

CHAPTER 19

A Service of the Word with Holy Communion (pages 518-520)

In the Anglican Church in recent decades there has been a renewal of the centrality of the Eucharist, with the weekly receiving of Holy Communion now regarded as normal. On the other hand not every community has a priest available every Sunday. In the absence of a priest *A Service of the Word with Holy Communion* provides for the distribution of Holy Communion from the Sacrament previously consecrated. There is much discussion about whether it is appropriate for this service to be used as the regular Sunday service in a church. A community where a priest is not able to be present every Sunday could think about having the Eucharist on a weekday and/or the value of having a non-eucharistic service from the Prayer Book on Sunday. Furthermore, ordained ministry in the Anglican Church in New Zealand is undergoing rapid change. In many communities there is a "non- stipended" priest. Communities also can explore having a "locally- licensed" priest (following the "total ministry" model).

The Ordination Liturgies of *A New Zealand Prayer Book* highlight the renewed discovery that all our ministry is rooted in baptism. The Prayer Book has clearly delineated various ministries. Where a service requires the leadership of a bishop, priest, or deacon, the Prayer Book is always careful to state this. Where the Prayer Book speaks of the "minister" this refers to any baptised Christian leading the service at that point. For *A Service of the Word with Holy Communion* the "minister" refers to the deacon or lay person authorised by the bishop "to distribute Holy Communion to a congregation from the Sacrament consecrated elsewhere" (page 518).

The Anglican Church teaches that only a priest or bishop may preside at a Eucharist. The Eucharist has a particular shape: it includes the Preparation of the Gifts, the Great Thanksgiving, and sharing the Communion. In a sense, it is this sharing of Communion which is "extended" whenever this consecrated bread

and wine is taken to a sick-bed in hospital, or to someone who is house-bound, or in the case described here, to a congregation in the absence of a priest. Such an "extension" is not another Eucharist, it is a service of Holy Communion, and the Prayer Book clearly makes the distinction. Such a service of Holy Communion has its own particular shape. Naturally a ministry of Word and Prayer may precede the receiving of Communion, but no part of the Great Thanksgiving is repeated (see page 732).

In order to highlight the link between the Eucharist and the Communion service which extends it, some communities emphasise that the one leading such a service of Holy Communion should try to be present (and receive the Sacrament) at the celebration of the Eucharist at which the bread and wine are consecrated. Others stress that it is preferable that this minister receives at the Communion service. There seems no particular reason why the minister cannot receive at both. Each minister and community is free to formulate their own practice.

A Service of the Word with Holy Communion is found on pages 518 to 520. Those leading this service need to make themselves familiar with its structure and its content. It includes various options. Another *Service of Holy Communion* is found on pages 729 to 737. This service is less appropriate for the situation of separate congregations but on occasion could be used on Sundays. Certainly the *principles* it teaches are relevant.

The alb or cassock and surplice are not the prerogative of an ordained person but the right of all the baptised. Hence it is appropriate for anyone leading public worship to wear such vesture.

Because the bread and wine are already consecrated the Prayer Book has them on the altar from the beginning of the service rather than on the credence or gifts table. The service begins on pages 404, 456, or 476.

The minister needs to think through how best to lead this service to fit in with the particular architecture of the building. The minister normally leads from the presider's chair but might greet the community from the centre at the front (appropriately with arms extended in welcome).

All the recommendations for the Ministry of Word and Prayer apply. Only a single greeting is necessary. Care needs to be taken not to clutter the Gathering

of the Community with lots of the optional parts. It is preferable to leave out all the parts which "may" be used rather than put them all in!

