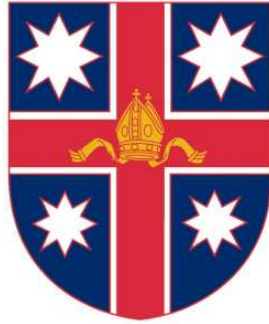


ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMISSION



Faithfulness in Service
Discussion Guide

May 2006

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Introduction

Faithfulness in Service was adopted by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia in October 2004 as the national Code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers. The Code is an evolving one. There have been revisions since its adoption.

The Code is intended to identify the personal behaviour and practices of pastoral ministry that will enable clergy and church workers to serve faithfully those among whom they minister. If the behaviour and practices it outlines are followed, our communities will be safer places for everyone, where integrity is honoured, accountability is practised and forgiveness encourages healing and does not conceal misconduct.

This Discussion Guide was developed by the Professional Standards Implementation Task Group of the Diocese of Brisbane to assist in the process of consideration of the Code in the Diocese. The Discussion Guide has been adapted to remove parts which are specific to the Diocese of Brisbane.

We commend the Discussion Guide for use in parishes and organisations throughout the Church. Little will have been achieved by the adoption of *Faithfulness in Service* if it is not understood and used. Making our Church a safe place for everyone will require ongoing commitment and vigilance, and adherence to the standards and guidelines in *Faithfulness in Service* in pastoral ministry and personal behaviour is an important strategy to ensure this goal is achieved.

We would appreciate feedback about *Faithfulness in Service*. To serve the Church effectively *Faithfulness in Service* must be a living document, which is modified from time to time in the light of the Church's experience.

May 2006

Professional Standards Commission

Suggestions for using this Guide

Our suggestion is that, in each parish and organisation, groups meet on 4 occasions for up to an hour and use this Guide to work through consideration of the Code.

Alternatively you may find it more suitable to meet twice for a longer period and to consider two topics each time. If you do this, please take a real break in between topics.

An outline for each discussion is provided. You will find that reading the relevant pages of *Faithfulness in Service* beforehand will make your discussion time more fruitful. Additional notes about some of the discussion questions provided in Discussions 1 and 2 have also been provided to help you understand *Faithfulness in Service*. Please check these before you conclude your meeting and discuss any further points that arise from them.

As noted in the introduction, we are seeking your feedback on issues and concerns that you identify and, in particular, your feedback on the usefulness of the Code as it applies in the case of children. A feedback sheet is provided for this purpose. Please forward the feedback sheet to the Professional Standards Commission so that the Code can continue to be developed.

You may wish to begin your discussions with the following prayer:

God our Creator,
when you speak there is light and life.
Fill us with your Holy Spirit
so that we may listen to one another,
speak the truth in love,
and bear much fruit in the service of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(A Prayer Book for Australia, page 213)

Discussion 1

Preparing for Discussion 1

- Read *Faithfulness in Service* pages 3 – 5 and 12 –13. Every time you come to a word in **bold type**, it means it is one of the key terms that are used in the Code. Please check its meaning from the list of Key Terms (pages 6 – 11).

Aim

Discussion 1 introduces you to codes of conduct in general and to *Faithfulness in Service* in particular (Table of Contents, Sections 1, 2 and 3).

Thoughts about the reading

Codes of conduct have been developed by many organisations and professional bodies in recent times. The oldest recorded code of conduct is probably the Ten Commandments. Another very ancient one is the Hippocratic Oath that was taken by newly graduated medical practitioners.

Codes of conduct are statements about how the members of the organisation or professional body will behave. Typically they set out the practices and behaviour that are appropriate and describe the practices and behaviour that are prohibited.

Codes of conduct come from a desire on the part of the organisation or professional body to ensure that their members will behave in a way that is consistent with their moral beliefs and is expected by those with whom they deal. Although codes reflect everyone's obligations under the laws of the land, they usually go further by focussing on the conduct of relationships between people.

Codes may be mandatory or voluntary. A mandatory code is one which is adopted by law. It has the force of law.

A voluntary code is one which a group of people has freely decided to adhere to as a matter of conscience. The law will then take account of their code as a measure of what that group regards as ethical behaviour. In the event of a matter being taken to court, the code will be relevant, but not conclusive, evidence of duty of care.

Also, the law then sees the individual person as being bound by the group's decision to adopt its code.

Codes may also be written to emphasise three different elements:

- aspirational - give ideas to strive for;
- educational – intend to educate or change the culture of the constituency;
- regulatory – indicate sanctions for violations of the standards.

Faithfulness in Service combines aspirational and educational elements. It contains Standards that express practices that the church expects its clergy and church workers to adopt. However, there are no sanctions *in the Code*, or in church law, imposed for the violation of the Code. (Consequences may flow only where the violation breaches an existing legal standard.)

Discussion 2 provides further information about Standards and Guidelines.

As a church, we are not implementing a code because of some legal obligation. Everything in *Faithfulness in Service* has a basis in Scripture. Much of its content can be seen either in the Ten Commandments or in the ministry of Jesus – how he related to those with whom and to whom he ministered.

