

Diocese of Sodor and Man

**Curate Development**

**Handbook**

IME Phase 2 (2018)

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**WELCOME**

Welcome as an ordained minister in the Diocese of Sodor and Man.

Thank you for embarking upon this stage of your development with this Diocese. I have the privilege of overseeing your second phase of IME under Bishop Peter. We are excited by the gifts, ideas and experience that you bring to life in the Diocese and your unfolding ordained ministry.

This Handbook should tell you what you need to know about the programme of ongoing training in the Diocese. Our intention is that you will flourish as a person, a child of God and mature into the ordained ministry of Christ in his Church.

I do encourage you to take every occasion offered to develop and extend your experience and ministry. Whilst you are a curate in training, you have opportunities to explore, to experiment and to extend your knowledge, understanding and experience in a supportive atmosphere that is not so readily available at later stages in ministry. Do make the most of all possibilities.

**All events on the Initial Ministerial Education 4-7 (IME4-7) Programme are compulsory. You must speak to me if you need to miss an event.**

Continual Ministerial Development (CMD) events form part of your IME 4-7 training. They generally take place on the third Thursday evening of each month, with occasional exceptions and are for all ministers who hold the Bishop’s license. If you are unable to attend any of these sessions you must inform both the Bishop and myself.

Under the oversight of Bishop Peter, I am the IME 4-7 Co-ordinator, just part of my overall responsibility for Continuing Ministerial Development in the Diocese.

The Diocese is committed to providing support for curates and to do our best to enable your ongoing formation and achieve the learning outcomes required in curacy. We are a small diocese and therefore unable to offer the same intense IME programme that other dioceses offer. However, we hope that we can tailor some of your training to your more specific needs to enable you to develop and mature as an ordained minister. I look forward to supporting you in this next stage of your vocation and ministry.

Rev Irene Cowell,

Diocesan Director for CMD

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**YOUR MINISTRY AS A CURATE**

You have become a curate because of your response to the call of God. That call has been tested by the Church through the discernment process. It has been tested through your training over the last three years, and now you have come to a new stage for which you have been waiting and preparing for long time. It is good that you have come to this place in your life.

But you have not yet arrived. This is just the beginning, and it will continue to develop and change throughout your ordained ministry

Ordination day brings both excitement and hope, and also anxieties about this moment in your Christian journey. You will have great hopes for your curacy but the early years of ministry are not always easy or straightforward. There will be testing moments and times of conflict. There will be times when you are tempted to be distracted from the gospel and the kingdom by the conflicts inherent in the church and the world. You, yourself, are still a place where spiritual forces battle for control – we go on being a work in progress! But God, who has called you, is faithful. God will continue to equip you for all that He has called you to be and to do; to provide all the resources that you need to share in bringing in the kingdom in your parish or benefice. Do your best to steward the resources of time, energy and finance that God provides you with wisely and in accordance with the principles of kingdom living.

What is of ultimate importance always in all you do is your own relationship with God, however you express this and work it out. You should always prioritise that time which is given to the nurture and development of this relationship. It is for this reason that you may wish to have a spiritual director / guide / soul friend and to meet with them on a regular basis.

**ONGOING DEVELOPMENT FOR CURATES IN TRAINING Life Long Learning**

**Training as a Curate**

The Church of England is committed to ensuring that those it ordains are supported through their first 3-4 years to grow and flourish as ordained ministers.

For a curate in training, the Church provides:-

• a title benefice which will be the context where that development may be lived and worked out;

* a Training Incumbent to oversee that development and
  + - at Diocesan level, the oversight and courses offered by the Director for CMD. In the Diocese of Sodor and Man it is the Bishop who is responsible, together with the Director for CMD in ensuring this. You also have the support of ordained colleagues and Readers from across the diocese. Do make the most of all the experience that is to hand. We all enjoy passing on knowledge that has benefited us and it reminds us of past demonstrations of the grace of God.

**EXPECTATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT IME**

**IME 4-7 events offered by the Diocese always take priority.**

If you have difficulty in attending a particular IME programme event, you must email or ‘phone the DCMD (Director for CMD) to seek permission to miss that session. My email is [cmd@sodorandman.im](mailto:cmd@sodorandman.im) or phone 823509.

