

# Planning your INDUCTION SERVICE

A guide for Churches and ministers

## Introduction

There are no hard and fast rules about induction services, these notes are intended to offer help and advice based on the experience and usual practice of other local churches. Except where indicated, you should not be bound to them.

## The Induction Service

The service is intended to mark and celebrate the commencement of a new ministry, it should be a joyful occasion that recognises:

**Ministry is a calling:** In our Baptist tradition we believe that God calls individuals to ministry, and that the mind of Christ is revealed through His people – the Body of Christ. The service would normally include an opportunity for minister and church to share how they each sensed God's guidance in concluding that this ministry should be undertaken. The gathered congregation can also be invited to affirm this sense of God's will.

**Ministry is a commitment:** There would normally be an opportunity for the minister and church to re-affirm their commitment to Christ and His Gospel, as well as their commitment to one another in ministry.

**Ministry is a partnership:** The local church does not fulfil its ministry in isolation, in particular there will be relationships with other local churches, community partners and the wider Baptist family. This might be recognised by the people who are invited to attend and/or participate in the service – or by the inclusion of specific affirmations, welcomes and greetings within the programme.

## Arranging the date

The first thing you will need to do is arrange the date – the following points should be considered: Induction Services normally take place on Saturday afternoon – however this is not essential, some churches hold them on Sundays or at other times.

It is normal for a Regional Minister or representative from the Association to lead the act of induction. At certain times of year (especially Sept-Oct) there will be large numbers of Induction Services taking place, so if you require a Regional Minister, check that they are available. NWBA office will normally be able to guide you.

It is not unusual for ministers to take up their duties prior to a formal act of induction.

You will probably want to invite other churches in the immediate locality and Baptist churches from your local network to attend. While you cannot account for every event that might be taking place, check that there are no significant events happening in the area (e.g. other Induction Services, Churches Together conference etc.)

The calling and induction of a minister is a significant matter and members of the church and congregation should be encouraged to see attendance as a high priority. Try to avoid school holidays and other times when congregation members might not be available.

You should set and publicise the date as soon as you can – the more notice you give, the more likely people are to be able to attend.

## Who should take part?

Anyone can take any part in an induction service, but the roles listed below may be a useful guide:

**Moderator:** The moderator may often welcome the congregation and lead the opening part of the service. The church may wish to include at this stage, some expression of appreciation for the work the moderator has done during the pastoral vacancy.

**Regional Minister:** The Regional Minister will normally be invited to lead the act of formal induction, but may be willing to participate in other ways if required. NOTE: if the service includes an act of Ordination (see below) this should be led by a Regional Minister or their appointed representative.

**The New Minister:** The new minister will usually be invited prior to the act of induction to

share how they sensed God calling them to this role. Often he/she will also be invited to conclude the service with a prayer of blessing.

**Church Secretary/Officer:** The Church Secretary will normally share the account of how the church sensed God's calling in this new ministry.

**The spouse of the Minister:** It is important that the service properly reflects the anticipated role of the minister's spouse. In some cases, husbands and wives perceive themselves very much as a team and the spouse will want to share in making induction promises – others will see their ministry in the church as something distinct from their partner's. It is important that this is properly discussed and considered, and that assumptions are not made. You may also like to invite the minister's spouse to read the Scriptures or participate in the service in a way that reflects their own ministry.

**Laying on of hands:** The act of induction often concludes by the minister (and spouse when appropriate) kneeling and a group of people "laying on hands". Two or three in the group may be invited to pray. The group should be representative of the church and the wider family to which it belongs – they should also reflect the gender and ethnic mix of the church. They will probably include:

- The Regional Minister or person leading the act of formal induction
- The Speaker or another colleague of the new minister
- The Church secretary or another office bearer representing the church
- An ecumenical guest representing the wider Christian family in the area
- A couple of congregation members who reflect the diversity of the local church
- Family

**The Charge:** The sermon at an induction service is often called the "Charge to minister and congregation". It is usual for the new minister to invite a friend or colleague to do this.

**Greetings:** You may wish for one or two people to bring a formal greeting/welcome to the new minister. These should be brief and might include:

- Any civic leaders who have attended (or a representative from them)
- A representative from the wider church family in the area
- A representative of the local Baptist family
- A representative of the church/ministry from which the new minister has come

**Other elements in the service:** Those chosen to lead prayers/readings and other parts of the service give another opportunity to reflect the life and ethos of the church.

## What else do we need to do?

Once you have arranged the date, send out invitations as soon as possible. Remember to indicate the full scope of the arrangements (e.g. if there is a meal afterwards with greetings). If you are arranging food, it is useful to include an "R.S.V.P." – Remember to set a date for replies!

