

Patterns of Priestly Practice Project 2013

Summary Report

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Prepared by Dr Mike Clinton & Dr Jane Sturges, King's College
London, on behalf of the National Continuing Ministerial
Development Panel

1. Introduction to the Patterns of Priestly Practice Project

The Patterns of Priestly Practice project is a study of the daily activities of incumbents within the Church of England. It seeks to better understand a range of attitudes towards the multiple tasks and activities of incumbents and how those tasks and activities are organised and linked with broader experiences of ministry across a selected seven-day period. The project is led by Dr Mike Clinton and Dr Jane Sturges, King's College London. Ministry Division, who are funding the research, hope that through a greater understanding of these issues it will be possible to better support the development and deployment of clergy, especially those serving in oversight roles across multiple contexts. The project received ethical approval by a King's College London Ethics Panel.

2. The study

The study design used a daily diary to record daily activities, events and experiences for seven consecutive days. The start day for the diary study was randomly selected. This was preceded by a longer background survey which collected information on demographics and more stable attitudes and traits. The content of each survey tool is presented in Appendix 1. In February 2013, 900 incumbents were randomly selected to be invited to participate in the study. This selection was stratified to produce equal proportions of men and women and a mix of incumbents responsible for varying numbers of churches.

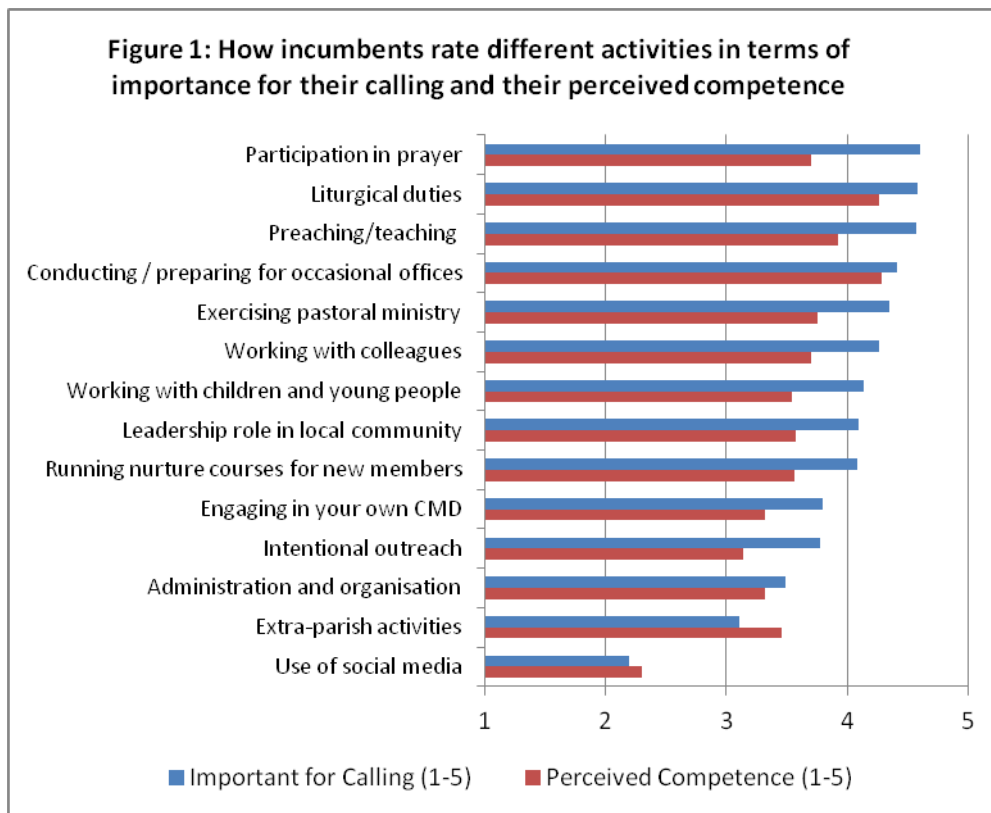
The sample: 217 incumbents responded to the background survey and 193 responded to the diaries (163 to all seven days). The sample is almost all stipendiary ministers working full-time. There are a wide variety of locations represented and ministers working in different team contexts. The majority of the sample is married (75%) and white (British; 92%). A slightly higher proportion of women responded (59%) than men, but less than half have dependent relatives or children. Most participants are between 50-59 years old, although other age groups are well represented. Average length of time since ordination as priest (or deacon) of the sample is 15 years (SD=8yrs; min= 4yrs, max=39yrs). In terms of churchmanship, scores around the mid-point of a 7-point scale were found on the dimensions of Catholic-Evangelical and Liberal-Conservative and just above the midpoint on a Charismatic-Non-charismatic dimension, which suggests more of the sample were Non-charismatic than Charismatic in outlook.

