**Guidance for Clergy planning a Sabbatical**

Sabbatical leave is a privilege of ministry, intended to provide clergy with the opportunity to take an extended period for rest, refreshment and renewal.

It is not a right and clergy should expect to consult senior colleagues, usually in the context of their Ministerial Development Review, about the possibility of taking sabbatical leave, and follow this up with a conversation with the Director of Discipleship or other colleague who can help them to create an effective Ministerial Development Plan.

All clergy are invited to consider requesting a six week sabbatical in the seventh year following their ordination to the diaconate, usually in the fourth year of incumbency.

Assistant clergy may take such a sabbatical every seven years thereafter. For this, a “mini-sabbatical” a grant of up to £500 may be offered.

Incumbent status clergy, and some others in stipended licensed ministry – including Church Army Officers, may take a three month sabbatical in the fourteenth year following their ordination to the diaconate, and every seven years thereafter. At the 14 year point and beyond, for stipendiary clergy, their stipends continue to be paid as normal. A grant of up to £1500 is available at the discretion of the Director of Discipleship and Ministry.

There should be a minimum of seven years between sabbaticals, but it is recognised that the timing of a sabbatical may be influenced by, e.g., moving roles, training a curate, family circumstances.

Service undertaken in another diocese will be taken into account, but clergy new to the diocese should expect to be in post for at least three to four years before raising the issue in their Ministerial Development Review.

Clergy do not normally take a sabbatical within three years of retirement, or within two years of completing academic study for which grants have been received.

There is a limited pool of funds available, so that it is helpful if the Department of Ministry is contacted at an early stage in the process, usually at least one year before the intended date of a three month sabbatical.

**Planning in more detail**

***This more detailed guidance may be helpful in shaping your thinking about sabbatical leave. Some of the answers to these questions may find their way into your Ministerial Development Plan.***

**First things first…**

Start by asking, what do I want to be different at the end of my sabbatical?

Pay attention to your spiritual, physical, and emotional needs as well as your learning goals. Consider including quality time with your family and friends, time in prayer or retreat, time enjoying an existing hobby or learning a new skill.

Decide who you will consult about the timing of your sabbatical – this might include your family, your PCC and your Area Dean or Archdeacon.

When the dates are decided and approved by your Area Bishop and Archdeacon, tell your PCC and Parish – make it clear where responsibility will lie in your absence.

When you are preparing for your sabbatical, please ensure that your Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) and Churchwardens understand who they should contact in the event of a safeguarding concern arising. Remind them that advice and support is available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser on 020 7939 9423. It is also helpful to identify, with the PSOs, who would be able to provide pastoral support to anyone affected by a safeguarding matter whilst you are away.

You will need to decide how best to “be absent” from the parish, whether you are going to be physically elsewhere or not. Ideally, you will prepare the parish to function without you for the period of your Sabbatical, and trust those you have given responsibility to.

Allow time before the date of your sabbatical to put arrangements in place for cover for services, funerals, and pastoral emergencies. If you have a curate, please ensure they have supervision or access to a supportive colleague during your absence. Some will be happy to step up to additional responsibilities, but please remember that your curate needs preparation and study time.

If you have particular spiritual needs or personal developmental or health concerns, consider beginning a process with support that can extend beyond your sabbatical (for example, look for coaching or peer support for accountability on your return).

Think about how you will prepare – what do you need to do 3 months before, 1 week before, the day before? It is easy to spend the first week of your sabbatical clearing the study of all the unfinished tasks. Similarly, if you are planning a walking pilgrimage, you need to get fit first!

Apply for grants and ask the parish for a contribution if you are going to incur unusual expenses for travel or training which will have an impact on the parish on your return. Experience seems to suggest that some parishes will give a grant to clergy (perhaps in recognition that they won’t be paying the usual level of clergy expenses for three months).

**While you are on sabbatical…**

Set boundaries, and stick to them. Make it clear to the parish what your expectations are

*Will you accept dinner invitations? Do you want to know if a particular parishioner is ill? Would you rather be ignored if you are seen at the swimming pool or the gym?*

What will your phone message say?

*If you have a dedicated work number you can have calls redirected, if not you may need to put a message on the answerphone directing people elsewhere.*

What will you do about emails?

*Some people find it helpful to monitor emails. Others prefer to block them – you can put an automatic reply on your service which might read “I am on sabbatical and not reading emails at present. You may prefer to contact me after my return on XXX, as email sent before that date will be destroyed and not read.”*

What about post?

*If you live alone, or your family are going to be with you for an extended absence from the vicarage, consider giving a key to Church Wardens or neighbours so that post (especially junk mail) doesn’t stack up. Take all the usual precautions you would on going on holiday – including ensuring that there are lights on automatic time switches.*

How will you record or share your experience?