Each curate has a responsibility towards his/her peer group, to support one another and towards the wider church in their preparation for ministry. The curacy holds opportunities for training that will not be on offer again. The training period is only three or four years; your ministry in the church of God will continue for the rest of your life.

The costs of curate training are borne by the Diocese.

Travel expenses to curate training days are part of the working expenses of the curate and should be borne by the training benefice.

**CURATE DEVELOPMENT**

Your Training Incumbent is the primary person who enables opportunities for ministerial development within and for theological reflection on the life of the benefice and its communities. The Training Incumbent will ensure supervision and is required to assess and provide formal reports on development at key stages.

The parish also has a responsibility under the Training Incumbent to support and encourage the curate in the development of their ministry and life in the benefice, and to help them explore the strengths and weaknesses of their lives as ordained ministers. The benefice is expected to recognise the need for training at Diocesan level as well as all that can be offered in the parish(es), and to give the curate time and travel expenses to fulfil those requirements.

The curate is expected to prioritise the training that is on offer; to make time to reflect on the training; to support other curates and to pray for themselves and for others in the training process. Curates may become aware of obvious gaps in their training and should, with the training incumbent and the DCMD, seek ways of filling the gaps, through placement or other ministry development beyond the training benefice.

**BEING A CURATE**

There is no single model of being a curate. Each curate is in a unique position and must develop a working pattern appropriate to his or her particular situation. Guidelines for drawing up a Learning Agreement are issued with this pack; they are available in electronic form from the DCMD. Stipendiary, Self-Supporting and Local Ministers must work out the development of ministry that is possible and most beneficial for them, within the guidelines and possibilities offered by the Diocese.

The Learning and Working Agreement is a document in progress and should be put together soon after ordination. The Agreement **must be finalised within one month of ordination. There will be a joint meeting of Training Incumbent, Curate and DCMD to make sure this happens.**

It should then be revisited after six months, and again around the time of priesting. It should offer a scheme of work which is practical, achievable and takes into account, the gifts, skills, life and other commitments of the curate in training. In developing the working agreement, it is important that time for family commitments, managing the home, work and leisure are taken into account.

It is very important indeed that Self-Supporting Ministers should ensure that their Learning Agreement is achievable and not aspirational. In other words, start with what you know you can actually manage in terms of the sessions and hours you offer – you can always increase the time you give, but it’s very much more difficult to reduce it when you find you’ve set the bar too high. Your Training Incumbent is well aware of the need to prepare your Learning Agreement.

There will be occasions where a curate would benefit from some particular training that may not be obviously on offer from Diocese or training benefice. The DCMD is there to discuss and facilitate such training needs insofar as is possible.

**LIFE IN THE BENEFICE**

Ordination is not the end of a journey, but a staging post. As people have grown and developed through their life experience, more recently through training at course or college, they are expected to continue to develop in knowledge, skills and prayer.

As an ordained minister, you take up an obligation for the Daily Office to be prayed in one form or another. It is important that the curate and Training Incumbent worship together regularly, within a discipline that is possible for both. Decisions about time, place, format and content need to be taken jointly, with a mutual awareness of the constraints of family and work life (in the case of self supporting ministers.) This is covered by the Learning Agreement guidelines.

**Personal prayer is also a priority, as for any Christian, and the development of suitable prayer patterns and habits is an important part of the training process.**

**Curates are encouraged in the discipline of a Spiritual Director, to take an annual retreat, to take time each week to read theologically and to remember how to make time for self!**

The DCMD can help with resources for some of these processes.

A retreat is not the same as a holiday and does not count as part of annual leave for Stipendiary curates.

**LEISURE TIME AND PRIVACY**

One of the most threatened boundaries in ministry is that of leisure and work; privacy and public ministry. This can be especially true in a small island community, such as the Isle of Man. Many ministers have been heavily committed to the church prior to ordination, in a voluntary ministry. Serving as an ordained minister, whether Stipendiary or Self-Supporting, requires different disciplines and good personal awareness.

The proper commitment of a minister can easily turn to being over-stretched, to guilt and burnout. Jesus took His disciples apart from time to time, to rest awhile; He Himself made time to pray, spent quality time with friends developing relationships.

You need to develop patterns and practices of recreation of varying styles in order to sustain a lifetime of service to the Church.