Your invitation list will probably include:

- The Church and congregation
- Those who attend Church groups and activities
- Local Churches in the neighbourhood
- Baptist Churches from the wider vicinity
- Any churches with whom you have a special relationship
- The Church from which the minister is coming (or college if this is their first pastorate)
- Friends and family of the new minister
- Any community groups who use or work with the church
- Civic leaders (Councillors, MP, MEP, Mayor)
- Community leaders (headteachers of schools you work with, etc.)

If you invite guests from the community, such events may be unfamiliar, be sensitive to them in planning the service.

You will need to plan catering – make sure that you have enough food, equipment, space and helpers to accommodate the numbers you are inviting. Modest refreshments done well (e.g. scones and cream) can often be better than an ambitious but chaotic spread.

Songsheets and orders of service – Your congregation will be bigger than normal, so you may wish to print orders of service. These may include the induction promises which you can obtain from NWBA in electronic form. You need the appropriate licence to reproduce the words of

hymns and songs. If you use a digital or overhead projector, check that screens are still visible for a larger than normal congregation.

Remember that there will be lots of visitors to your premises. Ensure that there are adequate stewards and that Fire Exits, toilets etc. are properly signposted.

## Ordination

If this is a new minister's first pastorate – the service MAY need to include an act of ordination. This is an act of recognition on behalf of the wider Baptist family, so you must follow BUGB guidelines. The Regional Minister will guide you in this matter.

## Order of Service

A sample order of service, including the induction promises is outlined below. The church/minister may wish to modify the induction promises – if you do, make sure that they are acceptable to the person leading the act of induction. There are alternative acts of induction available, such as those in the BUGB publication "Gathering for Worship."

Welcome and Call to Worship

**HYMN/SONG**

Prayers of Adoration, Confession, Invocation

Scripture Reading

**HYMN/SONGS OF WORSHIP**

**THE INDUCTION**

*Statement on behalf of the church*

*Statement by the Minister*

*Induction Promises*

**Regional Minister:**(CHRISTIAN NAME) seeing that we are about to appoint you to this charge and that you have been called by God to this ministry, I ask you in his name, do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

**Minister:** I do

**Regional Minister:** Do you believe in your heart that you have been called by God to the pastoral oversight of this church and congregation?

**Minister:** I do

**Regional Minister:** As you serve among this church family and community will you be committed to giving to its members and receiving from them? Will you obey the call to lead this fellowship whilst continuing to follow our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Head of the Church?

**Minister:** I will, relying on God's help

**The following question is addressed to the Minister's spouse (OPTIONAL)**

**Regional Minister:** (*CHRISTIAN NAME*) you have heard the commitment that (*MINISTER'S NAME*) has made to this church. Do you promise to encourage and support (*CHRISTIAN NAME*) as **he/she** seeks to exercise **his/her** ministry in this church and community?

**Spouse:** Relying on God's help, I will.

**The members of the church fellowship are invited to stand**

**Regional Minister:** My sisters and brothers, together you are making an important act of commitment believing that you have been called by God to work with this minister. In God's name I ask you, do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

**Church Members:** We do

**Regional Minister:** Do you, the members of this church fellowship acknowledge and receive (*CHRISTIAN NAME*) as your minister?

**Church Members:** We do

**Regional Minister:** Will you honour and support (*CHRISTIAN NAME*), working together humbly and cheerfully as the people of God?

**Church Members:** We will

**The whole congregation is invited to stand**

**Regional Minister:** As representatives of the wider Church and community, do you support this new chapter in the life of church and minister?

**Congregation** We do

**Regional Minister:** Will you continue to offer your support, prayer and encouragement in the months and years ahead?

**Congregation:** We will

**The congregation remains standing**

**Induction Prayer**

**Declaration of Induction (RM):** In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the name of this church and in the name of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, I now declare that (*CHRISTIAN NAME*) has been inducted to the pastorate of this church and congregation, to work with the members in the ministry to which Christ has called them all. As a token of this I now give the right hand of fellowship.

**The whole congregation joins in saying:**

May the Lord bless you and keep you

The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you

The Lord turn His face towards you and give you His peace

**Laying on of Hands (OPTIONAL):** The minister (and spouse if appropriate) are invited to kneel. Representatives of the gathered congregation gather around and place their hands on their shoulders. Two or three from the group are invited to pray, or a time of open prayer is invited from the whole congregation.

**Greetings (selective)**

**HYMN/SONG**

Bible Reading

Sermon/Charge

**HYMN/SONG**

Blessing