Almost a third of the sample indicated being responsible for a single church. The remaining two-thirds of respondents reported a range of 'multiple-context ministries'; the most common being the multi-parish benefice. In addition to the categories of the question asked, the written descriptions for the 'other' option produced two new categories: 'multiple but legal status unclear' and 'one church plus an additional role'. What is clear from this attempt at measuring this aspect of clergy's role is that it is not as straightforward as trying to classify clergy's roles in this way.

3. Findings Summary

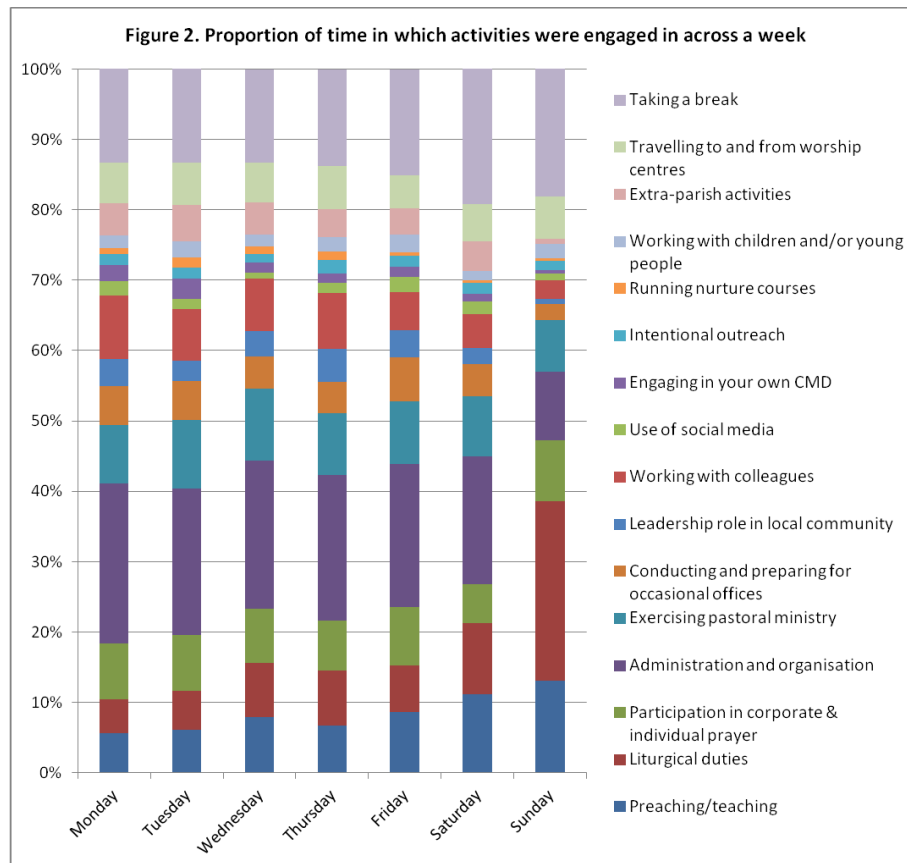
- Incumbents were found to have very strong and clear callings, which play a central role within their lives. A strong and clear calling was further found to be consistently associated with positive daily incumbent experiences.

