

Bible: What does the fourth commandment mean in the present context? I remain unconvinced that it means working all the hours the Lord sends provided somewhere along the line you have a (notional) day off. On what theological grounds can we justify going beyond, beneath or around, a directive from God that we would agree is given for humanity's best interests, spiritual, emotional, mental and physical?

Perhaps, then, the EU directive, though law not grace, is after all a useful tool for the Church. This writer, incidentally, has no objections whatsoever to local agreements in excess of 48hrs fixed by mutual consent under the AQAR principle. His objection is to the expectation that we all of us will put in as much time, irrespective of our circumstances, as whoever amongst us holds the record for hours in a working week. Interestingly, however, our research showed no correlation whatsoever between PFS ministerial hours put in and perceived growth or decline within the congregation. What are we trying to achieve?

It is surely time the Church became a caring role model and to care for its primary servants by setting down limits and parameters on expectations. Denominations must lead, for it is easier at a local level to implement an agreement, if nationally there is support for that process. Independents can then follow, if the lead given is both Godly and Christlike. Perhaps, however, this overdue paradigm shift will come from the grass roots practitioners applying necessary pressure to the Church for their own, the Church's and the Kingdom's sake.

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## COMMISSIONING OF A TRAINEE YOUTH MINISTER

Paul Beasley-Murray

Like a good number of other churches we have appointed a trainee youth minister. We marked the beginning of his training with a

service of commissioning. In the hope that this might be of interest to other churches, I have taken the liberty of reproducing the form of words used in the 'Act of Commissioning'.

We have come tonight to commission Martin as he embarks on the Oasis Youth Ministry Course, a course which will involve three days a week of intensive study and training over a period of two years, and which will also involve three days a week of supervised work here in our church.

As we come to commission Martin, I wish to read four brief passages of Scripture and to ask four questions, two of Martin, and two of the church:

Martin, the Apostle Paul said to Timothy: "Do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth" (2 Tim. 2.15). In the light of these words of Paul, do you promise to do your best in your studies, remembering that ultimately you are accountable to God? ["I do"]

Martin, the Lord Jesus said: "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10.43-45). In the light of these words of Jesus, will you endeavour to continue to model your leadership in this church on the pattern of the Servant-King? ["I will"]

Members and friends of the church, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples: "I give you a new commandment: love one another" (John 13.34). In the light of these words of Jesus will you show love for Martin and his wife Carita by praying for them, by caring for them, and by encouraging them over these next two demanding years? ["We will"]

Members and friends of the church, writing of one of their young leaders the Apostle Paul told the church at Philippi to "Receive him with joy, as a brother in the Lord. Show respect to such people as he" (Phil 2.29). In the light of these words of Paul will you in the coming days show respect to Martin as a special brother in the Lord, supporting the leadership he will seek to give in his work amongst young people? ["We will"]

As we come to pray for Martin, let me read two further verses of Scripture.

Jesus said: "Take a good look at the fields; the crops are now ripe and ready to be harvested" (John 4.35). The Apostle Paul said: "The Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead his Spirit fills us with power, love and self-control" (2 Tim 1.6).

(The Act of Commissioning concluded with prayers & laying-on-of-hands involving every member of the Youth Ministry Team (Leader of Junior Church, Captains of the Boys & Girls Brigade etc).

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## THE OPEN BOOK (PART II)

David Spriggs

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### THE CHALLENGE FOR THE PREACHER

In the light of this complex challenge, what does The Open Book have to say to the minister as preacher and how can preaching contribute to the Open Book?

Central to The Open Book is essential biblical material. There are 5 key narratives with each of which is associated one of those fundamental human themes, which sparked off the project in the first place. They are: Creation Human Identity; Exodus Freedom; Exile/Return Justice; The Nativity Hope; Cross/Resurrection Forgiveness

One of the first opportunities for the preacher is to introduce people to this content, that is to explore these great biblical stories,