

Guidelines for Deliverance Ministry

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Guidelines for Exorcism

The Methodist Church is currently reviewing its guidelines for Exorcism and new guidance is expected to be brought to the 2021 Conference.

In 2020, the Methodist Conference agreed to adopt two resolutions in regards to deliverance ministry.

Resolution 63/2:

The Conference directs the Methodist Council to oversee the process of producing guidelines for the authorisation, training and supervision of those seeking to engage in deliverance ministry and report to the 2021 Conference.

Resolution 63/3:

The Conference directs that, for the interim until further guidance is prepared, no member of the Methodist Church:

- has the authorisation of the Methodist Church for participating in, or encouraging others to participate in, any act that might reasonably be interpreted as constituting the exorcism of a person or persons; or
- shall otherwise participate in, or encourage others to participate in, such an act in circumstances where no relevant system of support, consultation and accountability acceptable to the Methodist Church, is in place.

The Methodist Council is also doing work to ensure that a process of accountability and resources for support will be in place.

The current guidelines are out of date, not least with regards to best safeguarding practice and issues of spiritual abuse. Although incomplete, the following 1976 guidelines establish some basic principles for offering pastoral help to those who believe themselves to be possessed:

(i) These cases must remain within the context of the life and worship of the Church. Even when exorcism is practised it must be regarded as only one aspect of the pastoral ministry required.

(ii) No minister of lay person should act independently in these circumstances. The Superintendent and other Presbyters of the Circuit must always be consulted as they would be in other difficult pastoral situations. The Chair of the District should also be asked to suggest appropriate sources of help.

(iii) There should be a thorough pastoral investigation of the case, including, save in totally

exceptional circumstances, close and continuing collaboration with suitable persons qualified in medicine, psychology and the social services, including the appropriate referral of the person seeking help.

(iv) Since pastoral guidance is first and foremost concerned to assure people of the presence and love of Christ, it is important to follow this practice in these cases also.

(v) The ministry of bible, prayer and sacraments should be extended to those seeking help.

(vi) The form of any service of healing for those believed or believing themselves to be possessed should be considered in consultation with the ministerial staff of the circuit (or in one-minister circuits with those whom the Chair of the District suggests). Such a service should not be carried out when a person is in a highly excited state. It should not be unnecessarily prolonged. Publicity must be kept to a minimum.

(vii) Continuing pastoral care of the person concerned should involve as essential ingredient the teaching of the faith and incorporation into the worship community of the Church.

The full report can be found at: www.methodist.org.uk/media/2011/fo-statement-exorcism-1976.pdf

The Church of England revised its guidelines for Good Practice in the Deliverance Ministry in 2012, and it is recommended that anyone engaging in this ministry also adheres to guidance as far as is possible within a Methodist context. These can be found [here](#).

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