



Ministry!

If you've ever watched a minister preach and lead an uplifting service, or seen a procession of priests at an ordination in full vestments and thought, "Now that's ministry, dignified and polished," then allow me to gently widen the frame.

Ministry is also the person who arrives early enough to turn the heaters on, the one who sets out the chairs and tables for morning tea, and the one who knows where the spare lightbulbs live. It's the person who can fold service sheets at Olympic speed and who can make a hall look miraculously presentable after last night's youth group slime experiment. And yes, sometimes ministry is standing with a mop beside a urinal, contemplating life's great mysteries, such as: Who did this? How? And why now, ten minutes before the service?

If you think ministry is only about preaching, presiding, or being visible up the front, you may want to rethink your priorities. The Kingdom is held together by people who serve quietly in the background — the chair stackers, the sweepers, the fixers, the finders, the ones who make sure the place is warm, welcoming, and vaguely sanitary.

And here's the bit for those of us who wear the collar, if you're not prepared to get your hands dirty, to sweep the floors, empty the bins, wash and dry up, and yes, even clean the toilets, then you may need to rethink your idea of ministry. Ordination doesn't lift you above the mess, it places you right in the middle of it.

The truth is, the Body of Christ needs both the preacher and the person who bravely confronts whatever has happened in the men's loo (and sometimes that person is the preacher). One proclaims the Gospel in words; the other proclaims it in disinfectant.

So here's to the saints who set up, tidy up, clean up, and mop up, thank you! Your ministry is holy. Your ministry is necessary. And your ministry is every bit as real as anything done up the front. After all, Jesus washed feet. A urinal is just... the next logical step.

Dean Gavin.