Questions for Discussion

1. What other examples of codes of conduct have you seen or heard about?
 2. In what ways do they determine how people work with and relate to others?
 3. What are the good points about our Church having a national code?
 4. What might be some problems about our Church having a national code?
 5. Who does this national code apply to?
 6. What should a member of the clergy or a church worker do if a fellow worker is not meeting:
 - a Standard; and
 - a Guidelineof this code.
- When you have finished discussing the above questions, please turn to page 9 and read the additional notes that relate to some of the above questions.

Finally:

- Your feedback: Please turn to the Feedback Section (page 11) and note anything about pages 3 – 13 that you wish to send to the Professional Standards Commission about *Faithfulness in Service*.

Discussion 2

Preparing for Discussion 2

- Read *Faithfulness in Service* pages 14 – 18 and 32 – 34. Every time you come to a word in **bold type**, it means it is one of the key terms that are used in the Code. Please check its meaning from the list of Key Terms (pages 6 – 11).

Aim

Discussion 2 covers the standards and guidelines set out in *Faithfulness in Service* that apply to pastoral relationships and to financial integrity (Sections 2, 4 and 8).

Thoughts about the reading

These two sections of *Faithfulness in Service* – Pastoral Relationships and Financial Integrity – are the first of the content areas that you are asked to study. Note that the structure for each of the content areas is the same: there is a Preamble, there are Standards and there are Guidelines.

As noted in Discussion 1, all of the Standards express practices that the church expects its clergy and church workers to adopt. The Guidelines provide advice about how to achieve those practices and behaviours.

Some of the Standards in *Faithfulness in Service* reflect already existing legal standards (eg. 5.10, aspects of 6.4, 6.8, 7.4, parts of 7.5, 8.5). These legal standards come from civil, criminal or church law. Church law includes the *Offences Canon 1962*.

Therefore a complaint about the breach of a Standard may give rise to a disciplinary action before a church body, but only if the conduct breaches an existing legal standard outside of the Code. For example, “You shall be chaste ...” (Standard at section 7.4) reflects the *Offences Canon 1962*. “You shall not sexually abuse an adult ... a child” (Standard at section 7.5) reflects the civil or criminal law.

Pastoral relationships. Pastoral relationships are all about trust. Trust is of primary importance in the creation and maintenance of effective pastoral relationships. Trust grows when you maintain the physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries that are suitable to pastoral ministry.

Financial Integrity. In both their personal capacity and their pastoral ministry clergy are involved in matters of a financial nature. The ministry of church workers may include financial management. The financial dealings of clergy and church workers have a significant impact on the Church and the community. Financial integrity is essential to all financial processes and transactions.

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you see are the differences between “standards” and “guidelines” as used in *Faithfulness in Service*?
 2. Does the Code prohibit favouritism to some parishioners by clergy and church workers? What is the *Faithfulness in Service* reference?
 3. Does the Code prohibit unmarried clergy from forming a romantic attachment with a parishioner? What is the *Faithfulness in Service* reference?
 4. Does the Code recommend or require confidentiality? What are the exceptions to this? What is the *Faithfulness in Service* reference?
 5. Does the Code prohibit clergy or adult church workers from watching an R-rated movie? What is the *Faithfulness in Service* reference?
- When you have finished discussing the above questions, please turn to page 10 and read the additional notes that relate to some of the above questions.

Finally:

- Your feedback: Please turn to the Feedback Section (page 11) and note anything about pages 6 – 11, 14 – 18 and 32 – 34 that you wish to send to the Professional Standards Commission about *Faithfulness in Service*.

Discussion 3

Preparing for Discussion 3

- Read *Faithfulness in Service* pages 19 – 27. Every time you come to a word in **bold type**, it means it is one of the key terms that are used in the Code. Please check its meaning from the list of Key Terms (pages 6 – 11).

Aim

Discussion 3 covers the standards and guidelines set out in *Faithfulness in Service* that apply to ministry with children (Sections 2 and 5).

Thoughts about the reading

The origins of *Faithfulness in Service* lie in the work of the Church's Child Protection Committee (now Professional Standards Commission). Developing a national Code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers is one part of a network of child protection and professional standards policies and strategies.

Children are the most vulnerable members of our community. We therefore need to ensure that they are afforded maximum opportunity to develop fully and without danger.

Please carefully re-read the Preamble on page 19 of *Faithfulness in Service* and reflect on our responsibility to children before discussing the questions below.

Questions for Discussion

1. What difficulties, if any, do you see in adhering to the **Standards** set out in this section?
2. Thinking about pages 19 – 27, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the Anglican Church having a code of conduct with respect to behaviour towards children?
3. Do you think the Guidelines will be helpful to [your group] in caring well for children?
4. Do you have any suggestions for additional Guidelines?

Finally:

- Your feedback: Please turn to the Feedback Section (page 11) and note anything about pages 6 – 11 and 19 – 27 that you wish to send to the Professional Standards Commission about *Faithfulness in Service*.