In using the form of Absolution a deacon or lay person says "us" for "you" and makes any consequential changes (page 515). The resulting prayer, however, may appear cumbersome. Anglican understanding is that a priest or bishop declares absolution for sins confessed, a deacon or lay person prays for forgiveness. This principle is followed by those who use one of the following alternatives to the Absolution:

Merciful God,
grant to your faithful people pardon and peace;
that we may be cleansed from all our sins
and serve you with a quiet mind;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.** (page 577)

Or

Hear the word of God to all
God shows love for us
in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. **Amen.**
(page 731)

Only one Collect is used. A clear ending may need to be added e.g
We make our prayer
in the name of Jesus Christ
our Saviour/ Redeemer/ Lord/ your Son
who is alive with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.** (see page 549).

After the Collect comes the Proclamation and (optional) Affirmation of Faith.
"Then follow **The Prayers of the People**, not including **The Lord's Prayer**"
(page 518).

It is appropriate if something like the following is said to introduce the prayer beginning on page 518:

"The bread and wine for this service have already been consecrated. At a previous service, following Jesus' example and command, the bread and wine were taken, the Great Thanksgiving prayer was offered, and the bread was broken. Now to prepare ourselves to share in this Holy Communion we pray the prayer on page 518."

The prayer on pages 518-519 follows. Because "**The Great Thanksgiving** is **NOT** said when using the sacrament consecrated elsewhere" (page 732), it is preferable if the way that this prayer is proclaimed is different to the way the Great Thanksgiving is normally proclaimed. Hence, gestures usually associated with the Great Thanksgiving are probably best avoided. It is not specified who is to lead the prayer on pages 518-519. It might immediately follow the Prayers, and hence could be led by the same person who led the Prayers of the People and from the same place where these Prayers are usually led. Another person might lead this prayer, or the minister can lead this prayer from the chair. The congregation need not change posture for this prayer.

The minister introduces the Peace (appropriately with arms extended wide) from the middle at the front or from wherever is most appropriate. After the Peace is exchanged the minister continues:

E te whanau, we are the body of Christ.

By one Spirit we were baptised into one body.

The collection (and a hymn) might follow. An alternative place for this would be after the Prayers and before the introduction to page 518.

Note that the prayer on page 520 is optional. If the minister decides to use it, the bracket within it may be used or omitted as seems most appropriate to the situation.

The Invitation to Communion appears as a suitable point for the minister to go to the altar. The minister might remain on the congregational side of the altar, hold the chalice and paten before the congregation and say "Come God's people, come to receive Christ's heavenly food."

"The bread and cup are given to each person in the customary manner

with the appropriate words" (page 520). The minister may receive last or first.

No water is added to the wine once consecrated. Nor is unconsecrated wine added to the consecrated wine. If the wine runs out during the service, the people can be reassured that Christ meets them fully in the consecrated bread. If the wine appears to be running out people might use less wine by intincting their wafer (or bread) in the consecrated wine.

If there is a shortage of consecrated wafers (or bread) these can be broken into smaller pieces. Again if the bread runs out, the people can be reassured that Christ meets them fully in the consecrated wine. If both consecrated bread and wine run out we are assured that people's desire and prayers ensure "that they do spiritually receive the body and blood of Christ" (page 729).

"Any consecrated bread or wine remaining shall be reverently consumed by the minister, and the vessels cleansed, either immediately after the administration of communion, or after the Dismissal of the Community" (page 520).

After Communion the minister returns to the chair. Silence may be kept. All pray the Lord's Prayer. A brief prayer may be prayed after the Lord's Prayer (e.g. pages 525-542, 428-429, 472-473, 490). Any blessing is omitted, but "The Grace" could be included (page 52).

The minister (extends the hands wide and) concludes the service with:
(Go now to love and serve the Lord.) Go in peace.

Amen. We go in the name of Christ.

Suitable places for hymns include after the greeting, between readings, after the Prayers, after the Peace, and after receiving Communion.

Some Questions

The first section of this chapter sets out systematically the Anglican position on ordination and the Eucharist. Review it carefully in the light of your own beliefs and note where it indicates the direction the church is moving. Note your points of agreement and disagreement. Discuss this

with someone else.