

## Being a Spiritual Minister

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*By Michael Steffensen – Minister, Petone Church*

The role of a minister is varied. You need a wide variety of skills and life experience. And most of all, you need a well-developed connection to spirit. It includes having an awareness of what is going on around you at all times and this is done by keeping in touch with the people.

You are not expected to have all the answers all the time. It is more of a supportive role – helping people to help themselves. What is needed is a good rapport with Spirit, common sense and a good ear. Guidance is what is most important, prompting people to be open to which direction is right for them. It's not a case of telling people what to do – rather you help them find the direction they need at the time. And from this, they will see the possibilities that are open to them.

Being a minister can be a 24/7 calling and it's up to the individual minister to allocate their time appropriately. My own way is to be available at all times. I will always listen. But then I am able to allocate time and place to pursue the enquiry further.

We all have life experiences. Use these wisely. It is by trusting yourself and Spirit, that people will trust you. One of the greatest attributes a minister can have is to be a good listener – this is very important. Being an effective minister is more about listening than talking. Remember that the first thing a person notices about you is a smiling face and a positive attitude.

The role of a minister is all about change and you will constantly experience this as you move forward. You do not stand still, in reality you mature into the job. And this maturity is directly related to the amount of effort you put into your work.

To sum up I quote from the SCNZ 'Role of Ministers' that I received at my inauguration:

*“Be there for all people who need spiritual support when requested, respecting the person's integrity and freedom of choice”.*

Also, to:

- Officiate at marriages
- Conduct ceremonies for naming services, funerals, memorial services, blessings and the renewal of marriage vows
- Comfort the dying and the bereaved

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- Hold in confidence all privileged communication
- Be aware of and refer persons to specialist services as necessary
- Your role as minister is that of the pastoral care of your church; respect committees and their functions, allowing them to administrate
- Recognise your primary obligation to your 'parent' church and work to promote an environment that supports spiritual advancement for all its members. This will involve attending there as frequently as you are able.

Being a Spiritual Minister is one of the most interesting, challenging and worthwhile jobs I have ever encountered in my life. The joy gained from being of service to spirit in this way makes every moment so very worthwhile.