Discussion 4

Preparing for Discussion 4

- Read *Faithfulness in Service* pages 28 – 31. Every time you come to a word in **bold type**, it means it is one of the key terms that are used in the Code. Please check its meaning from the list of Key Terms (pages 6 – 11).

Aim

Discussion 4 covers the standards and guidelines set out in *Faithfulness in Service* that apply to personal behaviour and sexual conduct (Sections 2, 6 and 7).

Thoughts about the reading

“Actions speak louder than words”. How often have you heard or said that? Our behaviour is constantly under the microscope of others. Students of human behaviour tell us that where the message of our words is different from the message of our behaviour, others will heed the message of our behaviour irrespective of what we say with or mean by our words. “Do as I say and not as I do” is something people just cannot do.

Both the personal behaviour and relationships of clergy and church workers and their sexual conduct do have significant impacts on the Church and the community. This is because clergy and church workers are seen as models by others. As members of the church, we all have a responsibility to practice that which we profess to believe. It is what Jesus meant by “Love your neighbour”.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you believe it is useful for our Church to have written standards for the personal behaviour and sexual conduct of clergy and church workers? Please give details.
2. Do the standards in these sections of *Faithfulness in Service* accurately reflect the standards for clergy and church workers that are presently understood to be operating in your Diocese?

Finally:

- Your feedback: Please turn to the Feedback Section (page 11) and note anything about pages 6 – 11 and 28 - 31 that you wish to send to the Professional Standards Commission about *Faithfulness in Service*.

Notes about some of the questions for discussion

The following notes are designed to ensure that the points listed have been covered during your discussion. Please feel free to discuss these points further if required.

Discussion 1

Question	Notes
What other examples of codes of conduct have you seen or heard about?	Most professions and churches have a code of ethics or a code of conduct as do the various public services. Many can be accessed via the Internet ¹ . Their content is very similar in many ways to Faithfulness in Service; it is the context which is different.
What are the good points about our Church having a national code?	It enables all church members to understand the best ways of working with and relating to others.
Who does this national code apply to?	The code applies to all clergy and church workers (as defined in <i>Faithfulness in Service</i> , pages 6 – 7)
What should a member of the clergy or a church worker do if a fellow worker is not meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a Standard; and ▪ a Guideline of this code.	Check that you have covered all the points mentioned in sections 3.9 and 3.10.

¹ Examples include:

Code of ethics for psychologists: www.psychology.org.au/aps/ethics/code_of_ethics.pdf,

Australian Sports Commission code for coaches: www.ausport.gov.au/coach/ethics.asp;

Ethical standards for Queensland teachers: www.btr.qld.edu.au/reg_eth.htm;

Code of ethics for social workers: www.aasw.asn.au/about/ethics.htm;

Australian Public Service code of conduct: www.apsc.gov.au/conduct/index.html;

Church of England Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy

www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/ministry/workofmindiv/dracsc/guidelines.pdf

Discussion 2

Question	Notes
What do you see are the differences between “standards” and “guidelines”?	Standards identify practices and behaviours that the Church expects its clergy and church workers to adopt. Guidelines provide advice about how to achieve those standards.
Does the code prohibit favouritism to some parishioners by clergy and church workers?	Yes. Refer to section 4.7 of <i>Faithfulness in Service</i> .
Does the code prohibit unmarried clergy from forming a romantic attachment with a parishioner?	No. Note that Guideline 4.15 of <i>Faithfulness in Service</i> provides advice about the things it is appropriate to do in these circumstances.
Does the code recommend or require confidentiality? What are the exceptions to this?	The code requires confidentiality with some exceptions. Refer to section 4.8 of <i>Faithfulness in Service</i> .
Does the Code prohibit clergy or adult church workers from watching an R-rated movie?	No. Refer to the definition of “Restricted Material” on page 9 of <i>Faithfulness in Service</i> , which does not specify R-rated movies.

Feedback

The Professional Standards Commission seeks and welcomes your feedback about *Faithfulness in Service*. We will consider all the feedback that we receive as part of the process of further developing the Code.

The feedback we are seeking is from your discussion group. What has arisen from your discussions that as a group you do not understand or that concerns you? Maybe you want to highlight something good. However if as an individual you do wish to provide additional feedback on some point, please feel free to do so.

Please copy the following page (as often as is required) and use it as your feedback sheet.

When you have finished the 4 discussions and compiled all your feedback, please send it all to:

- If sending by mail: Professional Standards Commission
 General Synod Office
 The Anglican Church of Australia
 GPO Box Q190
 QVB Post Office NSW 1230
- If sending by e-mail: professionalstandards@anglican.org.au

Thank you for your feedback.

Feedback Sheet*

FIS Section	Paragraph Number or Reference	Please state issue or concern	Why is it an issue or concern?	Your suggestions for change (optional)

* Please use additional sheets as necessary; thank you.

Options for sending your feedback:

If sending by mail: Professional Standards Commission
General Synod Office
The Anglican Church of Australia
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QVB Post Office NSW 1230

If sending by e-mail: professionalstandards@anglican.org.au