*Some clergy find it helpful to keep a journal or log, and this is particularly helpful if you need to report back to funders/grant giving bodies. Your parish may enjoy a blog if you are travelling – or a report with pictures when you return*.

**On your return**

Remember your goals. If you went away determined to do things differently on your return, now is the time to do them differently! If you have made decisions about your working patterns, for example, allow time to explain your thinking to your colleagues and Church Wardens before you have time to revert to bad habits!

Consider the relationship between the end of your sabbatical and your return to work. Who will you need to see? Allow time to catch up with family (if you have been away) or with your colleagues and Church Wardens.

A sabbatical can be an emotional and spiritual roller-coaster, consider setting time aside to speak with your Spiritual Director or other support on your return, so that you can process the experience.

Allow time to write up your experience before you start back at work in the parish if this is required by grant givers, or is part of a programme of study.

The Department of Discipleship and Ministry will be delighted to hear about your experience – do drop us an email!

**Grant Application for Sabbatical**

*Please confirm that your plans have been approved by the relevant person*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Please complete details below* | *Confirmation*  *(Just type Yes)* |
| Name |  |  |
| Parish |  |  |
| Deanery + Area Dean |  |  |
| Area + Area Bishop |  |  |
| MDR Reviewer |  |  |
| MDR Date |  |  |
| Ministry Development Plan in place?  Please ensure it is attached to this document |  |  |
| Specific activities for which grant is requested |  |  |
| Proposed dates of Sabbatical |  |  |
| Total cost of Sabbatical |  |  |
| Remaining funding (parish/personal/grant) |  |  |

*Please cut and paste this page into a new document and send it to the Director of Discipleship and Ministry* [*mandy.ford@southwark.anglican.org*](mailto:mandy.ford@southwark.anglican.org)

*If you are able to provide invoices at this stage, that is helpful. If not, you must supply evidence of your expenditure up to the amount of your grant on return from your sabbatical.*

*You will receive confirmation of the amount of your grant from the Department of Ministry within 6 weeks of receipt of this application.*

*Funds are paid directly in to the bank account into which your stipend is paid.*

**Funding Sources outside the Diocese**

Clergy planning a sabbatical are encouraged to apply for external funding to supplement the Diocesan Grant. Clergy should consider applying to charities that support their own theological position, local charities, and charities with which parishes may have a particular link, e.g. livery companies, patrons.

**The following may also be useful:**

* **The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group Ministry Bursary Awards Scheme** is open to those in full time stipendiary ministry and can assist financially with a work-related project, a study course away, or support research in the UK or abroad. Applicants must normally have completed at least 10 years full time stipendiary ministry. Applications must be made in the year prior to taking a Sabbatical. For more detail, see the EIG website [www.ecclesiastical.com/mba](http://www.ecclesiastical.com/mba)
* **Sion College** makes grants to clergy in London Metropolitan Boroughs south of the River Thames. Membership for at least two years is required for a grant application and costs £20.00 per annum, or £15.00 if you are willing to receive emailed information only. See the College website for more details: [www.sioncollege.org/grants](http://www.sioncollege.org/grants)
* **The English-Speaking Union** offer a grant of up to £2,000 to members of the clergy from all denominations to undertake a tour in the US for up to four weeks with the aim of fostering understanding and the exchange of ideas. There is one grant each year and a competitive application process, which is now managed by Rippon College Cuddeston. More details are available from

[www.esu.org/programmes/scholarships/clergy/american-memorial-chapel-travel-grant](http://www.esu.org/programmes/scholarships/clergy/american-memorial-chapel-travel-grant)

* **US (formerly USPG)** offer grants and support to clergy wishing to travel overseas to experience and share in the life and mission of the world church. They offer a small grant and help arrange a placement where required, ranging from one to six months. This can be anywhere in the world where we have links with the Anglican Church. They ask all participants to submit a short placement report with photos. More details from <http://www.weareus.org.uk/travel/horizons/>
* The St George’s Jerusalem Trust offers clergy grants of up to 60% towards courses taken at St George’s College, Jerusalem. Further details can be found at <http://www.stgeorgescollegejerusalemtrust.org.uk>

**Women may also make applications to:**

* **The Women’s Continuing Ministerial Education Trust** - contact the Ministry Division at Church House <http://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/ministry/ministerial-education-and-development/continuing-ministerial-development/women's-continuing-ministerial-education-trust.aspx>
* **The Gilmore Fund** - contact the Revd Alyson Peberdy (Email: [alysonpeberdy@aol.com](mailto:alysonpeberdy@aol.com));