

# A BRIEF STATEMENT ON ORDINATION

## Study Guide

### Working with the statement

The following questions and exercises have been devised for study purposes – to be used by individuals, with conversation partners or in group settings. You may wish to approach this *Brief Statement on Ordination* section by section, or choose from the suggestions in framing your study of the document as a whole.

## SECTION 1

### Baptism and the life of the body of Christ

- How is Baptism understood by you and other members of your congregation or faith community?
- In what ways does your congregation assist baptised members to activate their calling as “members of Christ’s Church”?
- What is the relationship between baptism and ordination?
- What more could the Church do to encourage the view of Christian life portrayed in Section 1?

## SECTION 2

### The ministry of the ordained is a representative ministry

Consider the meaning of the phrase, “the ministry of the ordained is a representative ministry,” using the following questions:

- What might be the key characteristics of a ‘representative’ in any walk of life?
- What are the most important elements of representation for ordained ministers?
- How may ‘representative ministry’ take place where there is no resident ordained person?

### “The ordained ministry of the Uniting Church consists of two offices: the ministry of the Word and the ministry of deacon”

- How well, in your view, does Section 2 account for the origins and reasons behind these offices?
- If possible (especially in a group setting), share or describe observed stories or examples of these ministries in action.
- Considering any stories or examples, in what ways may the ministries of the Word and Deacon overlap? Would you agree with the statement that their particular responsibilities are not exclusive?

### “An instrumental understanding of ministry is inadequate”

- Why is an “instrumental understanding” of ministry seen to be inadequate? Do you agree? Give reasons, or discuss this question with others, based upon experience.
- Find out how calls to the ministry are discerned in your context?
- Why is “mere performance” seen to be insufficient? How are “substantive spiritual relationships” identified?

## SECTION 3

### “Not all ‘specified ministries’ in the Uniting Church are ordained ministries”

Comment on the distinctions made between ordained and other specified ministries.

- Are these distinctions clear and adequate in your view?
- With others, share examples and stories that may clarify the difference between ordination and commissioning.

## SECTION 4

### There is no “right” to ordination

- How do you respond to the notion that ordination is “a process in which the person re-evaluates their life in terms of the call of Christ”?
- In your view, has the Church given too much attention to ordination? Why or why not? (If you have access to discussion partners, explore this question together.)
- How may an appropriate appreciation of all the ministries in the Church (both ordained and not ordained) be achieved?