- Incumbents generally report that they receive support from their diocese to experiment and try new things, which is perhaps good, as they report quite high levels of proactivity in relation to themselves. Incumbents further report being moderately able to control their daily schedule and avoid isolation.
- As shown in Figure 1, activities such as prayer, liturgical duties and preaching/teaching were seen as most important for calling. Areas of perceived confidence followed a similar pattern as calling importance, which reflects a positive association between one’s vocation and perceived abilities.



- Also shown in Figure 1 is that administration and organisation appears towards the lower ends of the list on both calling and competence. Further analysis showed that days when more time was spent engaged in this activity were also those when incumbents reported feelings of lower calling fulfilment, less positive mood, greater work-life conflict.
- Incumbents most often take a day off on a Friday (42%).
- For many incumbents, days begin early and can finish very late. Mornings are typically used firstly to participate in corporate and individual prayer. Administration and organisation then dominates each morning, with the exception of Sunday. Afternoons are spent engaged in more varied activities. Sunday has a different profile to the rest of the week, with preaching/teaching and liturgical duties occupying the mornings for most.
- Figure 2 presents the proportion of hours spent engaged in different activities across the week. It is clear that Sunday has a very different profile to other days, with considerably more liturgical duties and time spent in preaching/teaching. On other days, administration and organisation is the activity that takes up most time.
- Calling fulfilment (e.g. “daily accomplishments helping towards fulfilling a sense of vocation”) was slightly more than ‘moderate’ each day of the week and most common on Sunday. Calling

clarity was strongly linked to greater calling fulfilment overall. Feeling vigorous and energetic in the morning, experiencing a positive event, spending more of the day engaged in intrinsically motivating activities (such as preaching/teaching, liturgical duties, occasional offices, and working with children/young people) and spending less of the day engaged in administration and organisation each significantly contributed to greater calling fulfilment each day.



- Morning vigour, positive events, ‘autonomous’ motivation rather than ‘controlled’ motivation, taking breaks, lower levels of administration all helped to predict better clergy well-being from day to day. Interestingly, people felt most vigorous in the morning if they had had a difficult day the day before, in terms of guilt-related motivations and experiencing a negative event.
- We found very little evidence of strong effects linked to single/multiple context ministries. One finding suggests that clergy responsible for a greater number of churches may engage in more activities motivated by guilt (as opposed to viewing those activities as ‘fun’ or ‘important’) than those with fewer churches. However, mostly findings were very similar across single/multiple context ministries.

4. What next for the Patterns of Priestly Practice Project?

Across June and July in 2013, a series of interviews will be conducted with around 30 incumbents in three dioceses to dig deeper into many of the issues raised by the project so far. The diary data will be analysed further, combined with the interview findings and written-up into a final report in the Autumn. If you have any thoughts or suggestions for this next stage of the research, or on any of the findings presented in this summary report, please do get in touch (michael.clinton@kcl.ac.uk).