Every Stipendiary member of staff should have a complete day off a week wherever possible, with the evening before included in that time. This should ideally be the same day each week. Training Incumbents should model this way of working to their curates. Self- Supporting Ministers need to ensure that they are not giving every spare waking moment to the Church on top of their jobs. Training Incumbents should be understanding about this.

Curates, like all human beings, need to give time to self-care and important relationships. It is important to find balance in your time off to provide appropriate self-care in managing your own household matters and in sustaining and building relationships with family and friends.

**TIME OFF**

The leave entitlement for Stipendiary clergy is detailed in your Statement of Particulars (see Common Tenure.) Full details are in the documents you will be sent.

Self-Supporting Ministers should define carefully within their Learning Agreements, sensible holiday arrangements. These should take into account, family responsibilities and the demands of the ‘working life.’

• Remember what was said above about realistic Agreements!

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND BEING ORDAINED**

**Facebook ... Twitter ...?? An amazing opportunity for fellowship and mission? Yes!**  **But** ... please remember that even some Bishops have found themselves in hot water after rash and unwise postings on social media! You need to be alert to the potential pitfalls for public ministers.

This is one of the grey areas of ordained life, where it’s sometimes difficult to walk the right boundary between ourselves as private individuals and public representatives of the Church of England. One danger is that we can say something we come to regret. Another is that people we never intended to have access to our postings can misinterpret them. Remember! When you post a comment or let off steam to friends about a tricky situation or bad day, you are publishing your thoughts and opinions – and they stay out there, from then on.

**The challenge of integrity for clergy**

We want to be ordained ministers of integrity where the ‘me’ of my private life is the same as the ‘me’ in the pulpit or at the Lord’s table. So think carefully about how you describe yourself and your interests – think very carefully about what you trust to the various media you engage with, for your own sake as well as the Church’s.

You must also make absolutely sure you know and observe all safeguarding policies that relate to the Church and other institutions you are involved with in ministry – especially beware posting photos of children and vulnerable adults without permission.

We also know that social media are a wonderful way of providing pastoral support to individuals, of staying in touch with people who’ll never cross the church doorstep and of sharing the good news! So if it’s your thing, do be on Facebook, do use Twitter – just remember we need to think first and make sure we haven’t forgotten who we are as deacons and priests.

As a professional, seek on social media to behave accordingly. Criticism of your Incumbent, other lay leaders or ordained colleagues, your Bishop and Archdeacon is inappropriate as is being seen to be supporting or tolerating racist opinions, or other extremist views. **A Basic Rule of Thumb: before pressing ‘post’, pause, ask yourself ‘Am I comfortable with my Bishop or a parishioner reading this??!’**

**MORE ABOUT THE DIOCESAN IME 2 PROGRAMME**

The Diocese of Sodor and Man is committed to providing an IME 4-7 programme, but is limited by the annual number of curates coming through training and the resources of a small island diocese.

We will as far as we are able endeavour to help you meet the criteria expected at the end of your training. Therefore any training events or peer support group meetings are a compulsory part of your training and development and should be given priority over any ministerial opportunities in the benefice. It is hoped that all Self-Supporting Ministers can participate equally fully and the expectation is that they will also give priority to these events when their work commitments permit.

The Initial Ministerial Education 4-7 (IME 4-7) programme requires where possible:

* attendance at the monthly Diocesan CMD events
* attendance at meetings ( 3 per year) with other curates across all 3 years.
* regular supervision meetings with your training incumbent
* completion of one assignment per year
* attendance at training not normally available in a parish situation It might include things like a trip to the prison and practical input from the Registrars on weddings, funerals and the legal side of running a parish.
* Individual training as identified through yearly review
* a portfolio ( guidance available with this handbook)

Throughout these programmes runs a thread of developing spirituality and prayer, with biblical and theological reflection, to encourage you that at the heart of all our learning and ministry is a desire to increase our knowledge and love of God, revealed to us through the life, death and resurrected life of Jesus Christ.

**All curates are required to keep careful records of their participation in the training programme and to complete a portfolio to provide evidence of their experience and development during the years of curacy. This will be reviewed annually and must be assessed at the end of your title post by the DCMD and Bishop.**  **You will need to complete your training period satisfactorily before you are able to take on a first post of responsibility or become an Associate Minister.**

You will be asked to meet in addition to IME events with other curates, to grow in fellowship, to share experience and to pray together for one another.

