

10th February 2026

Ministry

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry.”

Bible, *Ephesians 4:11*

When our minister was on leave, our “worship team” shared in the leading of worship. I had the responsibility of organising this, and, from time to time, when it was appropriate, took my place on the rota.

One Sunday I was sharing worship with another member of the team. When I conduct worship myself – as I’d done the previous Sunday when I baptised a little baby – I wear a clerical collar. Robes are largely a thing of the past for me, but, for whatever reason, the “collar” still appears. But on this particular Sunday, sharing worship with someone else, I chose to dress in a suit and collar-and-tie. (I still can’t do the open-necked-shirt thing.)

Not surprisingly, it was noticed – by the lady with whom I was sharing the worship, and by some members of the congregation. The “noticing” wasn’t critical, but it was “wondering”. And my response was easy. I didn’t want there to be a visible distinction between the two people leading the worship. The “ordained” and “lay” tags were laid aside in a symbolic fashion. The worship was being led by the people of God for the benefit of people of God. It was a ministry of all of us, for the benefit of all of us.

Was it important? It was for me – and, I reckon, for the people who were wondering about “the minister” in a collar-and-tie. Will I do it again? Probably. Will it change things? Not much, I suspect, though I’m convinced that we have to do more – even in a symbolic way – for the “ministry of all believers” to be front-and-centre in the whole of Church life.

Three years ago, the United Reformed Church in Wales produced a document called “The Whole People of God”. (It’s worth reading – see <https://www.urcwales.org.uk/the-whole-people-of-god>). The website says:

The Lord Jesus Christ continues ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God called and committed to God’s service and equipped by God for it. This service is given by worship, prayer, proclamation of the Gospel, and Christian witness, by mutual and outgoing care and responsibility, and by obedient discipleship in the whole of daily life, according to the gifts and opportunities given to each one.

“Mutual and outgoing care and responsibility.” That’s the work of ministry for the whole people of God, right there ...

A prayer for today

At one with God; at one with each other; at one in service; at one in love. Amen