministries within our commitment to follow Christ and be God’s people.

A mutual ministry review helps us to be accountable to God for our actions, a stewardship responsibility portrayed in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25). Most importantly, a mutual ministry review enables us to share and witness to the activity of God in our lives and community, as when the seventy disciples returned to proclaim what miracles had happened in God’s name (Luke 10).

Part 1: An organic model for mutual ministry review

Scripture Reflection

Mark 4:26–32

Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

Luke 13:6–9

Then Jesus told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Matthew 7:16–20

You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.

Isaiah 5:1–4, 7a

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he

expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.

What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? . . . For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting.

1. *Questions for discussion*

What did you hear?

What do these passages say about where our growth comes from?

What do we need to do to grow?

Are our actions producing fruit for the kingdom of God?

2. *Place your ministry activities in appropriate categories.*

The Bible often uses metaphors of fruit and vineyards to describe the people of God and the work to which we are called. Caring for a church, like caring for a vineyard, requires hard work. We labor in the vineyard with God, and we plant and water, but God gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6). To bear good fruit, a vineyard needs to be tended over the course of many years. The farming cycle must be repeated: season after season, crops are planted and tended, and fruit is gathered and stored. Similarly, year after year, we make plans for our church community, act upon them, and review our activities. The work is never ultimately perfected nor completely finished, and the fruit is not always sweet. Sometimes pruning is needed or the land needs to lie fallow. Yet when good fruits are gathered, we celebrate and give thanks for the rich harvest. The good fruits of the harvest, as Saint Paul describes, are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22).

This is an opportunity to use an agricultural model to explore our activities according to where they are in the growth process to see in a positive and nonthreatening way: what needs digging and fertilizing (reworking); what needs planting; what needs watering or pruning (tending); what needs to lie fallow; what we are overtending; what is ready for harvest and celebration festival. *Consider which category each of your church's mission fields or ministry areas belong to.*

MUTUAL MINISTRY REVIEW

<p>DIG: What needs digging into (prep work), or digging around and fertilizing (reworking)?</p>	<p>PLANT: What needs planting (exploring, starting, leading)?</p>	<p>WATER: What needs watering (tending, oversight, encouragement)?</p>
<p>NEW SEEDS: What might we start or add?</p>	<p>LIE FALLOW: What needs to be put on hold for a while?</p>	<p>CELEBRATE: What needs harvesting and/or a harvestfest (celebration)?</p>
	<p>PRUNE: What needs to be pruned or weeded out (let go of)?</p>	

Some ministry areas to consider placing:

Ministry Area	Description
Administration/oversight	overseeing all aspects of congregational ministries, including programs, finances, etc.
Adult Formation	nurturing and equipping people for growth within the faith community and for mission; developing opportunities for prayer and faith sharing; and sharing expectations for ways to strengthen our spiritual development
Children/Youth	designing and implementing effective programs of Christian formation and education; inspiring and incorporating youth fully into the life and ministry of the church; and encouraging and equipping leaders to work with youth.
Communications	using appropriate tools to communicate the story and mission of the Church for the success of its work
Evangelism	training and leading persons to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and to invite others into Christian fellowship
Facilities	taking care of maintenance, working on new construction, and eliminating debt
Leadership Development	strengthening the capacity of church leaders to engage in mission and ministry; discerning potential leaders; making provisions for ongoing leadership education, formation, and training; and developing functional ministry teams
Outreach	empowering and equipping persons within the congregation to become aware of and participate in ministry to individual and community needs and concerns beyond the faith community
Pastoral Care	providing pastoral response at significant life stages (e.g., death, dying, sickness, birth, crisis, success), including caring through home and hospital calling
Social	supporting fun fellowship events for the church and community
Stewardship	leading the congregation and individuals to identify, develop, and offer their gifts and resources
Worship	offering glorious worship services

Part 2: Evaluation and Goal Setting

Scripture Reflection: *1 Corinthians 12: 1, 4-30 (Today's New International Version)*

Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. . . .

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and [the Spirit] distributes them to each one, just as [the Spirit] determines.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as [God] wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts

need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

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

And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

1. Discussion Questions

a. What did you hear?

b. Why is it important for each of us to discover our gifts and vocation and participate in the body of Christ?

2. Once you have filled in ministries and activities on our Mutual Ministry Review chart above, ask some additional critical questions about how you are doing with mutual ministry:

a. Have you identified leaders for each ministry?

b. Have you created teams?

c. How do you invite new people into key ministries?

d. How are you doing on leading these ministries?