Each curate has a review every year. This will focus on reviewing your progress and development over the previous year and usually happens between March and June, and will also involve your Training Incumbent. Other appointments can be arranged as required, and both the curate and Training Incumbent are free to contact the DCMD for that purpose at any time

Towards the end of the deacon’s year, the Training Incumbent prepares a report on the deacon which goes to the Bishop. You and your Training Incumbent will be invited to an interview with the Bishop after which he will decide whether and when you should be ordained priest.

The Bishop will then interview you again approximately two and a half years into your curacy. Your Training Incumbent and the DCMD will be asked to submit reports ahead of this interview.

All reports from Incumbent and DCMD are ‘open’ and you will have had the opportunity to see and discuss them before they are submitted.

At the end of the training period, the curate is invited and encouraged to write a review of the curacy process, commenting on training in the parish and in the Diocese. The development process is kept under review within the Diocese. It is developed for the benefit of the curates in training and any comments, ideas and suggestions will always be listened to and taken seriously.

**LEARNING AGREEMENT AND SUPERVISION Licenced Clergy and Common Tenure**

Under Common Tenure, the Diocese is required to provide a **Learning and Working Agreement** for every curate in training.

**The proforma for the Learning and Working Agreement is included in this handbook.** There will be a meeting of curate and Training Incumbent with the Diocesan Director for CMD who is responsible for IME 4-7 within the first three months after ordination to agree and sign this document.

The agreement should be completed as soon as possible after ordination. It must be ready at the interview with the DCMD mentioned above. It should then be reviewed after six months, and again on the curate’s ordination to the priesthood. The Agreement is a document in progress, not something carved in stone.

**Supervision**

Staff meetings play an important part of parish ministry and are important for a curate to attend where possible. But this is not the same as supervision! Regular supervision meetings form a vital part of the pattern of the Training Incumbent/ curate relationship.

To start with, for a **Stipendiary curate, supervision should be of the order of an hour each week of dedicated time**. This may become less as time goes on. Snatched conversations before or after morning or evening prayer are not the same as supervision and should not replace planned and focussed meetings when issues of weight can be chewed over thoroughly. **Self-Supporting curates are encouraged to plan regular supervision times of the order of once every 2 weeks for the first 3 – 4 months and at a minimum monthly after.** It would be sensible sometimes to plan the content of supervision meetings in advance, although mostly talking over what is currently in progress is most useful. Under Common Tenure, it is obligatory for Stipendiary curates to have weekly sessions and for SSMs to have a minimum of 12 per annum.

Learning is as much modelled as taught, and supervision should reflect this, with a willingness on the part of both Training Incumbent and curate to be open to learn from each other, to respect the gifts and points of view that each brings to a situation.

Curates bring a wealth of previous life experience to their ministry in the church and this must be valued and appreciated by the Training Incumbent.

**REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF CURACY**

Under the Clergy Terms and Conditions of Service arrangements, all curates – Self- Supporting and Stipendiary – will need to be formally assessed as they prepare to move out of curacy and into the next phase of ministry.

The Bishop has to be able to say that someone has gained the necessary skills and shown the appropriate level of development and capability, before allowing a curate to proceed any further in ministry.

The assessment indicates whether a curate has satisfactorily achieved the **Formation Criteria** defined by the national Church as necessary on completion of Initial Ministerial Development Phase 1 and 2. These outcomes have shaped your training and development from the time you first entered formal ministerial training, so there is a real integrity and continuity through the whole of these years.

There are outcomes common to all curates, but also additional aspects for Stipendiary curates, or those expecting to move into a post of responsibility (incumbent-equivalent), whether receiving a stipend or not.

Assessment will include the evidence of your progress and development as demonstrated by your portfolio, reports from your Training Incumbent and the CMDO and interviews with the Bishop.

Reviews:

Each year, there will be a meeting to review your progress as a curate. These involve both you and your Training Incumbent and are normally held between March and June. These reviews will be conducted by:

Bishop Peter in Year 1. Rev Irene Cowell (Director for CMD) Year 2. Bishop Peter in Year 3.