Appendix 1. Survey content

Background survey					
	Measure	Definition	No. of items / Scale	Example item	Source
Q1	Calling clarity	Extent to which calling is perceived to be clear and strong	3 items / 'SD (1)' – 'SA (5)'	My sense of call is as strong as it was when I was first ordained	New - KCL team
Q2	Calling event(s)	Open item: Reflecting on the events of the last two weeks, can you identify a particular incident (or group of incidents) that may have strengthened or diminished your experience of calling and/or its fulfilment? Please describe the incident(s) and how it affected you in the space below.			
Q3	Support for proactivity	Extent to which proactivity is supported by diocese	4 items / 'SD (1)' – 'SA (5)'	Clergy would be supported if they try out new things or do things in a different way	New - KCL team
Q4	Schedule autonomy	Extent to which daily schedule is perceived to be within one's control	3 items / 'Never or only infrequently (1)' – 'Always (5)'	How often are you able to... Plan your days how you see fit?	Based on Morgeson & Humphrey (2006)
Q5	Relatedness	Extent to which one's role provides relationships with others	3 items / 'Never or only infrequently (1)' – 'Always (5)'	I feel part of a group	From Van den Broeck et al (2010)
Q6a	Calling prototypicality of activities	Extent to which activities are seen to be important in relation to sense of calling	16 items / 'Not important at all (1)' – 'Very important (5)'	How important is this activity in relation to your sense of calling?	New - KCL team
Q6b	Perceived competence at activities	Extent to which one believes to be competent at activities	16 items / 'Not very competent (1)' – 'Very competent (5)'	How competent do you feel when performing this activity?	New - KCL team
Q7	'OCEAN' Personality traits	Short measures of openness to change, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism	10 items / 'SD (1)' – 'SA (5)'	'Extraverted, enthusiastic'	From Gosling et al (2003)
Q8a-d	Trait Affectivity	Extent to which people have a trait to view things positively/negatively	4 items / 'SD (1)' – 'SA (5)'	'Everyday seems exciting, new and different'	From Stokes and Levin (1989)
Q8e-h	Proactive Personality	Extent to which people actively seek to change their environment/ selves for the better	4 items / 'SD (1)' – 'SA (5)'	'I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve things in my life'	From on Bateman and Crant (1993) – used in EMS
Q8i-l	Calling centrality	Extent to which a calling to ministry is central to the self	4 items / 'SD (1)' – 'SA (5)'	'I enjoy ministry more than anything else'	From Dobrow (2012)
Q9-23	Demographics	Gender, age, marital status, dependent children/relatives, ethnicity, role, date of ordainment and licence to present role, theological outlook, number of churches, location, team context and diocese.			
Diary survey					
Q1	Psychological detachment	Extent to which people can detach mentally from their work day	3 items / Not at all (1) – 'Completely (5)'	To what extent could you... "Mentally detach from the tasks of ministry"	Based on Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) – one item used in EMS
Q2	Sleep length	Number of hours of sleep	2 items	Roughly, what time did you go to sleep yesterday? Roughly, what time did you wake up TODAY?	Standard
Q3	Sleep quality	Quality of sleep	1 item 'Poor (1)' – 'Good (4)'	How would you rate the quality of your sleep LAST NIGHT?	Standard
Q4	Vigour (part of engagement) in morning	Extent to which a person feels energised after getting up.	3 items / Not at all (1) – 'A great deal (5)'	After you had woken up THIS MORNING, to what extent did you feel the following? 'Bursting with energy'	Based on UWES – Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) – version used in EMS2011
Q5	Day off	Was today your day off? (yes/no)	1 item		Standard
Q6	Daily activities	What were the activities engaged in and at what times	1 item		New - KCL team
Q7	Autonomous motivation (including 4 x measures of ...)	Proportion of the day a person was engaged in autonomously motivated activities	12 items / 'Not at all (1)' – 'All day (5)'	Thinking about the activities and tasks you engaged in TODAY, how much of the time were you motivated by the following: Personal interest	Based on Ryan and Connell (1989); Gagne et al (2007)
Q8	Unanticipated events	Extent to whether a positive or negative event happened	1 item	Was there anything particular or unusual that happened TODAY (e.g. an event or experience), no matter how small, that left a lasting impression on you?	New - KCL team
Q9	Calling fulfilment	Extent to which one's activities have led to a sense of one's calling being fulfilled	3 items / Not at all (1) – 'A great deal (5)'	Reflecting on your accomplishments TODAY, to what extent do you feel they: Helped towards fulfilling your sense of vocation?	New - KCL team
Q10	Work-life conflict	Extent to which 'work' activities have interfered with non-work life.	3 items / Not at all (1) – 'A great deal (5)'	Reflecting on your accomplishments TODAY, to what extent do you feel they: Interfered with your personal/family life?	Based on Netemeyer et al (1996) – used in EMS
Q11	Ego depletion	Extent to which one's sense of self-control is in deficit	5 items / 'SD (1)' – 'SA (5)'	To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your level of energy RIGHT NOW? 'It would take a lot of effort for me to concentrate on something'	Parts from Ciarocco et al (2011) and added to by KCL team
Q12	Well-being	Extent to which a people feels happy and contented	7 items / Not at all (1) – 'A great deal (5)'	Reflecting on your experiences today, how do you feel RIGHT NOW? 'Contented', 'Tired'	From Warr (1990)