

Eastern Baptist Association



Take Care.

Ministry in the EBA



For All EBA Ministers

- Take Care of yourself
- Take Care of others
- Take Care from others

Useful resources.

- Baptist Union of GB <http://www.baptist.org.uk/>
Advice & resources on a range of ministerial issues.
- The Alban Institute <http://www.alban.org/>
USA organisation with resources covering many pastoral matters
- Ministry Today <http://www.ministrytoday.org.uk/>
UK organisation encouraging excellence in ministry
- Association of Pastoral Supervisors and Educators
<http://pastoralsupervision.org.uk/index.html>
National body accrediting pastoral supervisors
- Society of Mary and Martha <http://www.sheldon.uk.com/>
Providing support especially for ministers under stress.
- The Retreats Association <http://www.retreats.org.uk/>
Guide to retreats and retreat centres.
- The London Centre for Spirituality
<http://www.spiritualitycentre.org/home/>
Help in developing spirituality.
- Claybury International <http://www.claybury.org/aboutus/>
Body supporting development of ministers.
- Continuing Ministerial Development
<http://www.rpc.ox.ac.uk/index.php?pageid=135>
<http://www.spurgeons.ac.uk/Home/TheCourses/CentreforContinuing-DevelopmentinMinistry/tabid/123/efault.aspx7>
From two Baptist colleges.
- Connexion <http://www.baptistconnexion.org.uk>
For spouses of Baptist ministers and missionaries.
- Metanoia Books <http://www.metanoiabooks.org.uk/>
Bookshop of the London Mennonite Centre
- Grove Books <http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/>
Short but informed and useful booklets on a range of ministerial matters.

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Introduction

What's this about?

One of the primary functions of the EBA is to seek to offer appropriate care to ministers and churches. This leaflet makes some suggestions about how we can go about that and gives details of steps to be taken leading to care being given.



Pastoral Care.

The first thing to say is that there can never be enough of this! All ministers know that pastoral care could take up all their time and a great deal more. Also, in a church setting pastoral care is not just the responsibility of the minister. All share that care in some way or another arising out of the relationships forged in Christ.

Similarly, in Association life pastoral care depends on common commitment to Christ and one another. The committed relationship implies a covenant, a mutual relationship based on dependence on God in Christ, and willingness to give and receive in His service.

Relationships, therefore, carry responsibilities for ourselves and for others. They thrive best on good communication. That's part of the reason for this leaflet: to aid communication of need and support. What follows aims to set out how we can care for one another and ourselves in Association. It will seek to outline what ministers and churches can expect from the Association and one another. It will lay out clear paths of communication so that Christ's love might more readily flow amongst us.



Take Care— of Yourself

A first step

Arising out of our relationship with Christ we each have a responsibility to care for ourselves. That will mean a number of things.

1. I'll need to nurture my relationship with Christ. So, regular prayer, immersion in the Scriptures, worship for God's sake rather than as my job, and friendships that stir my love for Christ will be vitally important. Time off for recreation too is not a luxury but a necessity!
2. I'll need to nurture my relationships with those closest to me. So, family time, however that relates to me, will need to be found and guarded. This comes before church life and must not be seen as something expendable as part of "sacrificial" service. Any opposition between family and calling is a false opposition. They are part of a whole, given by God.
3. I'll need to nurture my relationships with those serving with me. That means fellow leaders in the local church. These are "ministers" along with the pastor. Relationships of openness, trust and affection are needed for the church's ministry to be effective. Time for prayer and recreation together are as important as meetings for planning and decision-making. This also means fellow pastors, including the regional team. Local ministers' groups, or smaller groupings should help this.
4. I'll need to keep my skills and calling clear. This will mean taking proper advantage of in-service training. It will mean finding ways to reflect on my ministry. The Guided self-appraisal programme can help here as can the Peer Supervision Scheme and spiritual direction. It means making retreats and sabbaticals a clear part of my personal pattern of life. The Association's "Care Covenant" leaflet may be helpful here.



Take Care— of Others

The Next Step

In some ways this is the mirror image of the first step. In caring for ourselves in relation to others, we will want to give as well as receive. All ministers will have a strong desire to do this. It's part of the DNA of the calling! Again there are a number of points.

1. I'll need to know my strengths, and use them! But I will use them so that they fit the needs of others and don't overwhelm them. My particular abilities won't necessarily fit every situation.
2. I'll need to know my weaknesses. No pastor is omniscient! But if I have a weakness I can find someone else to make up for that in the life of the church. I am not responsible for giving all the care, but part of my task is to see that the right care is given by the right people. A team may need to be built or an associate found. I sometimes care by finding someone else to do it better than me.
3. I need to know the boundaries. I need to be careful where I seek to help people of a different gender or who are vulnerable in some way or who are unknown to me. The more personal the care that is given, the more care there will need to be about boundaries even, perhaps, meaning I will have to cease giving care at some points.
4. I will need to know when to pass someone to another who can help them more than I can. Most of us have listening skills, but sometimes people will need counseling. Then I need to point them towards someone with those skills. This is not a failure; it's a recognition of how I can **best** help someone. Serving others is not about me, even though it may confirm my satisfaction in my calling. It's about helping someone see themselves in the light of God's love and receiving whatever He wants to give them.
5. I will need to remember that, in the eyes of many, I am a person of some power and authority. I will be as Christ, the servant-leader (Mk.10:45). I will be an example to others of how they might serve and find joy in it!



Take Care— from Others

Another Aspect of our lives together is to **receive care from others**. This is not always easy to do. Carers want to give, not receive and that is not necessarily bad. However, sometimes our unwillingness to receive help and support covers anxieties or unhelpful attitudes about our position or status and that of others. Again, some points....

1. I will be willing to acknowledge that, since I am not omniscient, I will need the support of others.
2. This will best arise out of a genuine relationship, so I need to keep in touch with those who are likely to be the source of care. That's obvious if the care is coming from a spouse, not so if its coming from a Regional Minister! The closeness of relationship will vary and therefore so will the sort of care I can expect.
3. I will commit to contacting those who may care for me when a need arises. Again, those closest will be aware of the needs pretty quickly and all I have to do is accept their ministry. Others will need to be told. So, colleagues in a prayer triplet or ministers' group will need to be told. A spiritual director will need to be contacted. Regional Ministers will need to be told. Essentially, the more "distant" the relationship, the more I will have to take some initiative in making and keeping contact.
4. I will welcome the prayer and ministry of others and will take seriously their advice and counsel. That doesn't just mean listening, it will mean taking action sometimes and letting people know what has followed from that!
5. I will make sure my family receive the care they need too from others. I cannot do it all for them. I want help for them. Connexion can help.
6. I will use national resources if needed. So, the Ministerial Counseling Service is something I will use sooner rather than later if necessary.
7. I will recognize that receiving help is not a failure or sign of weakness or a measure of incompetence. It is a sign of a normal human being depending on God and the resources he provides.

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The EBA Vision
To see God's Kingdom grow in the East of
England
Through healthy churches
Living as wholesome communities