Your portfolio will be requested ahead of the interview and will form the basis of the review. It will be returned to you afterwards.

* **Towards the end of your 12 months as a deacon**, your Training Incumbent writes a report on your progress and suitability for ordination to the priesthood for the Bishop, who may also consult the DCMD.
* **The Bishop interviews you** and your Training Incumbent before making the decision to ordain you priest.
* **Two and a half years into your curacy**, the Bishop will request a report from your Training Incumbent and the Year Tutor. He will interview you again and your portfolio will be an important part of the lead up to this review. This interview will help you look to the future. It is hoped that any concerns about progress and any questions about whether a curate will satisfactorily meet the assessment requirements will have emerged by this stage. It may be possible for the Bishop to indicate that the curate has reached a satisfactory level of assessment, but you may have to wait until the end of the 3rd Year or later for this to be finalised.

The Bishop may inform Stipendiary curates at this interview when they may begin applying for their first post of responsibility. He will also advise Self-Supporting Ministers about their transition from being a curate to an Associate or Assistant Minister. Where appropriate, questions about deployment for those who are self-supporting may also be discussed with the Bishop.

NB: A Stipendiary curate must ask the Bishop’s permission before applying for a post and may not usually move into a first post of responsibility until after the 3rd Year of training has been completed. Please also let the DCMD know as and when you begin applying for posts.

**Questions**

***What happens if I don’t have a satisfactory assessment?***

The Diocese will respond appropriately if such a situation arises. In the vast majority of cases, assessment will be important but straightforward – a positive and encouraging experience. As indicated above, it is hoped that, as in your pre-ordination training phase, any areas of concern or problems will be known and addressed early enough and long before the point of decision-making.

However, in the event that someone is not considered able or ready to move on in ministry, the Bishop and his senior staff will consider carefully what may be done. Sadly sometimes through nobody’s fault, a curacy period may become very deeply affected by factors beyond our control, such as sickness or a Training Incumbent leaving for some reason. The Diocese will always approach such situations in as pastoral and supportive manner as possible.

But it is possible that in rare circumstances, the ethos of continuing discernment may possibly mean that at the end of curacy, the Bishop will have to say to someone that our corporate discernment is that, after all, ministry is not for them – it might be that someone is simply not able to fulfil the Formation Criteria and so the Bishop will not be able to permit that person to move on to a further post. Please do not be anxious about this – we hope and trust such instances will be extremely rare.

There is an appeals procedure for anyone who finds her or himself in such a situation. The principles undergirding this will be those of transparency and natural justice. The curate will need to be available to meet with those handling the appeal and to provide her/his portfolio for them to see. The Bishop’s decision is final.

***What happens if my Training Incumbent is on long-term sick leave, or moves from the benefice?***

The Bishop and DCMD will ask someone else to have responsibility for you as acting Training Incumbent in such circumstances. You may or may not need to be attached to a different benefice to enable your training to continue. Each situation will be assessed individually and much will depend on the timing and your stage of development. It may be important to support you in sustaining the ministry and mission in your home benefice for example – but your training will be the priority.

***What if things get difficult in my curacy?***

Things will, at some stage, get difficult. It’s a normal part of formation and growth and not a sign of weakness or failure. The important thing is to recognise difficulties and address them sooner rather than later. Often, a conversation at an early stage can help significantly. The obvious first point for conversation is your Training Incumbent. A simple request to talk about the issue should mean time is given to this.

However, if this is difficult or proves fruitless, then the DCMD is there to help.

It may be that a facilitated conversation between you and your Training Incumbent is arranged. Sometimes, a curacy just does not work out. This is rare, but when it happens, it can become necessary for the curate to move to a different post to provide a positive training context. The Bishop, Archdeacon and DCMD will offer advice and help as they work to resolve such a situation.

**WHAT TO DO IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG**

* Don’t suffer alone or in silence.
* Do something before things get too bad.
* The other curates are your support group. They are going through similar enough experiences to be able to say to some extent: “I will pray with you..”
* Talk to your Spiritual Director regularly and keep your Training Incumbent and Year Tutor informed of any ongoing difficulties. It is easier to sort things out at an early stage than to let them fester.
* When prayer seems to hit a glass ceiling, the Bible seems dry as dust and worship loses its savour, remember the truth is that God remains the same, whatever our feelings, and He is faithful.
* When you can’t talk to your Training Incumbent, remember that you are not the first for whom this has happened, nor the last.
* When relationships in the parish break down, keep talking. Each of you is made in the image of God, however hidden that is.

