



Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for accredited lay preachers

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of accredited lay preachers in relation to ministers of word and sacraments, church related community workers (CRCWs) and elders within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of ministers, CRCWs and elders are to be read alongside this document.

Whilst lay preachers are not mentioned in the Basis of Union, they exercise an essential and valued role in leading worship in United Reformed Churches. Accredited lay preachers are trained, accredited and commissioned by the United Reformed Church. Lay preachers share with ministers of word and sacraments in the leadership of worship in local churches. In their role of leading worship there may be times when a lay preacher is called upon to exercise a pastoral role when a minister of word and sacraments is not available and they need to adopt similar standards of integrity in their lives and relationships. Lay preachers, in addition to their promises as members of a United Reformed Church, at their commissioning service reaffirm their faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and undertake to exercise their ministry in accordance with the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church.

2. Standards of Christian Behaviour

2a Personal integrity and health

- To live a Christian life as persons of prayer and integrity.
- To be committed to growing in faith and discipleship and developing the gifts each has been given.
- To be aware of the need of ministers, lay preachers, elders and members to have

- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise, e.g. with regard to the safety of children, and to respect ministers and elders needs to maintain that same confidentiality.
- To exercise care and sensitivity when seeking counsel from others and in discussion about pastoral concerns, in order that the identity of any person shall not be revealed unless permission has been granted.
- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material.

2b Relationships with ministers