3. *Different ministry areas need different levels of oversight. Consider different areas in terms of different categories identified by Ken Blanchard:*

Level of Oversight	Where do your ministries fall?
DIRECT inexperienced workers by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving explicit instructions; • closely tracking performance; and • providing frequent feedback. 	
COACH moderately competent workers by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explaining why; • soliciting suggestions; • praising nearly right performance; and • continuing to direct tasks. 	
SUPPORT nearly competent workers by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing decision making; • encouraging independent problem solving; and • supporting development of an independent style 	
DELEGATE to fully competent workers by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empowering the worker to act independently; • providing appropriate resources; and • leaving them alone! 	

Place each of the ministry areas in this chart according to the levels of oversight required. Identify areas that presently require clergy or staff involvement by placing an asterisk () in front of them.*

Successful delegation happens when a ministry team has: (i) a responsible leader or group of leaders, (ii) experienced and enthusiastic workers, (iii) intentional preparation (training, coaching, apprenticing) of new leaders and workers, (iv) a clear role that is appropriately monitored by the leaders, (v) helpful process guides or manuals, and (vi) appropriate communication with and reporting to the governing board.

4. *Begin to set goals for the community or ministry area, asking:*

- Are we sensing a call in certain areas?
- What would you like to build on or do differently, if anything?
- What do you sense God might be calling you to do in the coming year or two?
- What one thing would you like to see enhanced or added in the coming year or two?
- What goals would we like to set? Where (to whom) will our activities be?
- Have specific answers to four questions for each goal:
 - Who (will do this)?
 - What (will they do)?
 - When (will it be done)?
 - How (will it be done)?

Appendix A: Leadership Responsibilities of Vestries²

1. Support unity and love.
 - a. "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34)
 - b. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35)
2. Discern the church's mission and purposes (asking "What is God calling us to do and to accomplish here in this place?" and "How can we best practice this ministry?" to clearly articulate the unique mission of the congregation to respond to God's calling in the world, by identifying the populations, communities or areas the congregation is called to serve and defining the congregation's goals)
3. Ensure effective planning (develop a depth of knowledge of the communities being served; review and approve staff and ministry team plans to accomplish congregational goals; understand and question the assumptions upon which the plans are based; and help strengthen the plans to realize progress toward the goals)
4. Determine, monitor, and strengthen the church's programs and services (introduce, alter or eliminate programs as needed to involve gifted individuals to fulfill the mission of the congregation and regularly monitor results to evaluate whether plans are being achieved and operations are being properly managed)
5. Select, monitor, evaluate, compensate, support and – if necessary – replace the ministry leaders, and ensure management succession
6. Provide proper financial oversight (review and approve the church's financial objectives, plans, and actions, including significant capital allocations and expenditures)
7. Ensure adequate resources
8. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability (ensure that the church has in place systems to encourage and enable ethical behavior and compliance with laws and regulations, auditing and accounting principles, and its own governing documents)
9. Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance (its own effectiveness in fulfilling these and other board responsibilities)
10. Enhance the church's witness and reputation (serving as a model for Christian community, mutual ministry and open communication, especially constructive criticism and feedback)

² Adapted from Ten Basic Responsibilities Of Nonprofit Boards (BoardSource, 2003) and The Report of the NACD Blue Ribbon Commission on Director Professionalism (National Association of Corporate Directors, 2005).

Appendix B: A ministry team model for mutual ministry review

Individual ministry teams may also apply the organic mutual ministry review process above to evaluate their progress. Where leadership is effectively delegated, a governing board may also ask individual ministry teams to take the lead by participating in the following process:

1. The governing board sets a schedule for ministry area information requests and discussion times during governing board meetings over a period of months. A twelve- or twenty-four-month proposed schedule of ministry review times is prepared.
2. The governing board asks ministry area leaders, teams, or committees to (i) share and develop their hopes, dreams, goals, and strategies in their particular ministry areas, (ii) answer the following questions for the ministry area, and (iii) present the answers in a short report to the governing board at least a week before the ministry area will be discussed.
 - Who is part of this ministry?
 - What do you believe is the strength of this ministry?
 - How do you invite people into this ministry? Is it working?
 - What would you like to build on or do differently, if anything?
 - What do you sense God might be calling you to do in the coming year or two?
 - What one thing would you like to see enhanced or added in the coming year or two?
 - What are your goals for the next year or two, including specific answers to four questions for each goal: Who will do this? What will they do? When will it be done? How will it be done?
3. The governing board (i) reviews ministry team reports and suggests additions or changes, (ii) prioritizes and coordinates ministry team recommendations with overall plans for the church community, and (iii) monitors, adjusts, and follows up with ministry team plans as needed.

Emphases of this process are to help everyone understand what is going on, learn about ministries, support communication among ministries and the congregation, celebrate gifts and ministries, and provide a foundation for governing board discernment, planning, oversight, and decision making.