**Areas of difficulty can arise because . . .**

* Both Training Incumbent and curate care deeply about their work. They have different gifts and priorities, or they have competing gifts and abilities.
* Boundaries are often blurred in working relationships in the church - between work and leisure (what is a parish picnic??); between personal and professional issues; between home and church. This blurring is different for Stipendiary and Self- Supporting Ministers.
* Because of the deep commitment which you have given to this outworking of your life as a Christian, you are vulnerable and open (good, but potentially risky traits.) The same is true for others in ministry. You will hurt and inflict hurt. Neither side will mean it. Maturity as a Christian minister means working out how to go on loving, how to forgive, how to be reconciled. Remember, you are a child of God and so is your Incumbent.
* Conflict is also normal, creative and a point of growth. It can lead to the most amazing resolutions when not avoided but faced up to in a mature way.

**TOP TIPS TO SURVIVAL**

* Reflect theologically and try to see God’s point of view as well as your own, remembering that this is His work and He has called you.
* Pray – keep on praying!
* Develop selective hearing.
* Remember the praise and not just the criticism.
* Bear in mind that each person is trying in the best way they can to express their faith and love for God.
* Thank God that not everyone is like you.
* Look for the gifts in those who are different from you.
* Remember that God and the church are not synonymous.
* Keep a good sense of humour.
* Make sure that fun - or at least relaxation! - is still part of your life.
* Keep things in some sort of perspective in terms of the coming Kingdom of God.

**Appendix 1**

**WHAT CAN – AND CAN’T I DO IN MY DEACON’S YEAR?**

**What Deacons Can – and Can’t – Do!**

There is always some uncertainty about what deacons are allowed to do in their first year. Here are some pointers. It won’t be an exhaustive list, so if in doubt, please ask your training incumbent or the DCMD.

**YOU CAN ...**

* You are expected to gain experience in bereavement ministry and, once trained, conduct **funerals**. This must be part of the first year of all stipendiary deacons and it is a good place to start in the early weeks. It may be more difficult for self-supporting ministers to be available to participate in the leading of funerals mid-week if in paid employment.
* You may – legally – officiate at **baptisms** as a deacon. You should gain experience in Baptism preparation.
* You may be involved in the preparation of candidates for **confirmation.**

**THEY SHOULD NOT ...**

* While as a deacon you may legally officiate at a marriage, the Bishop asks that you **do not** until after the first year in ministry. If you find yourself being asked to officiate for a very close member of the family before then, permission may be given, but the curate will need to request that from the Bishop **before** agreeing to be involved in this way. However, you must remember that marriage is a very complex issue that is about far more than the ceremony itself. The legal framework of rights and requirements is complex and you will need practical training about it. You are asked always to seek the approval and advice of your Training Incumbents before approaching the Bishop.

**Appendix 2**

**REFLECTION GROUP**

Curates are expected to become part of a reflection group made up of members from across all three years of curacy. In case you are not familiar with these groups, here are some pointers:

A reflection group is a group made up of you and others who have been ordained in the diocese in the last three years.

It should be supportive and affirming, but also help you to grow.

You meet three times through the year and your commitment to that and to one another is crucial.

Confidentiality must be absolute – your reflection group must be a safe place for you to air whatever you want or need to bring to it. This is paramount!

Everyone must be able to speak, without interruption.

Priority is given to attentive listening.

It is a place where you can challenge one another, gently and appropriately ... to help each other grow.

Ask open questions ... help each other look at an issue from a different perspective.

Do not criticise or become judgemental.

A reflection group is not an excuse for communal whingeing, nor is it a gossip shop! It can, over the years, help you stay balanced and to feel cared for in the demands of ministry.

What can you bring to cell group? Some examples might be; Relationship troubles, problems with ... people ... practicalities of ministry ... work, tough questions – ethical issues you need help with, curacy issues. Anything you need or want to share with your group.

***You are all asked to make time to meet at least three times each year, in addition to IME 4-7 events, for this important peer support and fellowship.***